

FREEDOM

June 25, 2004

Watch

MP working dogs enhance BAF security
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Jalalabad PRT improves life for Afghan citizens
Page 3



Air Force Master Sgt. Andrew Gates

Load Prep

Air Force Airman 1st Class Jonathan Allen-Rivera, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, prepares an Infrared Illumination Flare pod for loading on a 355th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron A-10 flying in Operation Enduring Freedom. Allen-Rivera is deployed from Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska.

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Cover photo by Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau, 17th Public Affairs Detachment Sgt. Grady Bentley, 58th MP Co. explosive dog handler, instructs Britt to search a cement truck for explosives prior to the truck entering Bagram Air Base June 16. The K-9s serve as an addition to the force protection efforts conducted daily by MPs. They are also trained to participate in combat patrols.



By Mark Baker

Pvt. Murphy's Law

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J-Bad PRT enhances district-level growth

Story and photo by
Marine Lance Cpl. John E. Lawson Jr.
Combat Correspondent

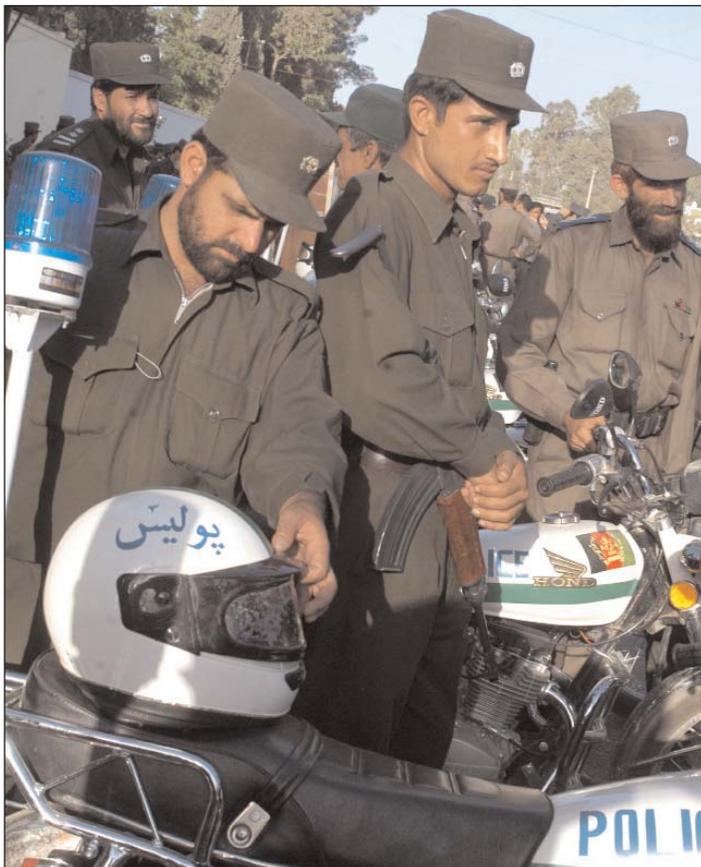
NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — The Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team is continuing its efforts to accelerate the well-being of Afghan people in eastern Afghanistan and its partnership with the Afghan people here.

The PRT, established in January 2004, broke ground on two major projects here June 6-7. The projects will be district centers for the Kama and Gowshta districts, each having 19 offices and workspace for about 40 people. The centers are intended to house district level Afghan government offices and facilitate local government operations, according to Maj. Lou Sand, deputy PRT commander.

The offices will cost about \$20,000 each, said Sand. Funding for the projects came from the United States Agency for International Development and the United Nations.

But the cost of the district centers does not include communications equipment and training programs also being implemented.

“The district centers are a key component to get the government up and running at the district level,” he said. “The district centers will also have communications centers so officials at the district level can communicate with the provincial and national level governments, establishing and strengthening the continuity of government in Afghanistan.”



Nangarhar police officers examine motorcycles presented to the department by the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team.

USAID will provide the training component, he said. “It’s a capacity-building training program – the first step in a long process to mentor and establish a working, district-level government.”

“The international community and the United States will work with the Afghan people for this government training,” said John Schweiger, USAID field officer and former Marine infantry officer, during his speech at one of the groundbreaking ceremonies.

The government centers and training are part of the PRT’s ongoing efforts to extend the reach of the national government of Afghanistan. The projects are scheduled for completion by local contractors around the end of the year.

Each ceremony was accompanied by the presentation of an ambulance and other supplies for the local clinics.

The groundbreakings are only a small part of the PRT’s efforts in the area. The team has also been working closely with the Nangarhar police.

The PRT presented ten motorcycles, a bus and a sport-utility vehicle to the police department at a ceremony here June 5. Three more SUVs are also scheduled to be presented. All vehicles were painted with lettering in both English and Pashto, the primary language in the area, and were equipped with lights and sirens.

