

FREEDOM WATCH

AFGHANISTAN



Live the Legend!

JUNE 2011

W This month's atch

- 4| Words from the Commanding General
- 5| Transfer of Authority: 1st Cav takes over RC-East

'Restrepo' Soldier returns to Afghanistan

- 9| Cooperation: Several weapons caches found
- 10| Camaraderie: COP Monti stays 'artillery thick'
- 12| Followup: Coalition forces tour Nangarhar prison
- 13| Optimizing: Nangarhar districts undergo national-level assessment
- 14| Techniques: TF White Eagle helps Ghazni ANP train recruits
- 15| Increase capabilities: ETT improves ANP facilities, abilities
- 16| Checkpoint: ANP officers prove their checkpoint operations skills

TF Redhorse brings training, confidence to ANP

- 20| Progress: Religious leader sheds positive light on PRT
- 22| Refurbishment: Small projects, big impact
- 23| Ulema Shuta: Influential religious leaders meet
- 26| Knowledge: ROK PRT, Ky ADT promote gender equality
- 27| Eventful: Internet video sessions help break down cultural walls
- 28| From home: Iowans donate to Afghan orphanage

Security through counter-IED efforts



FREEDOM WATCH

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Departments

- 18| Warrior Watch: U.S. Army CW4 Kelley Caudle
- 24| Goodwill across Afghanistan
- 30| Safety Watch: Electrical safety
- 32| Story snapshots
- 41| Nutrition Watch: Protein needs and performance
- 42| Unit Watch: Jordanian ambassadors to Afghanistan
- 44| Retention Watch



(Cover photo) The combined honor guard of a Sailor, Marine, Afghan Soldier, Soldier and Airman present the new colors of Combined Joint Task Force-1, Regional Command-East May 19. (Composite photo illustration by U.S. Army Sgt. David House, 17th Public Affairs Detachment)



CJTF-1 and RC-East Teammates:

Over the past year, the Warriors of CJTF-101 have invested their blood and sweat creating and advancing Security, Governance and Development for the people of Afghanistan. The Screaming eagles entrusted us with the legacy they and others before them sacrificed to build. We are honored to serve as the CJTF-1 and RC-East Command Team, and we look forward to working with our incredible Team of Coalition and Afghan Professionals as we advance Security and Stability for the people of Afghanistan.

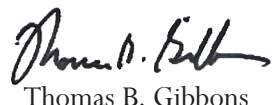
As a Team we will build momentum over this next year, and maximize every resource available. Together as a Combined and Unified team, “*Shona bah Shona*” with our Afghan partners, we will press forward and make the gains here in Afghanistan irreversible. We will fortify and professionalize the Afghan Security Forces and promote Social, Economic, Agricultural and Infrastructure Development in Regional Command East. Concurrently we will strengthen the bonds of trust between us and between the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

We are a Team of Coalition, Inter-Agency and Afghan partners joined in a historic journey for the people of Afghanistan. Our dedication and perseverance will set the conditions for a secure and stable Afghanistan with responsive, accountable and credible GIRA institutions.

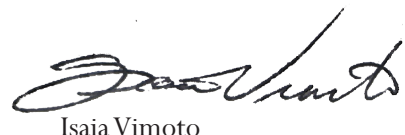
First Team...Live the Legend!



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Regional Command-East



Isaia Vimoto
Command Sergeant Major, USA
CJTF Command Sergeant Major

1st Cav takes over RC-East

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Kim Browne,
CJTF-1 / RC-East Public Affairs Office

During a pivotal time in the war on terror and in Afghanistan's history, Regional Command-East's command authority shifted from Combined Joint Task Force-101 to CJTF-1. At a transfer of authority ceremony May 19, held on Bagram Airfield, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) handed the reins of command over to the 1st Cavalry Division.

“Rest assured governors, generals, partners, Screamin’ Eagles, past and present, that this campaign is just that, a campaign, and not a series of one-year fights and the First Team, in very capable hands, will pick up where the 101st left off,” said Lt. Gen. David Rodriguez, commander of the International Joint Command.

Upon completion of the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Dan Allyn took control of eight U.S., French and Polish task forces and 14 provinces that combined have a population of 7.5 million Afghans.

RC-East consists of 43,000 square miles and shares 450 miles of border with Pakistan.

For the troopers of the division's headquarters this succession of authority marks a major point in history; it is their first deployment to Afghanistan.

Yet this isn't the division's first deployment in support of the war on terror. First Team Soldiers have deployed three times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Currently, the division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team will deploy and join 3rd and 4th BCTs in support of Operation New Dawn in Iraq. Additionally, the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade will deploy to northern Afghanistan this summer.

This change in authority comes after a year of advancing security, governance, and development for the people of Afghanistan by the 101st.

“The First Team and RC-East will continue to build on the hard-earned gains for which [the 101st Abn. Div.] and our Afghan partner have so bravely fought,” Allyn said.

In addition to the approximately 850 troopers from Fort Hood, Texas, CJTF-1 now has a combined joint task force of



Maj. Gen. Dan Allyn (right), commander of Combined Joint Task Force-1/Regional Command-East, and Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia Vimoto, unveil the unit's new colors, May 19, in a transfer of authority ceremony on Bagram Airfield. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Kim Browne, CJTF-1/RC-East Public Affairs Office)

more than 31,000 International Security Assistance Forces Soldiers and civilian partners ranging from nine different countries.

Allyn also gave a message to the members of the First Team, “Mount up, the battle is joined, and decisive and sustained action by this combined and unified team will defeat the enemies of the people of Afghanistan.”



Onlookers gather to watch the Regional Command-East transfer of authority from the outgoing 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) to the incoming 1st Cavalry Division held at Bagram Airfield May 19. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. David House, 17th Public Affairs Detachment)

‘RESTREPO’ SOLDIER RETURNS TO AFGHANISTAN

Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Mark Burrell,
Task Force Bronco Public Affairs

Less than six months ago, U.S. Army Pfc. William A. Swaray’s drill sergeant at Fort Benning, Ga., gathered soon-to-be infantrymen in a small room.

The drill sergeant wanted the young Soldiers to watch the movie ‘Restrepo.’

“He said, ‘OK, this is what you guys have gotten in to, so watch it and see,’” said Swaray, now assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Fear, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, TF Bronco.

“When we watched the movie, some of us became afraid,” Swaray said. “We started to see reality from that day on.”

Now, Swaray, a native of Monrovia, Liberia, is living at an observation post outside of Combat Outpost Monti in eastern Afghanistan’s Kunar Province. The reality is he is not far from where the documentary ‘Restrepo’ took place.

Not only is he a few miles from the Pech River Valley, but his team leader is U.S. Army Sgt. Misha Pemble-Belkin.

“Surprisingly, when I came to this unit, the very guy that was in the movie is in the same platoon and my team leader,” Swaray said. “I remember him in the movie shooting the MK-19 (automatic grenade launcher), and I remember him when he was being interviewed by the reporter. He’s like a hero, man.”

Pemble-Belkin, a native of Hillsboro, Ore., laughs when people treat him different than other Soldiers.

“It’s just a movie, that’s the way I look at it,” said Pemble-Belkin. “It’s no big deal to me, it’s cool, but I’ve done cooler stuff than that, I feel like.”

Some of the “stuff” Pemble-Belkin is referring to is snow boarding, hiking and photography. In fact, he said he wanted to join the military as a combat cameraman.

He tried to join the Navy, but they told him it would be at least five years before he would be able to do photography in combat.

Then he went to an Army recruiter and was asked what his hobbies were.

“The recruiter said, ‘Well, I know the perfect job for you - Airborne Ranger. Sit down and watch this movie,’” said Pemble-Belkin.

The recruiter showed him a video of Soldiers jumping out of planes, blowing things up and firing weapons.

He left for Army basic training three weeks later.

Through all the attention the documentary recently attracted, the speaking engagements he attended and even attending the Oscar Awards ceremony, Pemble-Belkin remains amazingly humble. At heart, he said he is a genuine Soldier who loves his job.

(Right) A Soldier assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Fear, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, TF Bronco, pulls guard while watching storm clouds roll in over Observation Post Coleman outside of Combat Outpost Monti in eastern Afghanistan’s Kunar Province May 5. The Soldiers stationed here at the mouth of the Pech River Valley and the Kunar River Valley, live in some of the most dangerous terrain in Afghanistan.



On his second tour, U.S. Army Sgt. Misha Pemble-Belkin, an infantry team leader from Hillsboro, Ore., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Fear, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, TF Bronco, stands under camouflage netting at Observation Post Coleman outside of Combat Outpost Monti in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province. Pemble-Belkin, who was in the documentary 'Restrepo,' during his first deployment to Afghanistan is focused on training and teaching his troops all he knows about Afghanistan.

After redeploying from Afghanistan in 2008, he married his childhood sweetheart, Amanda, and trained Soldiers in Fort Polk, La., for war.

Yet, he felt the need to deploy again.

"I had to come back here. I had to do one more tour. I had to at least lead a team," explained Pemble-Belkin, now a team leader in charge of a small observation post called OP Coleman.

"I felt like if I got out, then it's like I'm kind of failing cause I have the experience of being out here," said Pemble-Belkin. "You know, 15 months of walking these mountains."

Living at OP Coleman, the days are filled with guard duty and passing on his knowledge to new Soldiers like Swaray.

As Pemble-Belkin methodically disassembled a .50 caliber machine gun, he pointed out every piece and explained what he is doing to the Soldiers gathered around him at the small bunker.

Most of the Soldiers are in their early 20s and on their first combat tour.

They have been in Afghanistan for only about a month and it's been unusually quiet in their area. But the lull in combat at the observation post isn't a relief for Pemble-Belkin. Instead, he said it adds tension to their mission.

The Soldiers are eager to hear about combat, but more eager to react and prove themselves. Pemble-Belkin doesn't blame them. He's lived through some of the worst fighting in Afghanistan and is back for more.

But if they see combat, "In a way it'll change them," said Pemble-Belkin. "I just tell them, don't get scared when you get shot at, just hunker down and shoot back."

His wife isn't too happy with the prospect, but understands it's his job.

On the other hand, Pemble-Belkin said he believes he hasn't done enough compared to his peers.

"There's been guys that have been deployed five, six times now," said Pemble-Belkin. "I've only been on one 15-month tour. I (feel) I haven't even deployed yet. My grandpa did three years in World War II. Once I hit his mark, then I've been deployed. I still feel like I haven't done a full tour yet until I catch up to my grandpa."

Before deploying this time, he had mixed emotions and said he felt like there was still something he needed to accomplish over here.

"I came back here in that mindset - I need to go back 'cause I have some unfinished business," said Pemble-Belkin. "But now I'm just here to protect and try to teach these guys something."

The mission of this unit is different from what Pemble-Belkin grew accustomed to. He said his company is really focusing on the counterinsurgency fight and trying to win the hearts and the minds of the locals.

"I hope what the (commander) is trying to do right now, push the COIN fight, I hope that works," explained Pemble-Belkin. "But I don't know, we're in Taliban country up here, so I don't know It'd be nice to see them laying down their weapons and turning them into the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army and going and farming their lands."

With 11 months left in Afghanistan, Pemble-Belkin and his Soldiers have plenty of time to find out. ☺

Increased cooperation between locals, military leads to several weapons caches

Story by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Nicholas Rasmussen, Task Force Lethal

With tips from local villagers, U.S. and Afghan forces in Zormat District, Afghanistan, eliminated many weapons caches May 5-9.

Soldiers from the ANA and Company C, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Lethal, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, TF Red Bulls, found 11 rocket-propelled grenades, about 1,000 rounds of varying calibers, two confirmed improvised explosive devices and various other munitions and weapons in the five-day period.

Soldiers found the caches after villagers tipped off the military on the whereabouts of the weapons as part of the Government of Republic of Afghanistan sponsored Guardians of Peace program, which rewards Afghans who come forward with information leading to the capture of insurgents or illegal weapons.

