

Adjutants general attend Town Hall meeting at Bagram

Story and photo by Sgt. Alex Delgado
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – The adjutants general from several states visited here Jan. 23 and attended a Town Hall Meeting held for members of the National Guard.

Maj. Gens. Brian Tarbot from Utah, William Cugno from Connecticut, David Poythress from Georgia, and John Smith from Ohio along with Lt. Col. Austin Smith, an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve representative, responded to concerns voiced by National Guard Soldiers.

During their face-to-face talk, a hot topic was the present mobilization process. Poythress said of the process, “It’s got to be a lot more Soldier friendly and a lot more commander friendly.” Adding that the mobilization process is broken and needs to be fixed.

Benefits to National Guard Soldiers and their families while on active duty were brought up at the forum to include health care, which to many Soldiers is a priority. Smith added that 20 percent of the members of the Ohio National Guard have no civilian health insurance. Smith said TriCare was a way to remedy this.

Cugno said Connecticut is in the process of making it mandatory for doctors to honor Tri Care, making it easier for Soldiers and their families to maintain their health. Cugno added that Maj. Gen. Smith was a driving force in getting this issue brought up before Congress. Cugno said presently the Department of Defense is studying the proposal, a program that would cover unemployed Soldiers or those not insured through their employers.

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Lending a helping hat...



Photo by Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson

A young Afghan boy models his new stocking hat at the Republic of Korea Hospital here as he and his mother wait to be seen. The hat was just one of many Humanitarian Aid items donated at the hospital by Sgt. Gregory Heath, a journalist with the 4th Public Affairs Detachment, in conjunction with his mother, Chang Heath from Philadelphia. The Heath's were able to distribute hundreds of stocking hats, as well as socks, coats, candy and other assorted clothes to Afghans in need. This is the second time they have made the philanthropic gesture at the hospital.

‘Spiderman’ joins OEF

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Davidson
455th Air Expeditionary Wing public Affairs

KARSHI-KHANABAD, Uzbekistan – Air Force members are known for their innovation, and airmen are encouraged and challenged to continually look for better and smarter ways to accomplish the mission.

For one senior noncommissioned officer deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, that challenge led to a labor of love. He developed a tool that allows commanders to accurately track and report all Air Force members assigned to, and passing through, the base.

See **SPIDERMAN**, Page 3

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean questioned John Kerry's judgment while Kerry hinted Dean was being hypocritical as the two traded blows in the hours before Tuesday's Democratic primary.

Democrats fire shots in final New Hampshire campaigns

MANCHESTER, N.H. – Presidential candidates in New Hampshire aimed blows at each other's campaigns and backgrounds Monday hoping to swing voters to their side in the hours before Tuesday's Democratic primary.

Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean questioned John Kerry's judgment because of the Massachusetts senator's stance on the two wars against Iraq, while Kerry hinted Dean was being hypocritical, running a negative campaign while urging other candidates to keep it clean.

Despite sub-freezing temperatures, the candidates were out in force Monday greeting supporters and trying to win converts at coffee shops and diners.

President Bush praises the capture of al Qaeda operative

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – President Bush praised U.S. intelligence agencies Monday for their role in the capture of a key al Qaeda operative in Iraq.

"Hasan Ghul reported directly to Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the September 11 attacks," Bush told an audience of health care workers at Baptist Hospital.

"He was part of a network of haters that we're dismantling," Bush said. "Our intelligence officers did a good job.

"Our people are doing great work."

The pat on the back came amid criticism of the U.S. intelligence community from the

man who resigned last week as the U.S. chief weapons inspector in Iraq.

David Kay, who stepped down as the CIA special adviser leading the Iraqi Survey Group, gave a series of radio and newspaper interviews this weekend in which he said he saw no evidence that deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was prepared to use weapons of mass destruction.



Tate and his mother, Kathleen Grossett-Tate, are seen Monday following his release from prison.

Tate released from prison

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – Lionel Tate, the teenager sentenced to life for killing a 6-year-old playmate, was granted bond and released after three years in prison.