“Security in Nangarhar is an important responsibility for the police, especially now with the upcoming national elections,” said Lt. Col. Jerry W. Law, PRT commander, during his speech at the ceremony. These vehicles will extend the reach of law enforcement in the province.

In addition to presenting the vehicles, the PRT is also planning to train the policemen to properly and safely operate the motorcycles, he said. “We at the PRT will provide a driving safety course for the police officers chosen by General Noorsai (the police chief).

“These vehicles are just the beginning of the support that the PRT will provide to the police of this province,” said Law.

The PRT is also coordinating to get generators to power the police station, renovating the station’s basement, establishing a communications system for the police and building outposts at the four entrances to the provincial capital city of Jalalabad, he said.

The plans for the basement include a complete renovation to accommodate the addition of a communications room, an armory and storage facility, a holding room and a rudimentary care clinic for the policemen, he said.

The communications room goes hand-in-hand with one of the PRT’s other projects currently underway – a Motorola radio system designed to cover more than 60 percent of the province, allowing the police to communicate over more than 4,700 square kilometers.

The radio project includes the placement of five or more repeater stations to receive and rebroadcast signals, thus increasing overall range throughout the province. Base stations will be located at the Jalalabad PRT and the Nangarhar police station and five sub-stations will be located throughout the province.

Once completed, the radio project will cost about \$132,000. Funding is provided by the Coalition through the Commanders Emergency Relief Program.

These are only some of the projects completed by the PRT since it was formed. The Jalalabad PRT has completed about 50 of its 110 total planned projects as of June 7.

Other projects the PRT is associated with include park restorations, building schools and clinics, providing generators, donating water and dump trucks, refurbishing the Jalalabad Airport, donating ambulances, improving roads and bridges, digging wells, building water distribution systems and donating school supplies and furniture.

ARA helps reservists switch to active duty

Story by Pfc. Chris Stump
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Service to country, a steady pay check, college benefits or retirement at a young age; whatever the reason for choosing to go active duty, many U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers are taking advantage of an easy route to full-time Soldiering. And the career counselors of the U.S. Army Reserve Affairs Office are here to help with the transition.

Soldiers begin the switch while still deployed. With the assistance of a reserve affairs NCO, Soldiers must complete an application packet, he said. The packet includes information such as time in service, rank, grade and other personal information that is essential for enlisting in the Army.

To convert from the reserves to active component, a deployed Soldier must have more than 30 days left on their deployment, but less than 90 days when requesting a transfer to active duty, said Master Sgt. Greg Jacobs, Army Reserve Affairs retention NCO.

The change to active duty is actually made once the Soldier redeploys and then separates from their unit, he said. Once the Soldier separates, he goes on leave as an active duty Soldier with PCS orders to report to an active-duty unit.

Soldiers may start their packets before

the 60-day window, but they cannot submit them until they hit their 90-day mark.

The packet is not difficult to fill out, said Jacobs, but anyone wishing to make the switch to active duty is advised to start the paperwork as soon as possible. This gives the reserve affairs NCOs more of an opportunity to assist the Soldiers, without having to rush through the process.

“We are here to help the Soldiers any way we can,” said Jacobs. “From filling out the packet, to linking them with active

the active Army, but there must be a slot open for the Soldier, he said.

“Depending on the needs of the Army, some Soldiers may need to reclass,” said Jacobs.

Because of the differences in jobs and positions available between the reserve and active duty components, a handful of Soldiers might lose rank or have to reclassify into another MOS, he added, but for the most part, Soldiers retain their rank and job in transitioning to the active component.

In addition, many are also eligible for bonuses for making the switch. Bonus eligibility applies to those Soldiers who reclass to join active duty.

“The enlistment bonuses are paid by the Active Army component,” said Jacobs. “In some instances, Soldiers may qualify for whatever bonus the Army has available.”

Often times these bonuses also depend on the length of an enlistment. According to Jacobs, an enlistment contract can range anywhere from two to six years.

“How long your enlistment has to be is usually determined by your MOS,” said Jacobs. “Critical shortages can affect the length of an enlistment, as well as the training you are receiving if you reclass.” One example Jacobs gave is military intelligence. Because this field is considered to

“We are here to help the Soldiers any way we can.”

Master Sgt. Greg Jacobs
ARA Retention NCO

duty career counselors, we will do whatever we can.”

After the application is completed, it is sent to active duty career counselors who verify information, like rank and time in service, and send the packet on to the U.S. Army Human Resources Command in Alexandria, Va. for approval, he said.

Upon final approval at Alexandria, the Army begins the process of finding an opening for the Soldier, he said.

All ranks and military occupational specialties are eligible to leave the U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard to transfer to

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Enduring Voices

Why is Independence Day important to you?



Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Shane Rytting
CJTF-76, OCF
“Independence Day is important because it is the birthday of our nation.”



Sgt. Walter Maciejewski
125th Sig. Bn.
“Independence Day means my 6-year-old son is free and gets to make his own choices in life.”