The U.S. Soldiers said the work they've been doing to form relationships with the people living in their area of operations led to the increase in amount and quality of the tips received.

"A lot of it has to do with what we did over the winter," said U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Jenkins of Westminster, Md., an intelligence analyst with Co. C. "We went out and made friends with the locals."

In one instance, while at a local Madrassa, the Soldiers received a tip that insurgents buried an improvised explosive device near a clinic in Sadar Kheyl Village.

"This happens quite a bit," added U.S. Army Spc. Tyler Malom, of Polk City, Iowa, a rifleman in Co. C's 1st Platoon. "We'll be out on patrol and somebody will come and tip us off about something in the road."

In another instance, the ANA platoon leader, Lt. Pallawan, received a phone call about another suspected IED.

Pallawan and his men investigated the site and found a sack with five mortar rounds, which they brought back to their combat outpost to be destroyed.

"The fact that the ANA were able to gather intelligence and act on it without the support of coalition forces shows their growth as a (company)," remarked U.S. Army Capt. Michael Minard of Bettendorf, Iowa, the commander of Co. C.

"The people are really beginning to trust us," said Pallawan. "You can tell this is true not only because of the number of tips we receive, but also by the way we are received in the villages." ☺



(Top) Afghan National Army soldiers display a cache of six rocket-propelled grenades they found in a home after acting on a tip they received while patrolling through Babeker Village, Zormat District, Afghanistan, May 5. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Joel Sage, Task Force Lethal)

(Above) More than 70 high-caliber rounds are discovered in a field by the Afghan National Army and 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Lethal, 2nd Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, TF Red Bulls, during a dismounted patrol that covered more than 20 kilometers of Zormat District, Afghanistan, May 5. The partnered forces also found three improvised explosive devices, one of which was a hoax, and six rocket-propelled grenades during the patrol. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Joel Sage, Task Force Lethal)

Soldiers at COP Monti stay ‘artillery thick’

Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Mark Burrell,
210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Less than two years ago, Cotey A. Knudsen didn't have a lot on his plate. He worried about graduating high school, not getting fired from his part-time job and having enough gas money to get home. But since the age of 10, he's wanted to do something extraordinary. Now, U.S. Army Pfc. Knudsen and his friends hold each other's lives in their hands at a small combat outpost in the treacherous Kunar River Valley in eastern Afghanistan.

"It was a big jump, but I've handled it all right," said Knudsen, a cannon crewmember from Jacksonville, Fla. "All my buddies are around and my chief taught me a lot."

Knudsen and his buddies assigned to Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, have been at Combat Outpost Monti for less than a month.

Their job is to provide artillery support for the infantry Soldiers stationed at the COP. When Soldiers on patrol make contact with the enemy, they call back to the artillery Soldiers manning the M1198 Howitzers to put rounds downrange.

"It gets hairy and if I mess up, a lot of the wrong people could get hurt," said Knudsen, who is on his first deployment.

He said, that's why these Soldiers who live, eat and sleep within seconds of their guns have to lean on each other in order to survive.

"Before I became a gunner, I had never seen this type of camaraderie," said U.S. Army Sgt. Jordan S. Davis. "Have you ever heard the term 'artillery thick' before? It means tight, like a fist, like our section."

The last unit stationed here said they received contact almost every week and urged them to be close-knit.

"We got briefed before we came out here that we were coming to one of the most dangerous areas of operation out here," explained Davis, a native of Jacksonville, Fla. "The only thing that did was help us to realize we had to be close in order to make it."

Since they've been here, they've experienced just how dangerous this plush valley can be.

"At times, it can be crazy as heck before you know it," said Davis. "You see mortars



During dry-fire practice, U.S. Army Pfc. Cotey A. Knudsen, a cannon crewmember from Jacksonville, Fla., assigned to B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, sights in on a target with an M1198 Howitzer at Combat Outpost Monti in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province.

hitting on this side, you see mortars hitting on that side and the only thing you can do is be prepared to man your guns."

Some of the other Soldiers expressed regret about not being able to leave the COP and go outside the wire said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Benny E. Campbell, a platoon sergeant from Corpus Christi, Texas.

He said their job on the guns is different, but no less critical.

"Our mission is just as important as theirs," explained Campbell. "Where they're getting attacked is from across the river and from high elevation positions, so it's almost impossible for them to take care of that stuff without us."

Whenever a mission comes down from the fire direction center, the Soldiers spring to life and the valley echoes with thunder.

"I love shooting the gun, I love it," said Davis. "When you're actually firing on an

enemy, the only thing you can think is, 'May God have mercy on his soul,' 'cause there ain't no surviving that."

Yet, Campbell has to constantly remind his young troops that there's a reason they're being called to fire 105 mm shells into the valley.

"I hope we shoot more, but I hope we don't shoot more," said Campbell. "If we shoot more then someone's getting attacked."

A few weeks ago, Campbell and his Soldiers were firing round after round at the enemy.

"We shot about 50 rounds and every one was really excited, then we saw the medevac birds coming in and dropping people off," said Campbell as he dropped his head. "So, it's OK to get excited about doing your job, but you have to understand there are real effects out here. It's war."

Davis, on his third combat tour, agreed.



(Above) During dry-fire practice, U.S. Army Pfc. Cotey A. Knudsen, far right, a cannon crewmember from Jacksonville, Fla., assigned to B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, helps line up an M1198 Howitzer at Combat Outpost Monti in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province.

(Right) U.S. Army Sgt. Jordan S. Davis, a cannon crewmember from Jacksonville, Fla., assigned to B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, writes down firing coordinates on an M1198 Howitzer at Combat Outpost Monti in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province.

He said they're out here to try to keep International Security Assistance Forces safe at all costs.

"Whenever they're out there and they call for fire it's all about speed, it's all about accuracy, it's all about those guys getting the support that they need when they need it," said Davis. "Because if not, what else are we here for. If we can't make sure they make it home to their family's safe, there's no point of us being out here."

Although many of the artillery Soldiers in TF Bronco face a precarious task over the next year, if Knudsen and his fellow artillerymen stay "artillery thick", they hope to prosper. 🙏





From left to right, Afghan Uniformed Police Officer Alam Gril, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Brion Sullivan, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco, and AUP Col. Shir Agha tour the new containment area for the Nangarhar prison located in Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province.

Coalition forces tour Nangarhar prison

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. Hillary Rustine,
Task Force Bronco Public Affairs

In the aftermath of a second massive escape from Sarposa jail, outside Kandahar, U.S. and NATO forces are reassessing the prison system in Afghanistan.

Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, sent several different types of military police, such as the 127th Military Police Company, to help identify problems in the Nagarhar prison. Their duty is to advise the Afghan Uniformed Police on the re-evaluation of the prison.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Brion Sullivan, a Titusville, Pa., native, works in the provost marshal's office, as the non-commissioned officer-in-charge, 3rd BCT, 25th Inf. Div., TF Bronco.

"We went to look at the construction to see if there were any noticeable situations that would allow someone to capitalize on a shortcoming to make an escape," said Sullivan

Conditions in the prison are different from U.S. prison systems. The Nangarhar prison was designed 65 years ago to hold 500 to 600 prisoners, but it currently holds around 1,200 prisoners. Construction and sanitation are high on the list of concerns, said Sullivan.

"In comparison to what I've seen in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and Cuba, they need a lot of help with cleanliness, and security issues need to be addressed," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class

Eddie Flournoy, a Bronx, N.Y., native, who also works in the provost marshal's office as a corrections specialist, with 3rd BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Military police who helped with the assessment are convinced the problems can be effectively addressed, said U.S. Army Cpl. Justine Bemis, a Corry, Pa., native, with the 127th Military Police Company.

"This tour is a good idea," said Bemis. "What (the Afghans) are doing has loopholes, and we're going to try and close the loopholes."

Some of the troubles that have plagued the prison system in the past include unauthorized cell phone use, unauthorized television use and illegal drugs trafficking, said Afghan Uniformed Police Col. Shir Agha.

"They are doing the best with what they have, and we are hoping to assist them to identify weaknesses and shore them up," said Sullivan.

The AUP are taking the knowledge to heart.

"The staff seemed eager for our help with security and that is our goal," said Flournoy.

Amid the crumbling brick and wood cellblocks, signs of hope are beginning to emerge. The newest addition is a confinement area with concrete walls and metal doors. The concrete and metal are a small step in the right direction to avert tragic events such as those in Kandahar. ☺

Nangarhar districts undergo national-level assessment



A Kuz Kunar elder voices his concerns with Dr. Mohammad Shafiq, Independent Directorate of Local Governance District Delivery Program team lead, center, and Mohammad Naim, Kuz Kunar's Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development extension representative, right, during the district's DDP field assessment.

Story and photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Casey Osborne,
Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

Representatives from Afghanistan's Independent Directorate of Local Governance performed a field assessment at Nangarhar's Bati Kot and Kuz Kunar District Centers to implement the District Delivery Program April 23 -27.

The DDP is a national program that involves an IDLG team from Kabul who travel to districts across Afghanistan and discusses local needs with district sub-governors, extension representatives and community leaders, said Ricky Majette, United States Agency for International Development general development officer from Raleigh, N.C.

The purpose of the DDP isn't necessarily to construct new buildings, but rather to optimize service delivery to the people, said Dr. Mohammad Shafiq, IDLG team lead.

"We want to effectively utilize the resources that are available," he said.

Bati Kot and Kuz Kunar are the sixth and seventh districts in Nangarhar to undergo the DDP.

Majette saidboth districts have unique circumstances which make them

particularly receptive to the benefits a program like the DDP offers.

Bati Kot's outgoing district sub-governor, Hajji Niamatullah Noorzai, has created a 15-year plan outlining his vision for development and growth in Bati Kot. His ambitious strategy includes building the district's infrastructure, particularly roads and electricity.

Then, once a strong economic foundation is established, he plans on attracting investors to create at least five food-production factories in the district, capitalizing on the district's strong agricultural foundation.

As for Kuz Kunar, the local provincial reconstruction team has assisted them in their preparation for their DDP since early January, said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Anderson, Nangarhar PRT commander from Dallas.

"Kuz Kunar has many of the elements that we want to empower, many of the elements that we want to encourage among other districts," Anderson said. "It has a strong (District Development Assembly) under a respected leader, a district sub-governor who's willing to work and get out of his office and meet with constituents, and the right level of engagement

between the people and the government."

Even considering the two districts' advanced capabilities, they still face problems.

Security issues in Bati Kot are the main concern driving down economic growth, Noorzai said.

"Security is a very big problem for us," he said. "Most of the residents in this part of Afghanistan go to other countries to start businesses or find job opportunities."

The main issue facing Kuz Kunar is the lack of improved roads, said outgoing Sub-Gov. Hajji Abdul Qayum. Beyond that, the district mainly needs renovation of old structures to effectively meet the needs of the people.

While still a relatively new process, the DDP is already producing benefits for the people of Afghanistan and connecting them to their government, said Majette.

"The DDP is working, and hopefully other districts are paying attention and want to be a part of such a process," Majetter said.

"People will trust the government more than they used to because of the DDP," said Qayum. "Before, there was corruption. Now, there's order." ☺



Afghan National Police recruits exercise being attacked with grenades at a check point at the Ghazni Police Academy May 5. Polish Army military police from Task Force White Eagle are helping instructors at the academy prepare new recruits for service with the ANP.

TF White Eagle helps Ghazni ANP train recruits

Story and photos by Polish Army Maj. Szczepan Gluszcak,
Task Force White Eagle Public Affairs

Task Force White Eagle Polish military police shared techniques with Afghan instructors while preparing Afghan National Police force recruits for the Police Academy in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan, May 5.

Exercises on operating checkpoints began in the classroom where instructors explained the procedures for standing up a CP. Then students went to the tactical training area, where they reviewed the manuals step-by-step.

“Today we practiced primarily searching vehicles and people,” said ANP instructor Afghan Army Lt. Mirzagul Alikozai.

Alikozai said instructors tried to diversify activities during the training to encourage the future officers to stay alert. With each situation, instructors changed the exercise scenario to force candidates to react differently.