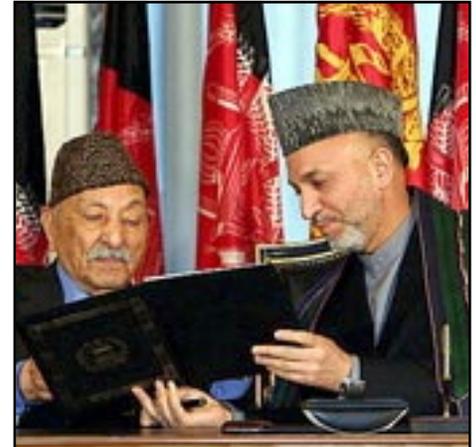
Tate walked out of the Broward County Jail late Monday afternoon and was met by a crowd of media and supporters.

In a five-minute hearing earlier in the day, Judge Joel Lazarus – the same man who originally sentenced him – ordered Tate released on his own recognizance on the condition that he wear an electronic monitoring device.

After the ruling by Lazarus, Tate's mother hugged her son, who will turn 17 Friday.

Tate will return to court Thursday and plead guilty to second-degree murder. *The Associated Press* reported that Tate will first meet with a psychologist who will test his mental competence before Thursday's hearing. According to the plea agreement, Tate is to be sentenced to the three years he has already served, another year of house arrest and 10 years of probation – the same deal he was offered before his trial nearly three years ago.

Tate, who was 12 years old at the time of the killing in 1999, is believed to be the youngest person in the United States sentenced to life without parole.



Afghan President Hamid Karzai, right, shows the decree former king Zahir Shah.

Afghan constitution is law

KABUL, Afghanistan – President Hamid Karzai has signed Afghanistan's new constitution into law, a document that gives him sweeping powers but exposed divisions when it was debated in a national assembly that concluded this month.

The constitution is intended to pave the way for war-torn Afghanistan's first free elections in June which the U.S.-backed Karzai is seen as favorite to win.

"I declare and enact the new constitution which was unanimously adopted," Karzai said in a statement following a signing ceremony on Monday before his Cabinet and foreign diplomats.

The ceremony took place against a backdrop of security worries that have held up registration of voters for the polls and raised doubts about whether they can be held on time.

The constitution envisages a strong presidency and enshrines equal rights for women. It describes Islam as the country's sacred religion but guarantees protection for other faiths.

Its religious stipulations were put to the test almost immediately when reformists in the government and conservatives in the Supreme Court clashed after the former lifted a ban on women singing on television.

Both sides argued that their position was backed by the new constitution, with reformers citing equal rights for women and the conservatives a clause stating that no laws should be counter to Islam.

SPIDERMAN, from Page 1

When Master Sgt. Dennis Mix, 416th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel flight team chief deployed from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., arrived at Karshi-Khanabad Airfield, he was tasked with keeping track of all deployed members serving at, and visiting, the base. He found that the system being used to accomplish this task was extremely labor intensive and contained data that was often questionable.

Mix recognized the importance of being able to produce a daily, error-free list that reported the status and personal information of each person on base.

Working with his airmen, Mix developed a new computer program that puts all the information commanders need on deployed personnel at their fingertips.

Affectionately known as "Spiderman," the program spins a web that can check personnel information against an Air Force data base, and produce a report, in clear text at the touch of a button.

While such administrative functions may not have the same glamour as combat missions, the Spiderman program is a critical part in operations here. To senior leaders its innovation has made Mix a superhero.

When asked how he decided to name the new program, with a gleam in his eye Mix simply quotes from the movie "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," saying, "We are the music makers, we are the dreamers of the dream."

Demonstrating a quiet sense of humor, he is quick to praise his team, and turn attention to their contributions. "The Spiderman program demonstrates the importance of distinguishing the line between efficiency and effectiveness," he explained. "Something may seem to be the most efficient way to get a job done, but that is no indication how effective it is."



Master Sgt. Dennis Mix, 416th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel flight team chief has developed a reputation among commanders here for finding better and smarter ways to accomplish the mission.

Spiderman seems to demonstrate both efficiency and effectiveness. Tasks that used to take hours, or even days, can now be accomplished in minutes, while solving problems with accuracy.