Najla Farzana
World Wide Language Resource
“Independence Day is for celebrating life and freedom.”



Marine Cpl. Eric Kalunta
CJTF-76, MARFOR
“Independence Day is the reason I joined the military.”

Airman takes pride in well-traveled flag

Story and photo by
Air Force Master Sgt. Andrew Gates
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — When some people say they carry the American flag close to their heart, it's just a figure of speech.

However, one member of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group means what he says — and he has the flag to prove it.

“My grandfather gave me a three-foot by five-foot flag when I was 12,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Joe Ramos, 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron operations superintendent. “That flag has gone everywhere with me since then — wherever I move and wherever I deploy.”

So far, that means that the flag has visited more than 50 different countries, to include Iceland, Chad, Honduras, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Egypt, Russia and most recently, Afghanistan. While assigned here, Ramos carries it with him on operations — securing the colors inside his body armor when he goes on tactical security element missions with other agencies.

“The flag has a lot of significance to



Air Force Master Sgt. Joe Ramos, 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron operations superintendent, raises his flag over the air traffic control tower on Camp Cunningham, Bagram Air Base.

me, I treat it with respect and as an essential piece of equipment, like my weapon. I don't leave home without it,” said Ramos. “When I pack my bag, I make sure that I have my flag, folded into a tri-

angle and packed as well. When I get into country and open my bag, it's a nice reminder of my grandfather.”

After he gets into a new country, he makes sure he puts the flag up — usually either in or over his living space, for at least one day. “That way I can say the flag was flown in country,” he said.

Just having a flag available on some remote deployments has been helpful — he used the flag for his re-enlistment in Russia, while another person re-enlisted in Egypt in front of the well-traveled flag.

“When the person re-enlisted in Egypt, he asked me if I was sure I didn't mind him using it,” said Ramos. “He said he was honored to use the flag knowing I take it everywhere I go.” Most recently, the flag was used at Bagram in the background for a promotion to first lieutenant for another member of the security forces team here.

Ramos said he hopes that when he retires, he can start a tradition, as he intends to pass the flag on to his 10-year-old son.

“I know it sounds corny, but I'm glad to be able to carry this flag and do what I do to support and defend it,” said Ramos proudly. “It's my flag!”

History detachment records OEF events

Story by Pfc. Chris Stump
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The 317th Military History Detachment is here to document the Coalition's mission and make sure that the history made during Operation Enduring Freedom is not forgotten.

It is the 317th's job to document exactly what goes on here in the Global War on Terrorism so years from now people can look back and know what happened, said Capt. Jeffrey Baucom, 317th MHD commander. The detachment is the only one of its kind in the combined joint operations area of Afghanistan.

To document what happens here, the three-Soldier detachment conducts interviews with

Soldiers in theater to get an accurate picture of the operations, he said. They also look for artifacts and photos that show what life was like for the people in the operations.

The Soldiers of the 317th are basically historical journalists, said Staff Sgt. Beverly Landis, 317th MHD historian. In fact, many personnel in history detachments are journalists by military occupational specialty, but it's not a requirement.

Although the focus of the questions a historian asks are more historically-based than a normal journalist's, the purpose of the interviews is almost the same — to record facts. But, while a writer records facts to tell a story, the MHD is saving a story for archives and future reference, she said.

Saving the military's story for future generations was, and is, such a priority to the United States military, that since World War II the Army went away from using professional historians and started using its own Soldiers to compile documentaries about its campaigns, said Baucom.

In the early years of uniformed military historians, Soldiers were tasked with the additional duty of being the unit's historian, he said. Once it was realized how important the mission was, the Army developed units whose sole purpose was documenting history.

“We wouldn't have learned much about D-Day if no one was there documenting or collecting what was filmed,” said Baucom.

Collecting, and preserving

for later generations, what troops see and do here is the 317th's mission. They are responsible for documenting Combined Joint Task Force-76's story, said Landis. In documenting that story, the historians research everything CJTF-76 does, from combat operations to rebuilding conducted by provincial reconstruction teams.

Preserving the story for future generations means gathering anything they can from the period that shows how people fought the war, she added.

“We look for photos and stories from Soldiers to see the things from their perspective,” she said.

To see that perspective, the

See *History*, Page 10

MP K-9s enhance force protection efforts

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Man's best friend has taken on a new role for Operation Enduring Freedom. Several K-9s, or military working dogs, are serving in Afghanistan, adding to the force protection efforts of the military police charged with safeguarding Coalition assets here.

The K-9s are trained to detect multiple types of explosives including det cord, C-4, TNT, and potassium and sodium chlorate. These highly trained dogs, and their handlers, are tasked with checking for the scent of explosives on vehicles and personnel wishing to gain entrance on to Bagram Air Base.

"Anything coming through the gate is checked by the dogs," said Staff Sgt. Orm Jenkins, kennel master and Military Working Dog liaison for the 58th Military Police Company.

