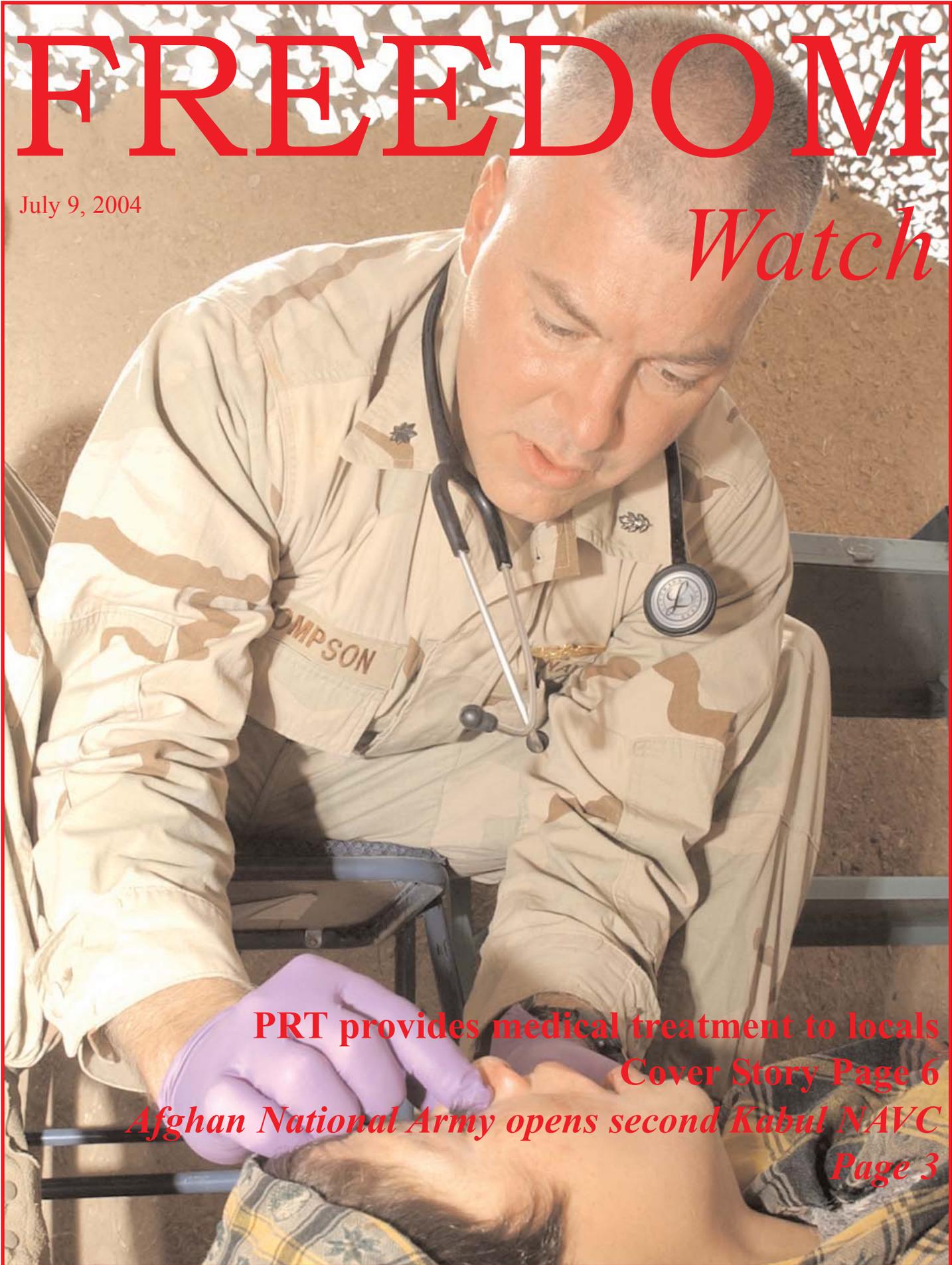


FREEDOM

July 9, 2004

Watch



PRT provides medical treatment to locals
Cover Story Page 6

Afghan National Army opens second Kabul NAVC
Page 3



Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl

Ready to train

Korean Maj. Kim, Hoyeoul (left), ROK 100th Eng. Group support officer, helps 10-year-old Shams put on the top of his new Taekwondo uniform. Shams is one of a group of about 20 local children who received uniforms from the Korean officers and NCOs, after completing three months of Taekwondo lessons at the Korean Engineer compound on Bagram Air Base. The lessons teach the children Taekwondo, as well as responsibility and discipline.