"Today we have a pool of people with huge information technology capabilities in the Air Force, and we have some of the brightest airmen in our history," Mix said. "We have to continually ask ourselves what we can do better, and then look for ways to answer that question."

While the Spiderman program has immediately noticeable value for deployed commanders, it also looks after the best interest of the airmen. One example of that is Spiderman's ability to keep track of all members who will become re-enlistment eligible while deployed. For those in career fields with Selective Reenlistment Bonuses, that means more cash in the bank because reenlisting here makes the bonus tax free.

"Sergeant Mix is a deployed commander's dream, because he embodies the leadership and ingenuity needed to get the answers folks need when far from home," said Lt. Col. Karon Uzzell-Baggett, 416th Expeditionary Mission Support Squadron commander. "He is passionate about ensuring the personnel flight's primary role of personnel accountability and has developed a program which answers a myriad of questions about accountability. The program works so well we asked him to help us solve our problems with local purchase orders. He is now actively developing a database which will ensure accountability for assets and allow more scrutiny of orders."

When asked why he decided to name the computer program Spiderman, Mix smiles with pride and explains that it was named for his 4-year-old son, Erik. "Spiderman is his favorite superhero, so picking the name was easy," he said.

Cheney says democracies must confront terror together

Story by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Vice President Dick Cheney called on all democratic nations to support the war on terror during a speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Jan. 24.

Terrorism is a real threat, Cheney told the audience. He said that 19 men armed with "box cutters and airplane tickets" killed 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001. Terrorists armed with chemical, biological or nuclear weapons could kill 300,000 and would not hesitate to use them.

"We must act with all urgency that this danger demands," Cheney said. "Civilized people must do everything in our power to defeat ter-

rorism"

The vice president said there are three fundamental responsibilities for all democracies in the war on terror. "First, we must confront the ideologies of violence at the source by promoting democracy throughout the greater Middle East and beyond," he said. "Second, we must meet these dangers together. Cooperation among our governments and effective international institutions are even more important today than they have been in the past."

Finally, if diplomacy fails, then the democracies must be prepared to use force if necessary. "Direct threats require decisive action," he said.

Cheney responded to those who say that democracy cannot work in the Middle East. He called that thinking condescending and false.

Cheney echoed a persistent point in many of President Bush's speeches – that the desire

for freedom is not just for Americans or Western countries, but is universal. "Whenever ordinary people are given the chance to choose, they choose freedom, democracy and the rule of law, not slavery, tyranny and the heavy tread of the secret police," he said.

He pointed out there are many countries in the Arab world and the Middle East working toward democracy. Cheney named Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt and Saudi Arabia as countries making progress along that road.

He called on the rulers of Iran to follow these examples. In Iran, "there is a growing call for true democracy and human rights," he said. "Europe and America must stand as one in calling for the regime to honor the legitimate demands of the Iranian people. They ask nothing more than to enjoy their God-given right to live their lives as free men and women."



From left: Maj. Gens. William Cugno, David Poythress, Brian Tarbot, John Smith, and Lt. Col. Austin Smith address Soldiers at a Town Hall Meeting on their recent visit to Bagram Air Base.

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The duration of deployments was another key point of conversation between the generals and Soldiers. Tarbot said he supports six-month deployments as opposed to the 18 months scheduled for those who have been recently activated. Lt. Col. Smith said he is concerned about strain of the longer deployments on National Guard Soldiers and their employers.

Tarbot added that even though the deployments are getting longer, there is a chance that if full units are not needed all at once, units could break the mission into shorter rotations for the entire unit. The measure is still in the discussion phase.

The senior grade citizen-Soldiers also spoke on the frequency of deployments. Maj. Gen. Smith said current policy is a one-year turn around before one can be re-deployed. He added that the goal is for a five-year break between deployments. Cugno said currently that a Soldier cannot exceed a total of two years active service, including Homeland Security service.

Chief Warrant Officer Rich Curadi, a CH-47 pilot who is from Connecticut was among those gathered for the Town Hall Meeting. Curadi was one of many Soldiers present able to ask questions and express concerns during the forum. "It's great when the boss comes to see you, to have someone help put some issues at ease" he said.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

"The Crow: Salvation"

1530Z at the MWR building:
Alex Corvis returns to the world of the living to solve the murder of a young woman that he was wrongly accused of.