Using a series of commands, the handler and dog team thoroughly inspect each vehicle bringing supplies and services to Bagram and other parts of the country.

"If it weren't for the explosive dogs, none of the supplies would get in theater because it all has been searched by the dogs," said Sgt. Grady Bentley, explosive dog handler.

And the Military Police on the gates appreciate the added force protection benefit of



Sgt. John Davis, 58th MP Co. explosive dog handler, instructs Beny to search inside a truck during an inspection at the gate to Bagram Air Base June 16.

the dogs being on site.

"The dogs are really a great addition to what we're doing out here," said Pfc. Bertram Johnson, a military policeman attached to the 551st MP Company. "The trucks go through the X-ray machine, but there's always that 'what if,' and the dogs take away that 'what if.'"

That "what if" came into play during a recent vehicle inspection when Jenkins' dog, Wilson, responded to the scent of explosives on a dump truck. Although the explosive ordinance detachment determined the dog must have picked up on explosive residue and there were no explosives on the vehicle, it was turned away from Bagram.

These measures prove that it is better to be safe than risk the lives of Coalition troops and the K-9s are an important part of safeguarding these troops.

Although the current mission is focused on force protection, the dogs are also trained to accompany Coalition troops on combat patrols. The K-9s have sniffed out weapons caches and are a form of non-lethal force useful on the battlefield, said Jenkins. There is also one dog trained specifically to search for narcotics.

The K-9s are the best choice for all of these types of operations because of their sensitive noses, giving them a strong sense of smell.

"(Imagine if you were to) walk into a room and smell a pot of stew cooking," said Jenkins. "Humans, we just smell the stew. A dog smells each individual item cooking — the carrots, the onion, the salt and pepper."

When searching for explosives or narcotics, the dogs are very mission-focused, paying close attention to the handler's instructions, sticking close to the intensive training they have received. But off-duty, the K-9s resemble any other dog, serving as their handler's best friend.

"The rapport with all our handlers and dogs is real tight," said Jenkins.

Being deployed has brought the handler/dog teams even closer, since the handlers live next to the kennels.

"Sometimes we bring the dogs in our hooches to sleep at night," said Jenkins. "It keeps the bond closer."

In this line of work it is important that handlers have a strong bond with their dogs, he said. "Once you have that strong rapport, you know that dog will go through hell and high water for you."

Although the presence of the dogs will prove invaluable if an explosive is found being smuggled on to Bagram Air Base, they will continue to serve as a deterrent to would-be terrorists.

"Just with them knowing we're here and seeing the dogs here," said Jenkins. "It's one more obstacle that a terrorist has to overcome."

Satisfaction from a job well done for these handlers comes from understanding their role as deterrents.

"One of the things in the K-9 world is, in the narcotic world, you want to have finds," said Jenkins. "In the explosive world, you hope not to have any finds."



Staff Sgt. Orm Jenkins, 58th MP Co. kennel master, guides Wilson on a daily run through the kennel's obstacle course on Bagram Air Base June 15.

Maintenance flight keeps vehicles rolling

Story and photo by
Air Force Master Sgt. Andrew Gates
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The flight line at Bagram is a hive of activity as vehicles swarm about accomplishing various tasks — a jammer (small vehicle used to load munitions) carrying bombs here, a loader removing needed cargo from a C-17 over there.

Should one of those vehicles break, it could have catastrophic consequences for the mission — so ensuring that doesn't happen, or minimizing the impact if it does, is a top priority here.

That's the mission of the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron vehicle maintenance flight. Simply put, "we fix broken trucks," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Logan, 455th ELRS mechanic.

Although the basic premise is simple, carrying out that mission is not. A harsh environment and long supply chain can make working on any one of 149 vehicles a challenge. "We are able to fix any vehicle," said Logan. "We can do simple tasks like replacing headlights and tail lights, or we can do more difficult ones such as replacing engines."

Each member of the maintenance team has general knowledge about vehicle mechanics and is able to fix anything that rolls, or is towed, through their doors.

"Once you have the basics, everything else falls into place," said Logan.

Even with those basics, working on equipment ranging from refuelers and deciders to all-terrain vehicles can be somewhat challenging, because the environment is tough on vehicles. The dusty conditions quickly clog air filters, while rough, rocky roads wreak havoc on tires, he continued.

While keeping the vehicles running is extremely important in a desert environment, keeping track of those vehicles and ensuring that each vehicle comes in for scheduled maintenance is also important. "We have to report what percentage of our vehicles are in commission to higher headquarters," said Air Force Airman 1st Class Matthew Campbell, 455th ELRS scheduler. "I ensure we get these vehicles for their regular lube, oil and filter change or scheduled in for annual maintenance. Keeping close track of maintenance helps us keep our in-commission rate well above headquarters standards."