During the scenarios, the recruits demonstrated the basic techniques of intervention and showed their creativity and ability to anticipate while responding to rapidly changing situation, said Alikozai. While one group found weapons and equipment in a vehicle, the next group was attacked with grenades while trying to validate the driver’s and passengers’ identity.

“We are not going to facilitate their job - quite the reverse. We are doing everything to make it harder each time. Motivation is essential,” said Polish Army Warrant Officer Matthew Cegielski.

The advisers, all from the military police career field, used their experiences to help the Afghan instructors.

“We indicate the directions for improvement,” said Ghazni Police Academy commander Polish Army Maj. Mateusz Dadał. “However, we also make sure that the Afghan instructors independently conducted and planned most of the training.”



A Ghazni Police Academy recruit searches a vehicle at a practice check point May 5. Polish Army military police from Task Force White Eagle mentor instructors at the academy are helping prepare new recruits for service with the Afghan National Police.

The police academy runs two types of training courses. The first is a six-week basic course that covers writing, reading, hygiene, theory and practice training, including life shooting. After graduation, policemen are assigned to field units and begin their service. Some return to the Police Academy in Ghazni for additional training.

“The best servicemen will be sent by their commanders to the noncommissioned officers’ course for additional 16-weeks. This is the next stage of their careers,” said Dadał. 🇵🇱

ETT improves ANP facilities, abilities

Story and photos by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton,
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

The Panjshir Embedded Training Team completed improvements to Afghan National Police facilities in Dara District, May 8 and in Bazarak District, May 10.

The improvements included electrical conduit from generators to the buildings, new fuel tanks, interior lighting and electrical outlets. The Bazarak compound also received new perimeter security lights as a part of the refit.

“The biggest part of our mission is making sure that they’re self-sufficient, giving them what they need so they can protect themselves and then expand out to be able to protect the population,” said U.S. Army Maj. Russell Bossard from Pella, Iowa, and the Panjshir ETT deputy commander. “If (they) don’t have the infrastructure to support the (police) and the mission then (they) can’t be successful. So what we are trying to do is improve their facilities so they can be successful.”

According to Bossard, the EET prefers to find local contractors to promote economic growth by keeping money and jobs within the province. The work on the Dara and Bazarak facilities was done by Haji Azizullah Mohammad Construction Company whose owner was from Panjshir.

These improvements, along with other programs, are an important part of the ETT’s mission to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the ANSF, Bossard said.

The ETT, which is a part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls, is also working to improve the security of a few Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan Ministry of Defense storage sites by constructing new fences, barbed wire and guard towers.

“I am very thankful for the work the coalition forces have done for our buildings,” said Dara ANP Sgt. Mohammad Aarif, through an interpreter. “Now that we have power and more secure fences we can do our job better.”

The ETT also plans to start an English language course at the Operational Coordination Center-Provincial.

“The program is designed to help the OCC-P command team in Panjshir communicate and coordinate more effectively with foreign agencies,” said Bossard. “The common language within the UN is English and most of the OCC-P currently speaks very little, if any.”



The team works with the ANSF on a daily basis with training and mentoring programs. Often, they contribute smaller items such as traffic checkpoint operation kits and other supplies Afghan officers need to perform their duty safely.

“Everything the American Soldiers have given us and showed us, allows me to do my job much better,” said Aarif. “I joined the ANP in order to help make my province a safer place for the Afghan people.”

Future projects the team hopes set in motion are a remodel of The Lion’s Gate, the entrance to Panjshir, which is an important symbol of pride for the people of the valley.

They also hope to bring running water to the Dara compound through the installation of a well and storage tank.

Bossard said he thinks these improvements, both present and future, will make the ANSF’s facilities more capable of supporting the Afghans security efforts. 🇺🇸



(Top) An Afghan electrician with the Haji Azizullah Mohammad Construction Company runs wire for new perimeter security lights on an Afghan National Police compound in Bazarak District, Afghanistan. The company was contracted by the Panjshir Embedded Training Team to install electrical wiring and lighting at two ANP facilities. (Above right) An Afghan electrician with the Haji Azizullah Mohammad Construction Company makes the final adjustments to a light fixture in the Dara District Afghan National Police compound.



Afghan National Police officers with the Panjshir Reserve Police Force practice traffic control operations at the Provincial Headquarters in Bazarak Municipality, Afghanistan, April 27 under the supervision of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls, Panjshir Embedded Training Team, Police Mentor Team section.

ANP officers prove their checkpoint operations skills

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton,
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls, Panjshir Embedded Training Team, Police Mentor Team section, started validation exercises for the seven district police agencies in Panjshir Province, Afghanistan, April 30.

The exercises will test the Afghan agencies in proper traffic control procedures and checkpoint operations, which the PMT trained the agencies on over the last five weeks.

The first week of training was a “train-the-trainer” week. The team instructed select Afghan police officers on how to teach the classes and practical exercises. Instructors then assisted the newly developed Afghan trainers to teach the techniques and procedures to the rest of the Afghan police officers over a four-week period.

“I think the style of training that we are doing is working well for them,” said U.S. Army Spc. Antonio Rivera, the ETT medic and a PMT member from Des Moines, Iowa. “The combination of the train-the-trainer program, class room and hands-on training, really helps them to catch on to the material.”

The validation exercises are the final test to see if the officers have retained the information. During the evaluation, the district police agency receives a call from the Operational Coordination Center-Provincial that smugglers are trying to transport weapons, drugs or other prohibited items through their district and the police have to set-up a traffic checkpoint and search for the vehicle with only a basic description.

“The training we have done allows us to do the checkpoints better, and we need more of this type of training. It is very important training,” said Afghan National Police 1st Lt. Muhammad Naseer, the Paryan Deputy Police commander and the

checkpoint supervisor on the first validation exercise, conducted in the Paryan District April 30.

The PMT uses role players, both Afghan and U.S., who go through the checkpoint and evaluate the officers. The role players see if the police are asking the right questions, searching vehicles properly and working in a timely manner. They also look for proper traffic-flow management and use of intelligence sent down from the OCC-P.

“The ANP running the checkpoints asked all the right type of questions and stayed very professional, even adding a few of their own questions,” said Naseer. “We learned a lot from the training, and now we are able to do these checkpoints effectively.”

The traffic classes are the second installment of the training conducted by the PMT. The first class included Police Values and Ethics plus Use of Force and Human Rights.

“As long as they practice what we teach them, I think they will get proficient at it,” said U.S. Army Spc. Brian Brown, ETT signal systems specialist and a PMT member from Central City, Iowa. “The training is helping them, and I really think that they are getting something out of it. But, they have to remember practice is the most important part. It is like us, when we were on our way here we also had to remember to practice, practice, practice, in order to be ready.”

The next cycle of training, will focus on First Response, Crime Scene Management and the importance of Police Presence and Patrolling and is slated to start after all of the district agencies complete their validations.

The PMT said they hope their efforts to increase the ANP’s basic police skills and procedures will help them better understand their role as a civil security force. But most importantly, they will be able to go home knowing they tried to make Afghanistan a better and safer place for its people. ☺

TF Redhorse brings training, confidence to ANP

Story and photos U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus,
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

Task Force Redhorse military police mentors conducted a 5-day accelerated training course with the Afghan National Police at Vehicle Patrol Base Dandar, located in Koh-e Safi district, May 1.

Although it was not the first training session at the ANP station, it was the first conducted since the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Wolverines, conducted sessions in 2010, said ANP Lt. Col. Gul Padsha, the ANP station commander.

“We are very thankful for the training,” he said through an interpreter. “Every time the Americans come to train, we learn something new.”

U.S. Army Sgt. Adam Berger, a Kansas City, Mo., native, who is a military policeman attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment., and also serves as the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of training, said they covered detainee handling, personnel search, handcuffing, control point operations, improvised explosive device awareness, police survival skills, ambush awareness, weapon fundamentals and first aid.

Troop B, 1st Sqdn., 113th Cav. Regt., a part of the 34th Infantry Division’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Red Bulls, Soldiers assisted the PMT with the training.

“The purpose of the training was to give them the basics,” said Berger. “Bravo Troop conducts operations with this group of ANP and plans to work with them more in the future. We are here to familiarize them with the basics, so we can not only advance their skill level and build their confidence, but also make it easier for them to work with the American Soldiers.”

One ANP officer, Safi Ulla, who has been an ANP officer for seven years now, said that he especially liked the rifle training.

“We don’t normally get target practice,” Safi Ulla said through an interpreter. “I really enjoyed being able to fire at targets. The only other time we shoot live ammunition is in combat.”

Padsha, said he would like additional training at the ANP station including sessions for the higher ranking ANP officers.

“There are many things that the leadership needs to know, more than regular policemen,” he said. “Whatever training



(Top photo) U.S. Army Spc. Chris Jespersen of West Des Moines, Iowa, and medic with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Redhorse, shows Afghan National Police officers how to apply a tourniquet while using U.S. Army Sgt. Adam Berger’s arm as an example at the ANP station outside of Vehicle Patrol Base Dandar in Koh-e Safi District.

(Second photo) U.S. Army Spc. Micah Roberts of Washington, Iowa, and cavalry scout with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Redhorse, helps an Afghan National Police officer show off his target after rifle range practice outside of Vehicle Patrol Base Dandar in Koh-e Safi District. Soldiers of Task Force Redhorse conducted a five-day accelerated training course to train Koh-e Safi ANP on basic police skills including rifle marksmanship. Task Force Redhorse is a part of the 34th Infantry Division’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team and the Iowa National Guard.

the Americans are able to provide will teach us new things.”

After the training, Troop B held a graduation ceremony at the ANP station May 5. Task Force Redhorse commander, U.S. Army Lt. Col. David Updegraff of Wauconda, Ill., attended the ceremony and praised the ANP’s efforts in Koh-e Safi and their partnership with Task Force Redhorse.

The Koh-e Safi District sub-governor, Dr. Abdul Wheed, also attended and said that he appreciated all of their work in Koh-e Safi.

“If the security of Koh-e Safi is strengthened through training events like this,” he said through an interpreter, “then the security of Bagram and Kabul will also strengthen.” ☺



Warrior Watch

U.S. Army CW4

Kelley Caudle

*Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. Morgan McAfee,
Task Force ODIN-A*

Growing up in Myrtle Beach, S.C., in a home with two brothers, U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kelley Caudle's father never held her back because she was his only daughter.

"He would say, don't give up before you try, and my mom always said I couldn't do it because I was a girl," said Caudle, a C-12 aircraft pilot with Task Force ODIN-A (Observe, Detect, Identify, and Neutralize — Afghanistan) attached to the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon.

Caudle cites her father for giving her the determination and values she has today. He challenged her to soar to new heights on her sweet sixteen.

"My dad got me a few flight lessons at a flight school in Conway, S.C., for my 16th birthday, but I was still in high school playing softball and doing teenage stuff, so I wasn't sure if I wanted to do this for a career."

Following high school, she attended the University of South Carolina and earned a history degree in 1988.

"I had a few jobs after college, and I wasn't happy being an office manager, so I went back to the same flight school in Conway," Caudle said.

She called a former boyfriend from high school, who had since become an aviation warrant officer, and asked questions about how to become a pilot in the Army. He tried to convince her to go into the Air Force but the wait list to go to the board was a year long.

With her mind set, she headed off to the recruiter's office, and they tried to persuade her to become a lieutenant because she had a degree, but there was no guarantee of getting into flight school, she said.

"I joined so I could fly, so I applied for Warrant Officer Flight School," said Caudle.

The path to become a warrant officer in 1990 was much different from current day procedures. Caudle went to basic training with enlisted soldiers as a private first class, and on graduation day, she was promoted to sergeant on the condition that she graduates Warrant Officer Candidate School.

She attended Warrant Officer Candidate School, and graduated flight school with a certification to fly the UH-1H Huey helicopter.