Tomorrow's movie:
"Dragon"

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>
Uzbekistan:	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 63F L: 42F	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 48F L: 33F
Bagram:	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 48F L: 32F	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 46F L: 28F
Kabul:	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 46F L: 30F	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 46F L: 27F
Kandahar:	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 64F L: 37F	<i>Cloudy/Rain</i> H: 46F L: 32F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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- CJTF-180 Commander —
- Brig. Gen. (P) Lloyd J. Austin III
- CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —
- Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey
- Public Affairs Officer —
- Maj. Matthew L. Garner
- Public Affairs Sergeant Major —
- Master Sgt. Sharon Opeka

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- Commander — Maj. Matthew L. Garner
- NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson
- Editor — Sgt. Stephanie Hall
- Journalists — Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson
- Sgt. Gregory Heath, Spc. Kelly Hunt

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)



The Yankees have no full-time replacement lined up for third base.

Boone could be out with torn ACL

NEW YORK – New York Yankees third baseman Aaron Boone could miss the entire 2004 season after suffering a major knee injury last week while playing basketball in violation of his contract with the club, according to two baseball sources.

The sources said doctors believe Boone suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament.

The Yankees will seek all or some relief from the \$5.75 million they were to pay Boone this season. Boone, whose dramatic home run ended the epic seventh game of the 2003 American League Championship Series against Boston, avoided arbitration Dec. 1 when he agreed to the one-year deal to return to the Yankees. His contract contains a standard clause that prevents the player from engaging in activities considered to pose significant risk of injury. Basketball is specifically mentioned in the clause as a prohibited activity.

Boone, who will turn 31 in March, hit .254 with six homers and 31 RBIs in 54 games with the Yankees after they obtained him in a trade with Cincinnati on July 31, 2003.

Pitino to take indefinite leave of absence

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Louisville coach Rick Pitino is taking an indefinite leave of absence because of an undetermined medical condition that has left him in agony.

“I have been in excruciating pain the last three or four games,” Pitino said Monday. “It’s getting worse day by day.”

Pitino, 51, said the pain was “urological related,” and that he had been coaching with it for four to five months. He said doctors have ruled out prostate cancer, but they have yet to determine what is causing Pitino pain.

Louisville (15-1) is ranked fourth in this week’s AP Top 25.

Pitino said he did not know how many games he would miss. The Cardinals host Houston on Wednesday.

Jagr helps Rangers to rip Panthers

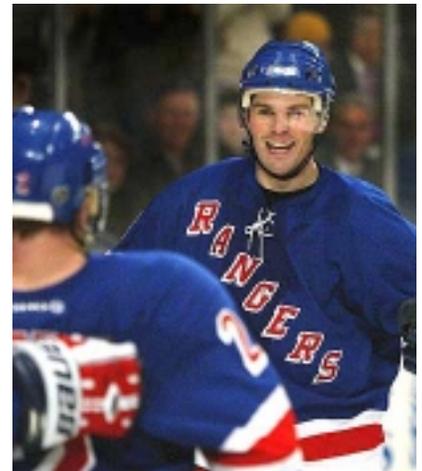
NEW YORK – Jaromir Jagr had a three-point night in his home debut for the New York Rangers, setting up Brian Leetch’s tiebreaking score and adding a third-period goal and assist in a 5-2 victory over the Florida Panthers on Monday.

Jagr, acquired Friday from Washington, enjoyed his home debut much more than his first game with the Rangers – a 9-1 drubbing in Ottawa on Saturday that he called embarrassing.

At least for a while, he lifted the negative energy that filled Madison Square Garden. He brought fans out of their seats to cheer his first Rangers goal, 17th of the season, that made it 3-1 at 33 seconds of the third.

Jagr got to a rebound of Eric Lindros’ shot and smoothly backhanded the puck in from the edge of the crease. He also assisted on Matthew Barnaby’s empty-net goal.