Campbell is also responsible for ordering parts through supply, tracking them as they move through the system and putting them on the shelves. Once the part comes in, he schedules the vehicle for repair. "If it is a critical component, we can bring the vehicle in, pull the part off the shelf and repair the vehicle," he said. "Much of the time, though, we can keep the part on the shelf until the vehicle comes in for regularly scheduled maintenance — that mini-

mizes how long the vehicle is not available to the mission."

Since it can take up to three weeks to get parts, the vehicle maintenance team often has to use the joint environment here to their advantage. "We have to do a lot of horse trading," said Air Force Master Sgt. Claude Armstrong, 455th ELRS vehicle maintenance NCO in charge. "We can use the supply system to get our parts here, but often other units on base have them. We have pretty good rapport with them, and so everyone is able to get their missions done as quickly as possible."

At times, though, even trying to get crucial parts through other organizations doesn't work. Then, the maintenance team has to improvise to get the vehicle running. "You have to make stuff work," said Logan. "The vehicles are crucial to keeping the mission going."

Making "stuff" work doesn't mean sacrificing safety, however.

"Our first priority is ensuring any improvised repairs will not make the vehicle unsafe," said Armstrong. "If it will, we won't do the repair and we remove the vehicle from service until we can get the right part. When we were able to repair the vehicle, though, the guys here have done some outstanding work to get a vehicle repaired and back on the line"

For example, a few weeks ago the fuel system broke in a bucket truck being used to make runway repairs. Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Jones, another 455th ELRS mechanic, using some ingenuity and parts from a different vehicle, was able to fabricate a new fuel system for the truck, saving a lot of time.

"We couldn't wait for the part to come in," said Armstrong. "If Sergeant Jones hadn't rebuilt the system, then civil engineers couldn't pour concrete for the runway."

The team also does a lot of work on K-loaders, the equipment used to unload cargo from various aircraft. Most of the loaders are more than 30 years old, and yet the team keeps them running smoothly — which is important since the cargo aircraft bring in the supplies and parts needed in other organizations to keep the mission running, said Armstrong.

"What I do is very necessary to keeping the mission going," said Logan. "Anyone who sits in a vehicle needs us."

"Doing this job gives me an incredible sense of accomplishment and a great sense of pride," said Jones. "I can see how I impact the rest of the unit."



Staff Sgt. Christopher Logan, 455th ELRS, tops off the engine oil after replacing the engine in a forklift during Operation Enduring Freedom. Logan is deployed from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

'Geronimos' gather to remember D-Day

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Troth
Task Force 1st Bn., 501st Para. Inf. Rgt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — As the sun started to set, Soldiers of Task Force 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment "Geronimos" came together to remember those who saw their last sunset June 5, 1944.

"Sixty years ago on this very evening, and at about this time, young men, the very first paratroopers of 1st of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, boarded aircraft in England enroute to the greatest endeavor in our Army's history," said Capt. Aram Donigian, Task Force adjutant and narrator for the D-day Remembrance Ceremony. "Their courage, their spirit and their eventual victory were not born in a day, but were tested and tried through months and years of preparation. They defined Geronimo, and we remember them today."

As night fell June 6, 1944, the Geronimos had lost 127 of their bud-

dies, another 86 would die of wounds received that day. A total of 240 died to secure a foothold in Normandy, more than a third of all 501st Soldiers who died during World War II.

"On June 5, 1945, the paratroopers of the 501st — part of the 101st Airborne Division — the 82nd Airborne Division and the 1st British Airborne Division loaded C-47 transport planes and jumped into the dark on a hot drop-zone," said Lt. Col. Harry C. Glenn III, Task Force commander. "Much blood was shed on D-day and many lives were lost during the course of World War II, but total victory was achieved."

Glenn told the paratroopers that the very deeds and sacrifices of those great Americans helped solidify and shape the United States. They helped to define what the Soldiers of today are fighting for.

"They laid the very foundation and expectation that Geronimos have upheld in Vietnam and Afghanistan," said Glenn. "Today we also take a minute to honor each of you who serve our nation in a time of need.

"As President (George W.) Bush said after 9-11, 'We are fighting for the security of our people, for the success of our ideas and for the stability in large parts of the world. Our cause is just, we will not tire, we will not falter, we will not fail.'"

He went on to tell the paratroopers that their predecessors had succeeded in all missions given to them despite huge adversity, and that the Geronimos in Afghanistan were following in those footsteps, "accomplishing every mission to a standard others can only hope to achieve."

Glenn said that the World War II vets, who are dying at a rate of 1,000 per day, have left behind a legacy, and today's Geronimos stand ready in the



Command Sgt. Maj. David Turnbull unfurls the Stars and Stripes before the D-Day ceremony.

heartland of terrorism, adding new chapters to that legacy.

"You are the newest generation of American heroes, and it is my privilege to serve with each of you," said Glenn.

The Task Force then took time to recognize their newest heroes. The combat infantryman badge and combat medical badge were presented to those Geronimos who were not present for a ceremony May 1.