"It was challenging going through WOC and flight school, I felt like the fifth wheel," Caudle recalled. "You knew some of the females that were in classes in front or behind you, but you didn't spend any time with them. The guys were standoffish, no one wanted to be the first to be your stickman and fly with you until you could prove you knew what you were doing."

After eight months, Caudle graduated flight school in 1991. As part of the three-day graduation festivities, she was discharged for one day, pinned Warrant Officer 1 the second day and received her aviation wings the final day.

"The Gulf War was just starting, so everyone in my class got a transition to the OH-58D Kiowa helicopter," she said. "At the time the 58D was still considered for combat only, so only males could fly it. I had a choice between a Black Hawk and a Chinook, so I picked the Black Hawk."

Even through the trials and hardships in Warrant Officer Candidate and Flight Schools, she said she always thought of those for whom she paved the way.

"What about the girl behind me? I have to do my best to make it better for her," Caudle said.

At every unit she goes to, she tries to lay the groundwork for a successful tour for the next woman to follow.

In 1999, she returned to Fort Rucker, Ala., to work at Warrant Officer Candidate School as a training advisory council officer, which is similar to a drill sergeant for warrant officers. Caudle said she deployed to Korea twice, Bosnia, Kosovo, Germany, and Japan. This is her first tour to Afghanistan.

Caudle recalled several memorable experiences as a pilot, but two stand out: an assignment to the Golden Knights Parachute Team as a pilot, during which she flew former President George H.W. Bush on his 80th birthday, and his son, President George W. Bush; and an assignment in 2009 to U.S. Army Priority Air Transport at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., during which she flew Gen. George Casey, Army Chief of Staff, to Afghanistan, and frequently transported then Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston.

With almost 22 years in the service, Caudle became certified to fly a variety of aircraft: the UH-1H Huey and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, the C-12 King Air, the twin-engine Otter, the Fokker, the UC-35 and the GV5 transport aircraft.

Caudle said the GV5 aircraft took the longest to learn to fly.

"The GV5 has the nicest Army cooks," she said. "They usually come from Ft. Hood where the culinary school is, and they make some awesome food with real silverware and garnish the meals. These are the planes used to fly the secretary of the Army, vice chief of staff and generals."

The upcoming promotion list will determine whether she stays in for a full 30 years. If not, she plans to start her civilian career.

Caudle said she experienced some rough times and some better times; and even some experiences that allowed her to meet some prestigious individuals. Through it all she remembers the advice of her father:

"Don't give up before you try."

Caudle kept that same mentality throughout her career. She challenges other females in the military:

"Don't give up, whatever challenges and obstacles are in front of you, just don't give up." 🇺🇸



A mosque outside of a village in Anaba District, pictured May 6, received two of about 60 loud speakers donated to Mawlawi Haji Ahmed Halimi, the Panjshir Director of Religious Affairs, by the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs section.

Religious leader sheds positive light on PRT

Story and photos by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton,
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

On the eve of the transition, Coalition Forces are shifting their focus to reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghanistan's war-torn infrastructure including the challenging task of gaining the Afghan people's acceptance and trust.

Leading these efforts are the Provincial Reconstructions Teams.

One team, the Panjshir PRT's civil affairs section, is taking an uncommon approach to winning this battle. Through cooperation and continued support of the Panjshir Director of Religious Affairs, Mawlawi Haji Ahmed Halimi, the team said it hopes to shed a positive light on the PRT's mission and inform the Afghan people of their humanitarian efforts.

"We hoped this project would promote the PRT in a different

light," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Hakan Togul, the Panjshir PRT civil affairs officer-in-charge from Crete, Ill. "We also thought that through the support of the Panjshir Director of Religious Affairs the people would better understand the role of the PRT."

Halimi said he understands the role the PRT will play and the positive things it can do for his people.

"I think working with the PRT benefits the Afghan people," said Halimi, through an interpreter. "By working with the PRT, I am working for the people because the PRT in Panjshir works for the people."

Halimi worked with the mullahs and religious scholars from the seven Panjshir districts to help the people understand the PRT's intent. He said he hopes the people will realize that the PRT is not there to change their way of life but rather to support it and respect their traditions and culture.

"Right now I am working with the mullahs and religious



Mawlawi Haji Ahmed Halimi, the Panjshir Director of Religious Affairs, speaks with U.S. Army 1st Lt. Hakan Togul, the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs officer-in-charge from Crete, Ill., during a meeting at his office in Bazarak Municipality, Afghanistan May 6. Halimi and the civil affairs team are working to improve the image of the PRT to the Afghan people.

scholars for peace. We want to remove the bad ideas from the people's thoughts and show them the truth about the PRT," said Halimi. "The PRT and U.S. military came to Afghanistan to help the people. They aren't doing things against their religion, in fact they're helping it, and they just came to Afghanistan to help the people."

A mullah, or religious leader, is a prominent figure in the political and social structure of the fundamental religious society in Afghanistan.

Their words and views are highly respected by the people.

"The mullahs go to the mosque five days a week which means they can pass on the good ideas about the PRT to the people," explained Halimi. "They can help to change the view and ideas of the people about the PRT, letting them know they support their work."

The civil affairs team said they know the importance of working with leaders like Halimi and made a point of doing so when they first got into country. A part of this effort included donating more than 60 loud speakers to the local mosques in every district.

The speakers are used during daily prayer and stand as a physical example of the work the PRT is doing for the people.

"This project helped to show the people that we are not here to intervene with their daily affairs or operations in the province but rather that we are here to help them rebuild and reconstruct their province and way of life," said Togul.

The project received a positive response from the people of the province.

"The reconstruction projects like the installation of the speaker systems, in the mosques, shows the people that working with the PRT is a good idea," said Halimi. "The people are happy

about the project and the other work the PRT is doing in the province."

"According to the Islamic culture, if groups like the PRT come from other countries to Afghanistan to help the people and do reconstruction or things like that, we welcome them," said Halimi. "But if they come by force and show their power then we don't accept them according to the Islamic rule."

By slowly working with the people through the mullahs, Halimi said he hopes to bring about change to the way they view groups like the PRT.

"We need to work step-by-step, start first in the villages, move to the districts, then the entire province," said Halimi. "Through the support of the mullahs and scholars, we can show the people the benefits of working with the international community."

Halimi's work goes beyond just improving the Afghan's view of groups like the PRT, he said he also wants to help them understand the role that Muslims play in the international community.

One way he hopes to do this is through the use of the Internet and other forms of modern technology.

"By working with the new technology that we have available to us, we can connect the Afghan people with the international community and show them how other Muslims are living and how they work together for the greater good of the people," said Halimi. "When we show them that, we will not have any problems."

Halimi said he hopes to bring the people of Panjshir and possibly all Afghans into the future. A future which he hopes will be filled with a more informed and accepting population, one that sees the benefits of working with groups like the PRT coming from miles away. ☺

‘Small projects, big impact’ program helps complete district water storage tank

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton,
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

The Bazarak Community Development Council with help from the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team’s Civil Affairs section finished refurbishing a drinking and irrigation water storage tank for the Bazarak District, Afghanistan, April 30.

The project is a part of the ‘small projects, big impact’ program run by the PRT, where up to \$5,000 is used to purchase materials for civil reconstruction projects. The Afghan people of the area, who will benefit from the project, provide the labor and the remainder of the materials.

“The good thing about this project is with less amounts of money we can help and serve the greater needs of the people,” said Abdul Rahman Kabiri, the deputy governor of Panjshir Province, through an interpreter. “The other important part of the project is it gives the people the idea in the future when they have such a project like this that they can do it by themselves and they are aware of the process.”

The Afghans point out deficiencies and bring them up to their local CDC who then works with the provincial government to address the problem. The PRT helps this process by donating materials, but the projects are led by the Afghan CDC. Often the people pitch in materials or labor for free to make sure the project is completed.

“These projects show the ingenuity and determination of the Afghan people. When they want something to be done, they get it done,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Hakan Togul, the PRT Civil Affairs officer-in-charge, from Crete, Ill.

The program, designed to build the capacity of the local governments shows the people their government is there to help them and how to use their government channels properly, said Togul.

The tank feeds 45 water faucets from a spring on the top of a nearby mountain supplying 300 families, more than 1,200 people, water for drinking and farming. Plus it will store the water during drier summer months giving them fresh, clean water year-round.

“A lot of the water was wasted before, and they were unable to use it after the spring dried up, but now they can store the water and use it in the future,” said Kabiri.

“The water storage tank was completely destroyed, so we brought it back to working condition,” said Gulmir, the Bazarak CDC director, through an interpreter. “I am happy to work for my people. Now they have healthy water for drinking. Before, they were using other water sources which were not healthy.”

The people of the village often used the river water which can be full of bacteria making it unfit to drink.

The ‘small projects, big impact’ program is popular among the Afghan people and provides a much needed push in the right direction, according to the PRT.

“I look forward to doing more projects like this with the PRT,” said Gulmir. “We need to continue our way and learn to solve the people’s problems in the small villages. It is important to do these types of projects which the PRT has been involved in. The small projects help more people than the bigger ones.”



Gulmir, the Panjshir Community Development Council director, shows members of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team the newly completed drinking and irrigation water storage tank in Bazarak District, Afghanistan, April 30. The PRT donated \$5,000 to the project for concrete. The labor and remainder of materials were provided by Afghan people in the nearby villages, who will use the water.

The water storage refurbishment is one of eight projects set for the district; many more are planned for the province.

“We are very happy that we can do a little part, and the Afghan people do a big part,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joseph Blevins, the PRT commander from Oregonia, Ohio. “I hope the people of Panjshir continue to welcome the PRT so we can work together.”



Provincial Governor Abdul Jabbar Naeemi addresses the gathered elders, mullahs, leaders and members of the Ulema Council, the province’s highest religious committee, at the Civil Military Operation Center in Khowst City, Afghanistan, at the Ulema Council shura. The governor thanked coalition forces for building roads and schools but reminded the audience that lasting change and peace can only come from the support of Khowst’s religious leaders.

Ulema Shura ties religious leaders to Afghan government

Story and photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Ken Scholz,
Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

A committee of Khowst Province’s most influential religious leaders held a shura in the Civil Military Operations Center in Khowst City with government and military leaders April 25.

Khowst Governor Abdul Jabbar Naeemi initiated the meeting which included members of the Mujahadeen Council, the Ulema Council and the Director of Hajj.

It was a culmination of weeks of travel and other shuras by local government leaders supported by coalition forces rallying for peace and unification throughout the province.

The shura consisted of many speeches made by mullahs, government heads, and mawlawis, Afghan religious leaders who are influential to both government officials and mullahs.

“Without the support of our mullahs, our government will not succeed,” said Mawlawi Mohammad Sardar Zadrán, head of the Mujahadeen Council, addressing the crowd of gathered religious and tribal elders.

Naeemi said, “In this last year, many mawlawis were killed because of our problems here. It is our responsibility to find the cause and resolution to these problems.”

While the Afghan government, with assistance from the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team, courts influential areas and leaders with projects and programs to improve the lives of people, Naeemi said that in the last month insurgents attempted to sway locals with multiple Improvised Explosive Devices in crowded areas of Khowst City, suicide bomber assassination attempts of revered religious leaders and rocket attacks. “Which book in the Holy Quran says to plant IEDs and kill our brothers?” Naeemi asked the assembled elders.

In the last month, Naeemi said, “our Afghan National Security Forces have disabled more than 80 IEDs.”

The absurd and ineffective tactics used by the insurgency to kill the very people from which it is trying to gain support was

decried and condemned by both government officials and religious leaders in attendance at the shura, added Naeemi.

“This country will not improve with fighting. Good governance is the only way forward,” said Zadrán.

With a wry smile he continued, “If fighting were the way to progress, Afghanistan would be more developed than Europe.”

Along with the calls for peace and continued development efforts, the gathered mawlawis and mullahs stressed the importance and their hope to be included in the government.

“This is the first time we’ve had this many mawlawis and mullahs come to sit down and meet. It should not be the last,” Zadrán said.

During the meeting Zadrán asked Naeemi for more educational and job opportunities and requested revised procedures for entering and searching religious centers such as madrassas.