Byron Ritchie pulled Florida within one 80 seconds after Jagr scored, but the Rangers held on to earn their eighth victory in 10 against the Panthers (8-1-1).



Jaromir Jagr has a goal and two assists in his MSG debut.

Davis looks strong in return to practice

HOUSTON – Running back Stephen Davis returned to practice Monday when the Carolina Panthers had their first workout of Super Bowl week.

Davis, who was held out last week because of a quadriceps injury sustained in the divisional playoffs, took part in the entire 55-minute session at the University of Houston.

“He looked just like he’s looked all season,” coach John Fox said. “He’s definitely healthy. We rested him all last week and he’s full tilt.”

Fox said it’s possible the injury report will be blank. He said Sunday that Davis would not be on it.

The Panthers practiced under the rumble of simulated crowd noise from a pair of speakers at one end of the field.

“We do it just to keep their focus,” Fox said. “We don’t expect the noise to be anywhere close to what it was in St. Louis and Philadelphia. It was just a matter of having had it all season for road trips.”

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

General vows to catch Osama bin Laden

By Andrew North

(BBC) – The American commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan says he expects to bring Osama Bin Laden to justice by the end of this year.

Lt. Gen. David Barno said dealing with Bin Laden and ex-Taliban leader Mullah Omar was a top priority.

“The sands in the hourglass of all of the al Qaeda senior leadership is running out,” said Barno. He was speaking as Afghan interim President Hamid Karzai signed the country’s new constitution into law.

Barno commands about 11,000 mostly American troops in Afghanistan whose focus is combating al Qaeda and members of the Taliban still operating in the south and east of the country. In an exclusive interview with the BBC, he said the problem of bin Laden and Mullah Mohammad Omar would be resolved this year.

“You can be assured that we’re putting a renewed emphasis on closing this out and bringing these two individuals to justice, as well as the other senior leadership of that organization.

“They represent a threat to the entire world and they need to be destroyed.”

At least 500 people are estimated to have been killed in the past six months or so of fighting in Afghanistan.

How to spend wisely in Afghanistan

By Anne Carlin

KABUL, Afghanistan (*New York Times*) – Washington has announced that it is accelerating the disbursement of \$1.6 billion in new assistance to Afghanistan in an effort to produce visible improvements in stability and governance by early summer.

The seemingly laudable plan is part of the Bush administration’s rush to show measurable progress in Afghanistan – by number of schools and clinics built, miles of road paved and tons of wheat seed distributed. But in terms of sustainable development, such numbers are far less meaningful than one might think.

Just about everyone wants progress in Afghanistan, a country that ranks near the bottom of every indicator on the United Nations Human Development Index. But rather than spend hundreds of millions of dollars on hastily constructed schools that may collapse in earthquakes or on roads with temporary surfaces that will crack under the weight of heavy trucks, the United States should use the money for better long-term development programs.

There are plenty of good candidates. For example, the government’s National Solidarity Program is providing block grants for community programs – allowing nearly 8,000 towns and villages to identify their most pressing needs and put in place projects that take care of them. This work complements other government programs around the nation on education and health.

In recent interviews, a wide range of Afghans and aid workers told

me that they worry most about two critical deficiencies that are hard to quantify on a quarterly report: a lack of security and a lack of local capacity to carry out development programs. The shortage of teachers, doctors, accountants and engineers outweighs the lack of schools, clinics and computers, because without the specialists, the institutions are worthless. The important point is that Afghans should be given the opportunity to carry out the programs they find vital, even if it takes a little longer than Washington wants.

Critics may say that giving the Afghans all that money is courting disaster. But the government here has shown in recent months that it is worthy of trust. While international advisors provided much needed transitional assistance, the recently concluded constitutional loya jirga showed that Afghans are capable of dealing with critical issues concerning governance and their future. The process took longer than it might have if the United States had used a heavier hand, but in the end the participants produced a solid document, in their own terms, with lasting legitimacy.

(Anne Carlin is the Afghanistan project coordinator for the Bank Information Center, a nonprofit group that promotes accountability and transparency at the World Bank and other development banks.)

“Give me E-mail, or give me death!”



kevin_kilgore@hotmail.com

By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support