Five paratroopers were awarded their second CIB, 81 received their first CIB, and three medics pinned on CMBs. Two Soldiers were also presented Purple Hearts for injuries they sustained during a rocket attack May 21.

The ceremony concluded with Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. David Turnbull conducting roll call.

"Staff Sergeant Ralston."

"Here, Sergeant Major," said the Company A paratrooper.

"Specialist Loyd."

"Here, Sergeant Major," replied the Battery B Soldier.

"Specialist Patton."

"Here, Sergeant Major," said the Company C Geronimo.

"Pfc. Lyons."

"Pfc. Robert Lyons." Again, the call was met with silence.

"Pfc. Robert A. Lyons."

After a third call, Taps began to sound, a tribute to Lyons, a paratrooper with Company A who gave his life in Normandy June 6, 1944, and all the other service members who have given their lives serving their country.



Lt. Col. Harry C. Glenn III (left), Task Force commander, awards Staff Sgt. Eric Dooling the Purple Heart for injuries sustained during a rocket attack May 21.

Basic vehicle safety prevents accidents

Safeguarding the Coalition

Story and photo by
Pfc. Chris Stump
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — In recent conflicts, more service members have died as a result of injuries sustained in vehicle and aircraft accidents than from wounds received in combat.

To keep that statistic from holding true for the troops under its command, Combined Joint Task Force-76 has standards in effect to keep its troops safe while operating vehicles, both tactical and non-tactical, said Garrett Lozier, CJTF-76 safety director.

Having Soldiers comply with the standards and safety policies of the command is paramount to their safety, he said. Those policies cover everything from completing daily preventive maintenance checks and services on a dispatched non-tactical vehicle to observing the command's speed limits, both on and off base.

Performing PMCS on a vehicle is one of the easiest and most basic steps to ensuring vehicle safety, he said. It's especially important when a vehicle will be traveling outside the wire in an area that is very hard on vehicles.

It is essential to ensure the vehicle is roadworthy and carries the right supplies to help its passengers in an emergency, such as a water and meals-ready-to-eat, he added. A thorough PMCS should include everything needed to keep the vehicle operating properly and ensure passenger safety, including, but not limited to, engine oil, coolant, seatbelts, tires and gauges. The daily checklist provided with non-tactical vehicles' dispatches includes everything that needs to be checked before driving.

Safety doesn't stop once the vehicle is checked over, though. Paying close attention to safety is especially important while operating vehicles in the areas troops do, said Lozier. This area of the world poses many obvious threats people don't encounter on the roads back home and some less obvious ones.

Two of the most well-known and apparent dangers to travelers on Afghanistan's roads are improvised explosive devices and other drivers, he said.

"Staying alert is the best way to avoid the dangers outside the wire," he said.

Avoiding another, more subtle danger — the road itself — also demands keen observation and driving experience, he added.

The roads in Afghanistan are poorly constructed and not designed the way roads are in the United States. There are numerous potholes in the roads and most are not banked at turns to allow for higher speeds like people are used to, he said.

"Many of the young Soldiers here aren't that experienced in driving," said Lozier. "And they're definitely not experienced driving in a place like Afghanistan."

Troops can help avoid accidents due to a lack of experience by following the safety standards set up by the command, he said.

The command has set speed and safety standards to ensure its Coalition troops travel at speeds that are safe for the roads and the other areas in which they travel, he added.

According to the CJTF-76 Safety Memorandum, effective April 20, 2004, speeds should not exceed five miles per hour (eight kilometers per hour) in living, working and recreation areas, and 15 mph (25 kph) on hard surface and gravel roads on base.

Also, according to the memorandum, convoys off the installation are not to exceed 55 mph (72 kph). The convoy commander will determine safe vehicle speed based on roads and weather — within the maximum speed allowed.

Adhering to the speed limits is one of the most important things Soldiers can do to stay safe, said Sgt. Ryan Belflower, 58th Military Police Company traffic accident investigator.

"I know the speeds on base are slow," he said, "but they're slow for a reason. With the amount of troops on Bagram and the amount of vehicles, the speeds need to be slow to protect pedestrians."

That holds true for off-base, too, he said. With the amount of large vehicles on the less-than-perfect roads outside base, personnel need to watch their speed and other vehicles. Of the accidents that occur off Coalition installations, speed and other vehicles are the major causes.

"Speed and 'jingle trucks' don't mix," said Belflower. "People drive wherever the road is best — sometimes on the side you're on. Safe speeds and attentive driving should be maintained to avoid accidents."

Many believe driving fast is the key to safe passage in a combat environment — they think a fast speed equals safety, said

Lozier. But, they don't take into account the adverse effect of excessive speeding — the increased possibility of accidents.

Many troops are told to drive as fast as they can to reduce their exposure to the enemy, said Lozier, but the roads in Afghanistan just aren't built for the speeds many people travel at. Increasing speed means sacrificing safety, which in the long run, can result in mission failure.