“We are Muslims. It is impossible that we don’t have respect in our hearts for our mawlawis,” said Naeemi.

At the conclusion of his speech, Naeemi offered the assembled mawlawis positions in his staff, noting that they were critical assets to the government’s efforts to encourage insurgents to end the violence.

Shah Mohammad, the Ulema Council Director echoed Naeemi’s focus on the importance of including religious consultants in the government.

“Some people are misusing the religion of Islam. They have made others think this is a violent religion. This is wrong. It’s one of peace,” the director said.

The process for reducing and stopping violence conducted by insurgents through appealing to Islam has worked in the past, the governor claimed.

“We have high ranking previous Taliban who are working with us for peace in the government,” Governor Naeemi said.

The Ulema Council Director concluded his speech, like the rest, with a message for unified and immediate action, “Now is the time for the improvement of our country. Now’s our chance.”

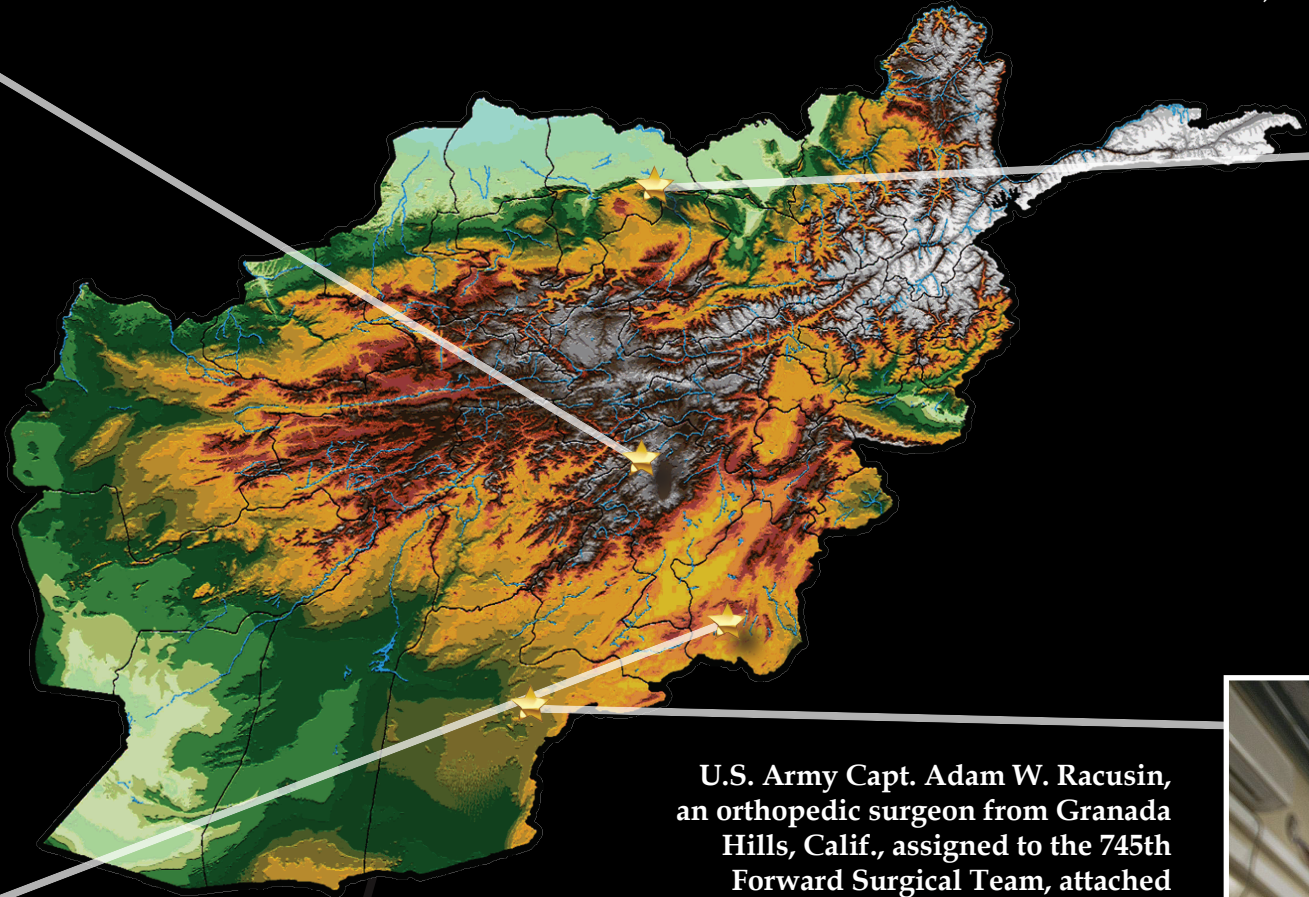
Goodwill across Afghanistan:



Provincial Reconstruction Team Laghman engineers speak with a contractor about the progress of construction on the Qarghay'i Laghman Empowerment Agricultural Facility Apr. 20. The LEAF will provide locals with a storage facility for dry goods and produce. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Ronifel Yasay, Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team)

ISAF and ANSF Reach Out

Abdul Matin Mubashe, a math and sciences teacher in Dara District, Afghanistan, teaches an Afghan boy how to read near a river in Dara May 1. Mubashe attended the grand opening ceremony of the Baba Ali Girls School which the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team contracted the local Raz Tanha Construction Company to build in a remote district of Panjshir. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs)



Khowst Provincial Gov. Abdul Jabaar Naeemi releases a dove at the conclusion of a ceremony announcing Mandozai District a peace district April 27. Mandozai joins Gorbuz and Jaji Maidan as the third official peace district in Khowst Province, Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Ken Scholz, Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

U.S. Army Capt. Adam W. Racusin, an orthopedic surgeon from Granada Hills, Calif., assigned to the 745th Forward Surgical Team, attached to Task Force Bastogne, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, cleans and bandages Nazawaly Uddin's hand a few weeks after performing surgery on it at Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan, April 18. Nazawaly's hand was badly burned by boiling water rendering her hand useless before the surgery. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Mark Burrell, Combined Joint Task Force 101)



ROK PRT, Ky ADT promote gender equality

Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus,
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

Afghan leaders of the Parwan Province met with the Republic of Korea Provincial Reconstruction Team and members of the Women's Empowerment Team, Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team III, for a gender equality awareness conference at the ROK Charikaar Base, Afghanistan, May 10.

Attendees learned what the international community considers gender inequality and how important the issue is in other countries, said Dr. Hyunjoo Song, a gender adviser for the ROK PRT.

The segregation of the two sexes, of men and women, is very normal in Afghan society, she continued, but Afghans don't really know that international communities consider the segregation of men and women to be discrimination.

"The training should not take place in one (session), it should take place continuously with the same audience, because it is not easy to change the people's attitudes," said Song.

Education has three components: acquiring skills, transferring the knowledge and changing attitudes. Among the three components, changing people's attitudes is the most difficult, according to Song.

"The gender seminar is to change their attitudes," said Song. "That's why we have to have the capacity building seminars with the same audience."

Coalition forces held a similar conference Dec. 14, 2010, in Charikar Division where Song spoke to more than 30 participants including attorneys and the mayor about gender awareness.

"The conference was a good experience and I learned a lot," said Mohammad Taher, a deputy director for economics in Parwan Province, through an interpreter. "All of the issues she talked about she is right. Mainly in villages, there is a lot of (discrimination) going on, but big cities are better at respecting women more because they are better educated."

Carmen Tamras, a female linguist with the Parwan PRT from San Jose, Calif., said when they go to the villages to talk to the people, many men will not allow her to talk to the women.

"The men think that since we are westerners that we are going to try to teach their wife inappropriate things, so they don't want them anywhere near us," she explained. "But when we talk to them and say I am a mother, I am a daughter, or a



Dr. Hyunjoo Song, a gender adviser for the Republic of Korea Provincial Reconstruction Team, uses images during a slide-show presentation to show Afghans gender inequalities seen around Afghanistan and the international perceptions of them at the ROK Charikaar Base, Afghanistan.

sister, or a wife, or whatever, show them some pictures of our family, show them that I work really hard and I wouldn't be here if I didn't need to be so they can look at us like a human being just like them ... then they can let us in."

Because talking to the women of the villages can be difficult the Kentucky ADT III takes a different approach.

"We make sure we tie ourselves to the female leadership," said U.S. Army Capt. Carla Getchell of Frankfort, Ky., the Kentucky ADT III women's empowerment coordinator.

At the operational level the Kentucky ADT ties female leadership such as the director of women's affairs, in with important meetings. They also teach the same kinds of things their male counterparts are teaching to ensure men and women are educated equally on finding resources for their projects.

Like the previous counterparts, Getchell and her team plan to be involved in projects to help Afghan women earn an income through agriculture. Past projects taught widowed and low-income Afghan women how to raise poultry and beekeeping.

"The goal, when setting up the poultry or bee keeping projects, is that coalition forces don't do the training. What we do is assist the local leadership, the female leadership, in resourcing the training," explained Getchell. "They provide the location, and we help them find resources for the training. We are the facilitators in connecting the Afghan (women) with resources available throughout the country."

Song supports the work of the Kentucky ADT III.

"When the women start to make money on their own it empowers them because they will be less dependent on other people," said Song. "It will definitely change their attitudes and change their husbands'. It could change the power structure in the household, it is not common, but it could change."

Combining the work of the PRT and the Kentucky ADT's women's programs, Afghan women may be able to start seeing progress in gender equality, said Getchell.

"I think one of biggest goals of (these gender awareness conferences) is just getting all of the women in the same room so that they are talking," said Getchell. "Networking is huge, and for us, in order to get them to a successful level, they have to know who they can call. Once (they) know the right people to talk to, it's much easier to get (their) job done. We want the line directors to be able to talk to the different leaders they have in their areas so that they can start solving their own problems when they occur."

Song said she intends to keep working on spreading gender awareness.

"I'd wanted to have gender conferences on a regular basis, like every month (after December's conference), but due to the limited mobility and transportation, I couldn't keep the seminars going," said Song. "If the conditions allow it, I will keep the seminars on a regular basis

"In 'sha Alla," she said, meaning, "If God wills it." ☺



Female Afghan students from Jalalabad, skype with female U.S. Soldiers with Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)

Internet video sessions help break down cultural walls

Story by U.S. Staff Sgt. Amber Robinson,
Task Force Bronco Public Affairs

Female Soldiers with Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, reached out to Afghan school girls with the help of the Department of State during a special internet video session at Forward Operating Base Fenty April 29.

The session was part of a series put into action by Anna Mussman, Public Diplomacy Officer for TF Bronco, who said the program is as a simple way for Afghan students to communicate with the Soldiers. The goal is to break down cultural barriers and provide both students and Soldiers insight into each other's worlds.

"What the State Department is trying to do is connect as many Afghan people as possible with Americans," said Mussman. "What we hope will come of that is a mutual understanding between the Soldiers and students. We have found that Afghans have a very narrow view of American Soldiers. Not necessarily Americans, just the Soldiers. They may not understand fully what U.S. forces are here to do, and we hope to dissolve the preconceptions the Afghan youth may have about our Soldiers."

Mussman said she hopes the Internet video sessions will personalize the Soldiers to the Afghan students, and allow

the Soldiers to understand the Afghan culture more fully, forming a foundation of communication that can continue to be built upon.

The Soldiers who participated were U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Toya N. Alexander-Cruz, from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, TF Bronco brigade chaplain's assistant and U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christine M. Hein, Sullivan, Missouri native, and TF Bronco personnel noncommissioned officer.

Soldiers and students alike said they were eager to learn more about the other.

"The girls were happy and excited to speak with us," said Alexander-Cruz, "and I was excited to speak to them as well."

Although worlds apart culturally, both Afghan and American girls found common ground as they got to know each other. Each discovered many of their values were universal, such as the pride of family.

"I told them about my son, and they asked to see a photo," said Cruz. "I held up a photo of my son and they all said 'Aawwww'. They told me he was very handsome and I should be proud of him."