Additionally, in compensating for possible exposure to the enemy, all CJTF-76 personnel traveling off base are required to wear ballistic vests. This provides protection in the event that a vehicle does come under attack. This extra measure takes away any excuse a driver would have to speed.

"Speed is not a cure all for everything," he said, "it must be used judiciously in accordance with METT-TC (mission, equipment, time, terrain, troops and civilians on the battlefield). Driving fast doesn't mean you're going to get somewhere safe."

In addition to using reasonable speeds, Coalition personnel can also safeguard themselves by using an alert passenger and doing checks and maintenance by the book, he said.

"Check and double-check everything to standard," said Belflower. "NCOs need to be enforcing the standards and making sure their Soldiers are doing the right, safe things."

The number one thing NCOs can do to make sure troops are maintaining safety, is to ensure they're using seatbelts, said both Lozier and Belflower.

"Seatbelts save lives," said Belflower.

Even in a combat zone where troops may have to exit a vehicle quickly, safety restraints are vital to keeping troops alive, said Lozier.

"There's a common misconception that wearing a seatbelt will hinder you from getting out of a vehicle quickly," he said. "In fact, there has not been one death attributed to a Soldier not being able to exit the vehicle to engage the enemy, either here or in the Iraq operation."

There have, however, been deaths due to traffic accidents in both operations, said Lozier, many of them avoidable.

"We can help ourselves by doing the things we are supposed to be doing," said Lozier. "Leaders need to train and enforce standards such as PMCS, speed limits and ensuring that everyone has situational awareness. We cannot let slip the simple things we need to be doing."

New program tracks reconstruction efforts

Story and photo by
Pfc. Chris Stump

17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Instructors from the Defense Geospatial Intelligence School came here recently to teach a group of civil affairs specialists and military topographers how to more efficiently document the rebuilding efforts in Afghanistan.

The instructors taught a four-day class on how to use map-making technology to create a central database for information on projects throughout the country, said Staff Sgt. Heidi Santiago, DGIS instructor.

The course will help the civil affairs specialists and their Provincial Reconstruction Teams better document the work they are doing, she said.

“It’s basically like a short topography course,” said Santiago, who instructs military topographers at DGIS. “We don’t go as in depth as we do for MOS (military occupational specialty) training, but we try to give them a good base to work off.”

The class of 18 Soldiers and one Airman learned how to use a program that allows them to input specific data about a point on an electronic map — a point someone can click on, open up and know exactly what it is and its characteristics, she added.

“For a place like Afghanistan where there are a lot of reconstruction projects, this is very useful,” said Santiago. “A point

is plotted on an electronic map and when someone clicks on that point, it can bring up all the information about it.”

That information could be the number of beds for a hospital, children in a school or depth of a well, she said.

Technology like this is important because there aren’t many good maps of Afghanistan — especially ones that go into detail about an area’s assets, said Maj. Mark Baker, DGIS instructor. In fact, many maps in use throughout the country are from the time of the Soviet occupation, and may be off by as many as 2 kilometers.

And if there were good maps, he added, they wouldn’t come close to holding as much information as an electronic map does.

“They (PRT workers) can open a map, find a school on the map and click on the school to bring up how many students it has, when it was built and what its further needs are,” he said.

Having a mapping system with capability to hold information like that is useful not only to PRTs, but also to commanders who want a full scope of the battlefield, said Santiago.

“Teaching people how do this will be a big help in advising the commander on tactical situations with accurate, up-to-date information,” she said.

It will also help topographers make more detailed and in-depth maps of the country, she said. Now, they will be able to input information about points



Staff Sgt. Heidi Santiago, DGIS, assists Sgt. Chris Peters, TF 168, with a block of instruction during a four-day class on using maps to document efforts in Afghanistan.

on a map, not just the points themselves.

“This will be good for plotting wells and being able to put them in the most useful place,” said Sgt. Chris Richmond, Combined Joint Task Force-76, 25th Engineer Detachment topographer.

“It will also be helpful in building in accordance with population centers,” he said. Until now, there wasn’t an electronic record that held information relating where people were building schools and other structures.

PRTs and topographers aren’t the only beneficiaries of this technology. All the digital maps being made will someday find a home on the Internet where people can access them on a centralized database, which will be monitored and checked for accuracy by different organiza-

tions, including the new Afghan government, said Baker.

“When the government wants to build something, they can look at the map and see if what they’re wanting to build has already been built, or how they can build to best suit the area,” said Baker.

“This will help the people of Afghanistan stand up on their own,” said Richmond.

Benefiting the people of Afghanistan is what all missions here boil down to, and the mission of keeping track of reconstruction is a very important one for the people, said Baker.

With the knowledge the students have gained from the class, said Santiago, they will be able to go out and more effectively help the country by better managing their assets and giving the Afghans what they need, where they need it most.