Despite their similarities, both Afghan and American girls could not avoid the vast differences.

"I asked (one Afghan girl) what she wanted to be upon her graduation from school and she said 'a business woman'," said Cruz. "I then asked how many more

of her classmates would like to be business women as well. She said many of her classmates would like to be business women, but some families do not believe in letting women go into business."

Although many women still experience oppression in Afghanistan, there are many more who have been given the opportunity for an education for the first time in years.

The female Soldiers of TF Bronco said they hope their sessions with the Afghan girls provide hope and ideas for a brighter future, which is now possible through education and the raw vigilance of young Afghan women.

"I believe it is vitally important for these women to understand there are women in the world that are just as successful, if not more successful, than men," said Hein. "I believe we can help to provide some of the tools and framework they may need to now succeed, but in the end it is their own decision and deeds which will make the difference."

Mussman said, "What we hope to do with this program is empower the youth. This is just one of many ways we are hoping to extend diplomacy to the next generation of Afghans. We hope to give the Afghan youth a sense of self and potential because they are, after all, the future of this nation." ☺



Two young girls stand in a doorway with their new gifts at a Charikaar orphanage, in Eastern Afghanistan, May 12. Students of West Middle School in Sioux City, Iowa, collected donations for a class project and sent them to Afghanistan where Iowa National Guard Soldiers distributed them to needy children.

Iowans donate to Afghan orphanage

Story and photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus,
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

Off the beaten path, down a few dusty roads in the city of Charikaar, Afghanistan, is a small orphanage. The compound is worn with broken windows and bare mattresses. It is filled with young children who have next to nothing. But thanks to an Iowa community, these children will have a few basic necessities that many Americans take for granted.

Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop and Troop C, both with 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Redhorse, visited the orphanage in Charikaar May 12 to hand out a small trailer full of goods. The Soldiers deployed with the Iowa National Guard's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, received boxes upon boxes of necessities from a school in Sioux City, Iowa.

U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Downs, a cavalry scout from Sioux City, Iowa, with HHT, said his mother, Christine Poeckes, initiated a shoe drive at West Middle School where she works as an 8th grade English teacher. He said it all started when he was deployed to Iraq and continued five years later here in Afghanistan.

Downs said while deployed to Iraq in 2006, his convoy drove by an orphanage, and he felt he needed to do something for them.

"I e-mailed (my mother) and said, 'Hey, we want to do something.' So, she started collecting clothes and shoes," he said. "And then when we got here, she just said, 'Hey, do you guys want me to collect stuff again?'"

Because Downs works in the squadron's tactical operations center, he didn't have the ability to visit the locals, so he relied on other elements of the squadron for help.

A friend of Downs, who deployed with him to Iraq and helped deliver much need supplies to an orphanage in Iraq, helped get the donations to the kids in Afghanistan as well.

"I have two kids at home and both of them are well off. I kind of wanted to do the same for a bunch of other little kids here, and take care of them. Provide for them, I guess," said U.S. Army Sgt. Tom Peck, a cavalry scout from Sioux City, Iowa, with HHT's personal security detachment which goes on regular trips into the Afghan communities. "So, (Downs) and I got together, his mom worked again with the kids at West Middle and got a bunch of shoes sent to us."



The students helped in a big way. Poeckes said her academic mentoring class needed to select a service learning project for the school year to which many students suggested helping needy children.

Having donated to the orphanage in Iraq, Poeckes suggested they help raise donations for the kids of Afghanistan.

Poeckes said one of her students came in one day with a clipping from a newspaper that showed two little Afghan girls watching U.S. Soldiers go by ... the little girls had no shoes.

"The students came up with different ways to collect donations," she explained. "They completed public service announcements, posters, and public speaking appearances asking for help in collecting. The response was overwhelming."

She said they received more than 300 pairs of shoes in all sizes and varieties along with some socks and various other items.

"We had to cut off collecting in order to find ways to ship them which cost \$594 to ship all of those shoes," Poeckes said. "We had some fundraisers and donations from other school activities and sent them off."

Once Downs received all of the packages, they set out to Charikaar. Troop C maintained security while Soldiers of HHT's PSD distributed the donations.

Downs, Peck and others organized the children in a line to distribute the treats and other goods while the interpreters helped the children fit shoes. After a while, the courtyard was bustling with movement and excitement.

"I think the drop went good," Downs said of the visit to the orphanage. "I mean, kids are kids, right? They looked happy. They looked a little sceptical at first ... I don't know if it's going to change anything, but those kids have shoes now ... and I'm glad we did it."

"I think the kids had a great time with it," said Peck. "I know we had a great time with it as well."

"You can only help so many," he said. But, thanks to the kids of West Middle School's efforts, and Downs' mother, who co-ordinated the shipping, he continued, the kids of the Charikaar orphanage now have shoes that fit and the U.S. Soldiers are able to continue to build trust with the people of Afghanistan.



(Above) A U.S. military interpreter helps a young boy try on donated shoes at a Charikaar orphanage, in Eastern Afghanistan.

(Top) U.S. Army Sgt. Phillip Olson, right, of Estherville, Iowa, and a forward observer in Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Redhorse, looks on as a U.S. military interpreter gets boxes ready to distribute donated goods to children at a Charikaar orphanage, in Eastern Afghanistan.

W Safety Watch

Electrical Safety

Story by U.S. Army Ron McKimmy, CJTF-101 Safety

Electricity is everywhere around us. We see it everywhere in the world in which we live. Electricity has become a part of our modern way of life and something we take for granted. It is in our homes, vehicles, computers and cellular phones.

We live and work in varied conditions throughout Afghanistan and sometimes it is easy to forget just how dangerous electricity can be. If the right conditions occur, electricity can kill. There are other hazards associated with electricity. Not only can it kill you, it can shock, burn, damage equipment, and ignite combustible materials causing fires.

You must respect electricity. Acting safely, when dealing with electricity, is important. It has been said that there are many reasons for unsafe acts. Sometimes people just do things they know they should not do and others just don't know any better.

Electricity can cause burns to the same extent as if you were burned with fire. Electrical shocks can damage tissue and nerve endings below the surface and internally. Electricity can permanently damage body tissue and leave you crippled for life. The biggest hazard is electrocution (death). Education is the best route to prevention.

Here are some common unsafe acts involving electricity:

- Failure to de-energize (turn off the power), during maintenance, repair or inspections
- Use of defective and unsafe tools
- Use of tools or equipment too close to energized parts
- Not draining off stored energy in capacitors
- Using three-wire cord with a two-wire plug
- Removing the third prong (ground pin) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-prong outlet
- Overloading outlets with too many appliances
- Connecting power strips or surge protectors in a series (daisy chaining)
- Using the attached electrical cord to raise or lower equipment (as a rope)
- Working in an elevated position near overhead lines
- Bypassing or deactivating a circuit breaker or fuse

An important thing to remember about electricity is that electricity is always looking for the shortest path to a ground. Whether the electrical current flows through the power cord or your body makes no difference to it. It is up to you to ensure that you control the flow of electricity.

Proper maintenance on electrical equipment is a critical step in preventing electrical shock and turning you into the ground.

When inspecting electrical equipment, look for the following things:

- Loose connections
- Faulty insulation
- Improper grounding (removal of third prong)
- Use of "homemade" extension cords
- Defective parts
- Unguarded live parts—for example, bare conductors or exposed terminals or metal parts of equipment may become energized when connected by cord or plug)

Electrical safety in hazardous environments

Use special precautions when working in potentially hazardous environments and situations. Even an accidental static discharge can cause a fire or explosion in areas where the following are present:

- Flammable vapors, liquids and gases (fueling operations)
- Combustible dusts
- Corrosive atmospheres
- Explosive environments
- Poor housekeeping: blocked electrical boxes, flammable materials stored in equipment rooms, lack of proper hazard signs, excess clutter.
- Special care is also needed in wet or damp locations - water and electricity are a bad combination. If the wire is frayed or damaged, a fatal electrical shock can result.

General electricity safety tips

Assume that all overhead wires are energized at lethal voltages. Never assume that a wire is safe to touch even if it is down or appears to be insulated.

Never touch a fallen overhead power line. Call 911 if you are on Bagram or contact the fire department, provost marshal office or your chain of command to report fallen electrical lines.

Stay at least 10 feet (3 meters) away from overhead wires during cleanup and other activities. If working at heights or handling long objects, survey the area before starting work for the presence of overhead wires.

If an overhead wire falls across your vehicle while you are driving, stay inside the vehicle and continue to drive away from the line. If the engine stalls, do not leave your vehicle. Warn people not to touch the vehicle or the wire. Call or ask someone to call the local electric utility company and emergency services.

- Never operate electrical equipment while you are standing in water.
- Never repair electrical cords or equipment unless qualified and authorized.
- Have a qualified electrician inspect electrical equipment that has gotten wet before energizing it.
- If working in damp locations, inspect electric cords and equipment to ensure that they are in good condition and free of defects, and use a ground-fault circuit interrupter.
- And most important of all: Always use caution when working near electricity. ☺

References:
Oklahoma State University Physical Plant Safety Manual, Electrical Safety chapter.
The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

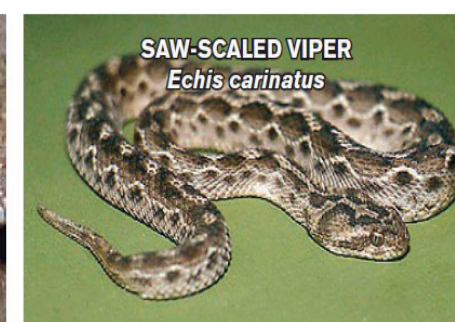
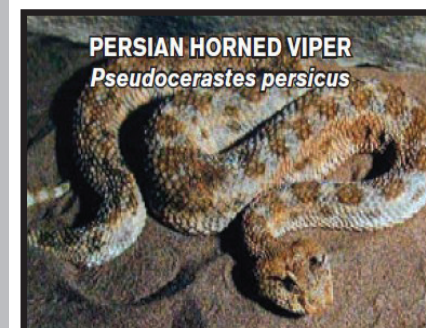


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SNAKES

PIT VIPERS OF AFGHANISTAN

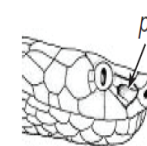


SNAKE IDENTIFICATION

VIPERS/PIT VIPERS



Long, hinged fangs that tuck into roof of mouth when not in use.



Vertically elliptical eye pupils; pit vipers with heat sensing organ between eye and nostril.



Broad triangular head with narrow neck and wide body.

COBRAS/KRAITS/SEA SNAKES



Short fangs fixed in erect position in front of mouth.



Round eye pupils.



Elongated head about the same width as the body.

SNAKEBITE PREVENTION

- Venomous snakes are found throughout Afghanistan. Assume any snake you encounter is venomous; leave it alone.
- Remediate conditions which attract snakes. Remove woodpiles, rock piles, construction debris, dumps, dense undergrowth and similar shelter for snakes. Store supplies off the ground.; practice good sanitation; control rodents.
- Practice "snake smart" behavior. Shake out bedding and clothes before use. Sleep off the ground, if possible.
- In the unit compound, keep doors, windows and vents closed whenever possible. Block holes in foundations, crawl spaces, ceilings and roofs.