History: Detachment preserves OEF for future

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detachment collects artifacts that include uniforms, photos and Soldiers’ stories, he said. They try to collect items that show the uniqueness of the operation — including shoulder holsters, multipliers and uniforms with mini lights attached — showing down to the smallest detail how Soldiers dressed and what they did to make their missions easier.

After all the artifacts and interviews are

collected, the detachment has a documented piece of history to share not only with the military community, but the civilian community as well, said Baucom.

The 317th sends all its documentation to the U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington, D.C., where items like uniforms and equipment are sent for distribution to museums. Video and interviews are also saved for later use in documentaries, he said. Many of the artifacts on display in museums are items

that were collected by MHDs.

Additionally, interviews the detachments collect often make their way into Army publications and other compilations of lessons learned, he said.

Anyone can walk into a museum and see uniforms from a previous war and visualize a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine wearing it, said Landis. The 317th is here to make sure people in the future know how the Coalition fought this particular war.

Army-style reenlistment makes memories

Story by Master Sgt. Terry Anderson
Combined Joint Task Force-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Schoenthal wanted to make her latest reenlistment one to remember, but didn't realize camouflage paint, an energetic Army officer from Hawaii, and a Memorial Day helicopter flight around central Afghanistan would make it one she would never forget.

The eight-year Air Force veteran hails from Phoenix, Ariz. and joined the service just out of high school. Schoenthal decided she wanted to extend her enlistment another four years when she left Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., April 4th. She had a definite date in mind for the reenlistment.

"First of all when I found out I was going to be deploying I knew I was going to have to reenlist, or get out of the Air Force," said Schoenthal. "I looked at a calendar to find out what would be a good day — a day that would mean something. I saw that I would be here on Memorial Day, so that seemed like a great day to reenlist."

Schoenthal is the only Air Force service member in an office full of Army troops, and works for the Combined Joint Task Force-76 personnel section. She works in the casualty section, processing paperwork on troops who lose their lives in the Global War on Terrorism.

Schoenthal knew what was going to make her reenlistment special. She set it up to take place Memorial Day and arranged for a flight on an Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, meshing her Air Force status with her Army assignment. Her supervisor, Lt. Col. Armon Cioppa, CJTF-76 personnel director, took it the extra mile to make sure she had a memorable experience.

"I believe that whether you're a Soldier, an Airman, a Marine or you're a Sailor, and you're in the CJ-1 (Personnel) section, you're not only part of the team, you're part of the family," said Cioppa. "I knew she had never reenlisted with a special program, in camouflage — she had never ridden on an aircraft."

After Schoenthal applied the first coat of green camouflage paint to her face, Cioppa assisted with the next application, making sure she met Army standards.

Then it was off to "Steel Beach," the flight line at Bagram Air Base, for the reenlistment ceremony next to a Blackhawk helicopter. Schoenthal raised her right hand and Cioppa administered the oath of reenlistment. Then it was time for her helicopter ride.

Schoenthal has been at Bagram Air Base for the past two months but has never left the confines of the base. But that



Sgt. 1st Class Glen Robinson

Lt. Col. Armon Cioppa, CJTF-76 personnel director, administers the oath of reenlistment to Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Schoenthal May 31.

was about to change.

"As we flew towards Kabul I saw local nationals working in the fields, lots of water, beautiful mountains and terrain. It was just amazing to see," said Schoenthal.

While she admits there are major differences in the way the Army and Air Force run the personnel business, Schoenthal said she appreciates how her Army co-workers helped make her Memorial Day reenlistment so special.

"People here have gone out of their way for my reenlistment, and I appreciate that," she said. "I've never felt so good about a reenlistment."

ARA: Deployment allows reservists to become active duty

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have a critical shortage, combined with training time and cost, many Soldiers are required to enlist for five years.

While bonuses are a great incentive to joining the military, they aren't the only reason people switch to active duty, said Jacobs. Many Soldiers simply find they enjoy the Active Army experience of service to their country and wish to serve full time.

"Some Soldiers come on active duty for

a deployment and realize they like the Active Army and decide to stay," he said. "Others may have jobs that won't be available when they redeploy."

Others just like the steady paycheck or career benefits, he added.

"There are great career benefits," said Staff Sgt. Jack O'Neal, 320th Psychological Operations Company, who plans on making the transition after his tour here.

One of those benefits is being able to retire at an early age, he said. "And they

have 100-percent (college) tuition reimbursement while you're on active duty."

Regardless of the reason a Soldier wants to go active, the U.S. Army Reserve Affairs office is here to help, said Jacobs.

"The Soldier must be willing to take the time to put together the packet," he said. "The legwork is done by the Soldier, but we will do whatever we can for him."

For more information on switching to active duty, contact the Army Reserve Affairs office at 231-4353.

Safety First: Nametag Defilade

Maintaining proper nametag defilade standards reduces risk to Coalition forces.

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