LOOK BEFORE YOU REACH OR STEP

Story Snapshots



Following a tip

U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Malcolm Baraibar of Manson, Iowa, platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Lethal, 2nd Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, TF Red Bulls, initiates a controlled detonation of an improvised explosive device in Zormat District, Afghanistan, May 10. Baraibar's platoon and their Afghan National Army partners found the IED May 9 after following a tip from a villager. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Nicholas Rasmussen, Task Force Lethal)

Ensuring security

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cody Johnson of Ankeny, Iowa, a cavalry scout with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Redhorse, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls, asks a villager if there have been any security issues within the village, May 9. Troop B and Afghan National Police visited the Sia-Sang Village to ensure security and search for weapons caches. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Kristina L. Gupton, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs)



Thumbs up

U.S. Army General Dazoid Petraeus gives a thumbs up after administering the oath of reenlistment to 28 Army Reserve members during the Army Reserves 103rd birthday celebration (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Tyrone Walker, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Army Wives

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Mark Deboe, 184th Battalion targeting officer, 184th Field Artillery, 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, from Harlem, N.Y., walks with actress Brigid Brannagh of the American Lifetime television show *Army Wives*, asking about the future of her character on the show. Brannagh, fellow actor Terry Serpico and 1st Assistant Director Susan E. Walters stopped at Forward Operating Base Griffin May 14 as part of a USO/MWR tour covering 10 FOBs and outposts in RC-N. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jeanita C. Pisachubbe, 4th CAB Public Affairs)



Recovery

U.S. Army Spc. Larry Smith, a mechanic with the 131st Transportation Company, a Pennsylvania National Guard unit attached to the 101st Sustainment Brigade, and U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Alvin Beehler, the chief instructor for the vehicle recovery course from the 59th Ordnance Brigade, US Army Ordnance Center and School, flip a mine resistant ambush-protected vehicle with an M984 HEMTT wrecker. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Michael Vanpool, 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (AA) Public Affairs)



Celebration

A Polish Army Honor Guard presents the Polish flag during an official celebration of the anniversary of the adoption of the Polish Constitution on May 3, 1791 during a ceremony May 3 at Forward Operating Base Ghazni, Afghanistan. The Polish Constitution was Europe's first and the world's second modern codified national constitution, following the 1787 ratification of the U.S. Constitution. (Photo by Artur Weber, Task Force White Eagle Public Affairs)



Foot patrol

U.S. Army Sgt. Nathan Johnson of Woodbine, Iowa, a member of the personal security detachment of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls, provides security during a foot patrol in the Bagram security zone, May 6. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Kristina L. Gupton, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs, 982nd Combat Camera)



Testing

Abed Wardak, local national engineer with the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, uses a Dynamic Cone Penetrometer to test the strength of the soil and identify the depths of the different layers. Wardak has been a part of the PRT engineering team for the last eight months. (Photo by U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Ashleigh Peck, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

Pass the hat

U.S. Army Cpl. Joseph Bello, a team leader with 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Fear, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco, from Waterville, Ohio, gives money May 1 to 1st Sgt. Ambrose Crump III, first sergeant for Alpha Co., 2nd Bn., 27th Inf., from Lexington, Ken., participating in a Wolfhound tradition known as "Pass the Hat", in which Soldiers pass a combat helmet to collect money for the Holy Family Home Orphanage in Osaka, Japan. Wolfhound Soldiers have maintained a relationship with the orphanage since World War II. (Courtesy photo)



Legal assistance

U.S. Army Spc. Kamal Jefferson, from Poughkeepsie, N.Y. and U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Hainrick Panuelo, from Pohnpei Island, Micronesia, both with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, speak through an interpreter to Afghan citizen Parwan Malikzai, about his legal claim at Forward Operating Base Fenty, May 11. The legal section is tasked with receiving claims of damages, which may be caused by the U.S. Army, from the local Afghan population and processing them for repayment. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Hillary Rustine, Task Force Bronco Public Affairs)



Prepare to launch

U.S. Army Pfc. Chaucer Pond, a Route Clearance Patrol 38 Soldier, 54th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Dolch, from Clermont, Fla., prepares to launch an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to survey the surrounding area for insurgent activity in Logar Province, April 25. This equipment allows route-clearance Soldiers to observe and track suspicious activity occurring behind buildings and areas normally not visible from the routes being cleared. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Rosalind Arroyo, Task Force Dolch Public Affairs)



U.S. Army Sgt. Carter “MacGyver” Raby of Ignacio, Colo., a team leader with 1st Platoon, 118th Sapper Company and U.S. Army Spc. Jacob “Mancub” Mayne of Price, Utah, a combat engineer with the same platoon, finish patching a road near Yaqubi Village, Khowst Province.

Security through counter-IED efforts

118th Sapper Company take the helm of Route Clearance Package 37

Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. Derek Nelson,
17th Public Affairs Detachment

In late August 2010, the Soldiers of the 118th Sapper Company arrived at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. A mere 10 days and four missions later, they took the helm of Route Clearance Package 37. Assigned to clear routes and counter the enemy’s attempts to emplace improvised explosive devices in their area of operations, they had no idea what the next year of their lives would bring.

Combat Chaperones

“Originally, the majority of our missions were escort and route clearance efforts to get combat logistic patrols out to different combat outposts,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Ryan J. Becker of Bountiful, Utah, 1st Platoon leader, 118th Sapper Co. “In between those missions we filled in our time with company-level clearing missions to keep the routes safe.”

Keeping busy is what the RCP does, and they do it well.

The unit doesn’t look for downtime, instead they turn their attention to the next mission and how they can better do their jobs.

“Our guys spend their time off working on mission essential

stuff; stuff that isn’t necessarily route clearance, but is preemptive,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Carter “MacGyver” Raby of Ignacio, Colo., a team leader with 1st Plt., 118th Sapper Co. “Guys do what they have to do, don’t complain and get the job done.”

Total Denial

In January, Task Force Rakkasan transferred authority of FOB Salerno to Task Force Duke. With the regime change came a mission shift for RCP 37.

“When Duke got in and got their feet on the ground, our primary focus became counter-IED efforts,” said Becker. “Some of these routes have been historically targeted by IED’s and (Duke) wants to lock them down and shut down the IED activity.”

The RCP takes several approaches to this mission. Constant patrols in the area help them to establish a presence. They interact with locals, work to educate them on IEDs, and take a grassroots approach to countering the insurgency.

“Our mission set has really been focused on how we can provide the locals with a feeling that we’re not going in there just to harass them,” said U.S. Army Sgt. John “Izzy” Israelsen of Salt Lake City, Utah, a team leader with 1st Plt., 118th Sapper Co. “We’re deployed and we’ve got a job to do, but we want to make it as symbiotic as possible.”



U.S. Army Spc. Daniel “Clinger” Vigil of Monticello, Utah, a combat engineer with 1st Platoon, 118th Sapper Company, sets rocks around a recently patched section of road outside of Yaqubi Village, Khowst Province, March 24. The placing of the rocks help to deter drivers from passing over the section of road and potentially damaging the fresh patchwork.

Israelsen attributes the unit’s positive relationship with the locals to the unit’s road patching efforts and unique culvert denial systems.

“They know that a huge blast in the road is caused by insurgent groups, and then they’ll see it gets fixed and they’ll know that the Americans fixed it,” said Israelsen. “It’s nice to know that they can roll over a road and not have their children bouncing around or pop a tire because the Americans are doing their job.”

The road patching efforts are just one way RCP 37 denies the enemy the ability to place IEDs. Historically, insurgents will reuse blast holes, placing IEDs where ones have already blown up. The constant string of explosions wears down the roads and makes them nearly unusable.

The patch, called the “Dizzy” patch, helps to keep Americans safer on the roads while improving them for local drivers.

Culvert denial systems are another way the RCP works to deny the enemy while still working with the local community.

The (aptly named) Salerno Box

“The culvert denial system has, over the last two months, become the primary mission for RCP 37,” said Israelsen.

Culvert denial systems come in several shapes and sizes, all with the same intent: prevent access to culverts which insurgents could use as a hasty hiding place for an IED, without preventing the flow of water for the local community.

“Culvert denial systems deny insurgents access to the culverts, which have been one of the largest terrain features used in anti-coalition attacks,” said Raby. “If we deny their access to culverts, they are forced to put more effort into setting up their IEDs,

which gives them a better chance of being spotted by surveillance.”

The systems can be as simple as a rebar grate over the end of a culvert. However the most commonly used and perhaps the most interesting is the Salerno Box.

The Salerno Box is a large steel box, solid on two sides with rebar caging on the other two. It has an open bottom and a solid top. Atop the box sits a concrete lid, with sensors to monitor and prevent tampering.

“We have a local contractor who fabricates the boxes and the lids that go on them,” said Becker. “The box is made in two sizes ... and then we attach the sensors.”

The Salerno Boxes help to keep troops safe, put money into the local economy and the locals seem happy about them as well, according to the 118th Sapper Co.

“When we install the Salerno Boxes, we have locals in the trenches with us helping us dig holes,” said Israelsen. “The locals tell us where they want the water to flow to irrigate their crops, so we take the extra time to use our people and equipment to help them. We listen to the locals because they’re why we’re here.”

At a cubic meter in size, the Salerno Box is highly visible to anyone who would pass by, a fitting symbol to mark the impact the RCP is having in their local area.

“You can see the difference,” said Israelsen. “It’s progress that you can see and touch.”

Continued on page 40

Tragedy strikes 37

Dec. 2, 2010. RCP 37 was tasked to clear a route up to Combat Outpost Sabari. At approximately 9:30 a.m., within eyesight of their halting point, disaster fell upon the unit.

According to U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Joshua “Lewi” Lewis of Duchesne, Utah, a squad leader with 1st Plt., 118th Sapper Co., the team exited their vehicles to search for indicators of IED emplacements. Their platoon sergeant, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class James E. Thode, discovered an IED command wire during the dismounted patrol. Before the team could react, an IED hidden off the road exploded where Thode was standing, killing him instantly.

“We don’t know exactly what set it off, but he was standing right on top of it and it killed him,” said Lewis.

The team was rocked by the explosion, physically and emotionally.

“It was a really hard loss for us,” said Lewis. “Thode was like a father to us. He would come around every morning and shake your hand with a big smile on his face. He was such a good platoon sergeant.”

As a civilian, Thode was a police officer in Farmington, N.M. A hero at home, Thode was even part of the department’s Special Weapons and Tactics team. As a Soldier, Thode became a commissioned officer after serving six years in the Army Reserves as an enlisted Soldier. Thode resigned his commission in 1999, returning to life as a noncommissioned officer and garnered the love, admiration and respect of his entire team.

“Everyone loved him like a father,” said Lewis. “He taught us so much about being Soldiers . . . he was such a good leader.”

Shortly before deploying with the unit, Thode was offered a command position with a National Guard military police unit in New Mexico and the option to not deploy with his team. According to Lewis, Thode denied the offer, choosing his team over the tempting police command position, a decision that would unknowingly cost him his life.

“Thode was the ultimate American hero,” said Israelsen. “It’s comforting to know that if he had to fall, he fell in combat with his men. Nobody wants to think of him dying from a heart attack or chasing a drunk driver on the freeway, that’s just the kind of man he was.”

Carrying the torch

Despite the devastating loss of their “platoon daddy,” the RCP continues their missions working with, and not against, the Afghan people.

“Thode set a great precedent in his life,” said Israelsen. “We had to follow in his shadow. Be a Soldier, be a representative, and be an ambassador that’s not going to show the world that Americans are ugly. That’s what he wanted.”

The team plans to return home in late June and have made special plans to honor their fallen platoon sergeant.

“When we get home we’re going to get our platoon together along with our families and go to Farmington to meet up with Thode’s wife,” said Lewis. “We’re all going to go out to dinner and drink his beer.”

“Fat Dog Stuck in the Dog Door Stout” is a specialty beer created by Three Rivers Brewery in Farmington, N.M., in honor of Thode.

The beer, according to Bob Beckley, the brewery owner, is a seasonal beer which he plans on brewing every year around the time of Thode’s death.

“He was a classy guy, the kind of guy you’d want to take home to mom,” said Beckley. “We’re going to brew it every year in his memory.”

The beer will serve as a celebration for the team’s return, a remembrance of their fallen comrade and the legacy and impact that the Soldiers of the 118th Sapper Co. have left both at home and abroad.

“I just hope that we can remember him, honor him and be as good of NCOs as we can, following in his footsteps,” said Lewis. 🍷



Soldiers with 1st Platoon, 118th Sapper Company pick up barriers after completing a road project near Yaqubi Village, Khowst Province.

Protein needs and performance

Story by U.S. Army Major Renee E. Cole, PhD, RD, LD.

Proper nutrition is critical to enhance physical performance. Can a protein supplement replace a healthy diet and proper fitness? Let’s take a look at proper body fueling, where we get protein, and supplement considerations.

If you don’t have the proper fuel, obtained through our diet, you won’t have the energy to do the work. If you don’t do the work, through fitness training, you won’t improve your performance. Taking a supplement cannot replace or make up for inadequacies in training and diet. Choosing healthy foods from each food group in the dining facility will likely provide you all the nutrients that you need. The recommended mix of nutrients is 55-to-65 percent carbohydrate, 15-to-20 percent protein and 20-to-25 percent fat from calories.

A common thought by many is that protein is critical for performance, but in actuality, carbohydrates are the primary fuel of the body.

If you are not consuming adequate carbohydrates (fruits, veggies, starches, grains) along with protein and fats, than your body will break down your muscle protein to convert to carbohydrate (glucose) to fuel the body; obviously not the outcome you want when improved fitness is the goal.

A sedentary 180 pound man consuming about 2000 calories per day only needs 75 grams of protein (15 percent of calories from protein).

The average person staying fit through one hour of physical activity three to five times per week needs 0.45 to 0.68 grams protein per pound of body weight, equating to 80 to 120 grams of protein per day.

On the other hand, a well trained Warrior or athlete training to three hours over five to seven days a week may benefit from 0.68 to 0.9 grams of protein per body weight, equating to 120 to 160 grams of protein per day.

Research evidence suggests a benefit of protein only up to 0.9 grams of protein per pound of body weight for the well-trained athlete. Anything beyond that is wasted money, the protein may be converted to fat if not needed by the body, and may add stress to the kidney and liver.

If we look at a typical diet, eggs with bread, cereal or oatmeal (20 grams of protein), three cartons of milk (24 grams of protein), two five-ounce servings of lean meat (70 grams of protein), and six ounces of grains (18 grams of protein) throughout the day will supply about 120 grams of protein, which is at the top end of the possible protein benefit for one hour of fitness three to five days a week.

But if you feel that you are a serious athlete working out hard for about two hours and five to seven days a week and need extra protein, you can easily increase protein intake in your diet by adding: peanut butter (two tablespoons=seven grams), seeds/nuts (one ounce=seven grams) another serving of dairy (one cup milk, four ounces of yogurt, or one and half slices of cheese = eight grams), beans (a half a cup = seven to ten grams), and protein bars (10-14 grams).

W Nutrition Watch

If you still insist on taking a protein supplement, here are some considerations:

- Supplements listed as natural are not always safe since manufactures do not need FDA approval to make and sell their product.
- Supplements may be contaminated with heavy metals, steroids, hormones, or medications.
- More is not better: Large doses may be harmful to your kidneys and liver (these organs help clean protein by-products from the body).
- Look for supplements labeled with a USP symbol (U.S. Pharmacopeia) or Consumer Labs seal of approval since these meet manufacturing and purity standards.
- Choose sources containing essential amino acids (i.e. whey, casein and egg proteins).
- Do some research before taking; many have no long-term studies and use testimonials (people’s opinion) without any evidence to prove safety or effectiveness.
- Check FDA website for consumer warnings and get more information at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov>.

Next month, we’ll delve a little further into the supplements offered in theater and if research evidence supports their use to improve performance.

If you would like more nutrition information, turn into AFN Radio at 94.1 every Monday 1030-1130 hr with DJ Chance, Maj. Cole, and Capt. Sager. 🎧



W Unit Watch

Jordanian ambassadors to Afghanistan (Wajib Al Khas Force) NASHMI TF Afghanistan/4

Jordanian ambassadors to Afghanistan responded to the humanitarian call from their Muslim brothers under the shared Emblem of Allah, country, proprietors of solid belief, derived from wise Hashimid leadership.

Their objectives, help the poor, treat wounds, restore infrastructure, wipe the tears from the innocent children's crying eyes, and spread peace and prosperity; while they strive to assemble a capable administration able to shield the populous and their rights, direct the people to a brighter future to include freedom of education and reassure safe travels nationwide.

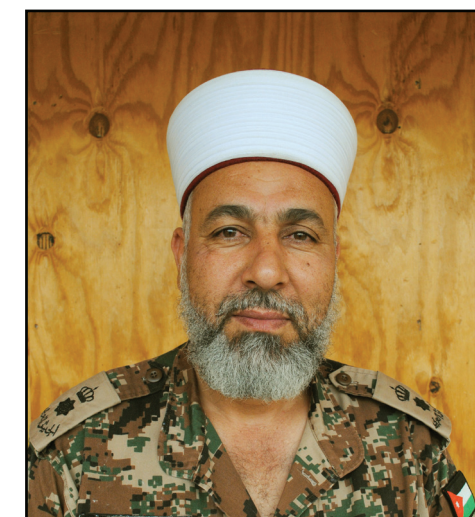
With direction from his majesty supreme leader of the Jordanian armed forces King Abdullah the Second son of Hussein, and direct supervision from the chief of joint task forces; the Wajib Force was formed in a way capable of providing a large variety of support to our brothers in Islam.

Members of this force are given exceptional training at the King Abdullah the Second Special Operation Training Center; this training provided their leadership with much area specific skill sets that will help them conduct their tasks accordingly; also trained all the personnel on all forms of patrols weather on foot or by vehicle, how to deal with explosives (i.e. mine awareness and steps taken), first aid and communications; all this preparation has been undertaken in order to ensure their capability in completing their tasks at hand effectively (i.e. providing local nearby communities with support).

Moreover, these members have been given theater specific training on the Afghani cultures and traditions, how to deal with this great nation, how to preserve the Great Quran and the Great Prophet's laws.

In a short period of time, through great efforts and shared beliefs and tradition in Islam, the Nashmi Task Force managed to gain itself great respect, trust and reputation with the Afghani populous and communities. Through many gatherings and Shuras in the local Afghani villages within our area of operation that included most Village Elders, Leaders, and Religious directors, we managed to get a better grasp over what this nation truly needs.

Large quantities of medical and food supplies were handed out along with religious seminars held by a carefully selected team of Imams, which through religious talk shows are organized that



are broadcasted on more than one radio station; with great success rates and a large number of listeners.

Currently we are busy with most projects involving the construction and reconstruction of the mosques, we are also involved in meetings, which during we explain to I.S.A.F forces how the Afghan people function along with cultural and traditional advice. On the other hand we provide all visited villages with free medical care days.

As we know that the Afghan society is a Muslim society that is very conservative and private, not any one can burst into their homes, even so if it was only to provide help and/or support.

Based on this knowledge, our leadership has put together an excellent team of female soldiers capable and well qualified to provide medical, educational, religious and social support to the Afghan women. This Female Engagement Team has been well received and accepted by the afghan women and seen as a part of the afghan community.

A Quran memorizing competition will soon take place with over a hundred competitors competing, on that note, a community center for Islamic thinkers is currently being built, along with many other projects within the industrial and agricultural fields; all these projects are being done in order to effectively manage the rising number of the unemployed youth.

In order for us to accurately pinpoint what the Afghani people really need we conduct regular visits to all the villages within our A.O.; Along with our F.E.T. (Female Engagement Team) and our team of Imams we visit the schools, medical facilities and mosques and record all their base needs in order for them to maintain a dignified acceptable level of living.

Subsequent to our results we arrange with the local village chief or elder medical days and supply the populous with medical, food and educational supplies (i.e. pens, papers, school bags, winter supplies...etc.).

Along with high motivation levels and exceptional combat skills our Force members also bear great Islamic manners and etiquette, they have been recognized by the Afghan people and all the other international forces working in Afghanistan.

And finally we will be in the good graces of every Jordanian man and woman for raising the Jordanian flag so proudly high; represent our fellow countrymen and women here in Afghanistan by helping the Afghan people and lessen their pains; along with bringing peace and prosperity to this country with countless wars. ☺

Retention Watch



**CJTF-1CD
Command
Retention Officer**
MG Daniel Allyn

**CJTF-1CD
Command
Retention NCO**
CSM Isaia Vimoto

**CJTF-1CD
Command Career
Counselor**
SFC Richard Erickson

**Oath of
Reenlistment**
I do solemnly
swear to support
and defend the
Constitution of the
United States against
all enemies, foreign
and domestic; that I will
bear true faith and
allegiance to the same;
and that I will obey the
orders of the President
of the United States
and the orders of the
officers appointed over
me, according to
regulations and the
Uniform Code of
Military Justice.
So help me God.



CJTF-1CD RETENTION

*See What's Happening in the
Retention Corner!*

Milper Message Number 11-096

● Effective date of message is 1 June 2011.

ARMY RETENTION CONTROL POINTS

GRADE	TOTAL ACTIVE SERVICE IN YEARS
PVT-PFC	5
CPL/SPC	8
CPL/SPC(PROMOTABLE)	12
SGT	13
SGT (PROMOTABLE)	15
SSG	20
SSG(PROMOTABLE)	26
SFC	26
SFC(PROMOTABLE)	29
1SG/MSG	29
1SG/MSG(PROMOTABLE)	32
CSM/SGM	32

**Effective 29 April 2001, MOSs below are added as
over strength at Skill Level 1**

11B	12B	12K	12R	12T
12V	13D	13F	13M	13P
13R	13T	14S	14T	15B
15D	15F	15H	15N	15Y
25B	25F	25L	25M	25N
27D	35G	35M	56M	68A
68J	88K	91E	91P	92L
92M	92S	94D	94Y	

Retention Contacts

- SFC Eric Crist - DSN: 318-481-6541, 10th CAB, Bagram
- SFC Nathaniel Fears - DSN: 318-431-2099, HHBn, 1CD Bagram
- MSG James Meyers - DSN: 303-794-9023, 3/25 IN, Fenty
- SGM Jeffrey Sabourin - DSN: 318-421-7131, RC-South/CJTF-10

For additional information see your servicing
career counselor or visit www.armyreenlistment.com

Mailing something home?

A few things to keep in mind to make the process quick and painless.

- Have your box ready for inspection.
- Be sure your container, box or footlocker is in good shape with old markings blacked out.
- Items may not be larger than 108 inches in combined size (length+width+depth).
- Items may not weigh more than **70 pounds**.
- Have your address label and customs form already filled out, be sure include a copy of the address label inside the package.
- No checks or credit cards, only cash or the Eagle Cash Card is accepted for payment.

Some items that **cannot** be mailed include:

- Alcohol of any kind
- Plants, plants products, sand or soil
- Live or dead animals
- Live poisonous insects (camel spiders)
- Cigarette lighters
- Weapons (pistols, rifles, replicas, toy guns)
- Weapon parts (magazines, barrels, bolts, receivers, stocks)
- Ammunition (live or spent, including brass)
- Exploded and unexploded ordnance (mines, grenades, fragments there of)
- Switchblades or knives with a blade longer than 6 inches
- Military equipment (TA-50, radios, any chemical defense equipment, compasses)
- No War trophies

For more information, please contact your unit mail clerk, a postal customer service representative or call DSN 318-431-3023.

NATIONAL GUARD AND ARMY RESERVE AFFAIRS

Guard:

**army.nationalguard@
afghan.swa.army.mil**

DSN

318-431-4249

Reserve:

**army.reserve@
afghan.swa.army.mil**

DSN

318-431-4255

**Please do not place
regular trash, cardboard
boxes or old mattresses
into the recycling bins**

**FOR PLASTIC BOTTLES AND
ALUMINUM CANS ONLY**



94.1 FM AFGHANISTAN

To make a request, call DSN 318-431-3339 or email afnbagram@gmail.com



the final watch

(from left to right) General David H. Petraeus, Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, (outgoing) Maj. Gen. John F. Campbell, Commander, Regional Command - East, Lt. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, Commander, International Security Assistance Force joint Command and Deputy Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, and (incoming) Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, Commander, Regional Command - East, line up before marching to the CJTF-101 to CJTF-1 Transfer of Authority ceremony held at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan May 19, 2011. (Photo by Sgt. David House, 17th Public Affairs Detachment)