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Throughout Afghanistan, CMAs allow local nationals to receive medical and veterinarian assistance. At a recent CMA in Bamian Province, Navy Cmdr. Bruce Thompson, a CMA team doctor, stops an Afghan boy's nose bleed outside the village of Ruye Sang.

Cover photo by Sgt. Frank Magni

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Special Forces teams defeat terrorists with counter-insurgency ops
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By Mark Baker

Pvt. Murphy's Law

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Kabul's second NAVC opens its doors

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Chuck Lawhead
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — The recent grand opening of the Kabul Military High School National Army Volunteer Center marked the latest NAVC to open in Afghanistan and the second in Kabul.

“The Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan Recruiting Assistance Team is assisting the Afghan National Army Recruiting Command with building, supporting and staffing a NAVC in each province,” said Maj. Steven Nixon, Recruiting Assistance Team deputy chief.

Currently, there are over 20 NAVCs



Jalalabad recruits await transportation to the Kabul Military Training center.

under construction which are expected to open in the near future. More than 10,000 Afghans have joined the ANA – a significant number since this was accomplished without formally trained recruiters.

At the same time, ANAREC also launched its inaugural recruiting academy class at KMHS. Sixty-seven Afghan officers have since completed the training.

The U.S. security assistance Training Management Office provided a Recruiting Mobile Training Team that certified nine of these officers to conduct future academy classes.

“A quality army starts with quality recruits, and the new recruiting academy is providing the Afghans additional tools to build on their recruiting success,” said Lt. Col. Shah Choudhury, RAT chief.

“The students enrolled were highly motivated, ready and eager to learn,” said Master Sgt. Tracy Cutler, RMTT NCO in charge. During the three-week class, students learn the skills needed to build an effective army. Academy classes range from “Evaluate a Recruiter’s Market” to “Directing Recruiting Efforts.”

“The academy provides a systematic method of delivering the command policies, and offers command and control in building the ANA more effectively,” said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Webre, RMTT, OMC-A.

Upon graduation the students are assigned to a NAVC of Recruiting Command staff to continue an aggressive recruiting campaign. The recruiting command has accomplished its mission consistently over the last six months, and even increased to meet the training base’s expansion from two to four kandaks (battalions).

With the possibility of increasing training to five kandaks by this fall, there is increased pressure on recruiting efforts to meet the needs of the expanding army and its regional commands.

Quality volunteers from all ethnic groups in Afghanistan form the foundation of the ANA. Recruiters work to provide a provincial and ethnic mix of soldiers who represent the face of Afghanistan.

In addition to soldiers, ANAREC is responsible for recruiting national police officers, a frontier police force and highway patrolmen for the Ministries of Defense and Interior.

Afghan officials said they greatly support the recruiting academy as an effective tool for building both the ANA and MOI.

A strong recruiting effort will not only build the army but will also determine the real, long-term future of the ANA and, subsequently, the stability, safety and prosperity of Afghanistan.

SF teams winning war on terror through COIN ops

Story by
Sgt. Maj. Keith Butler
CJSOTF-A Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — COIN – the commander of the Special Operations Forces task force here is not betting with it, flipping it or trying to pocket it. His SOF team is using COIN to win back Afghanistan for the people who live here.

“The war is now a COIN (counter-insurgency) operation,” said Col. Walter M. Herd, recent commander of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan. The CJSOTF-A is comprised of personnel from all the military services, active and reserve component, as well as military members from other coalition nations. “It’s much

more complicated than conventional, maneuver warfare,” he said.

The goal is to rid this country of insurgents or anti-Coalition forces by capturing or killing the enemy and by denying the enemy a place to rest, hurt people or find refuge, said Herd, who has served as commander of the several-thousand man task force for 10 months.

The Louisville, Ky. native’s task force works side-by-side with conventional leaders and warriors from the Army, Marines, Air Force, Navy and other Coalition forces that make up Combined Joint Task Force-76 and its higher headquarters, Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan.

“We want to continue to track down insurgents and put them out of business. Also, we want

to take away an environment for insurgents to exist,” said Herd, who has spent most of his career serving in Special Operations assignments, from being an “A-team” commander and Special Forces battalion commander to time in the Ranger Regiment and in joint assignments.

“The CJSOTF-A is – instead of trying to catch one fish – trying to change the temperature of the water so the fish can’t survive there,” said Herd, a graduate of Ballard High School and Centre College of Kentucky.

Combat operations began here in the fall of 2001 when SOF joined Northern Alliance fighters to oust the brutal Taliban regime in a matter of weeks. COIN is focused on finishing off the remnants of

the Taliban, as well as al-Qaeda.

“We are working with a small-town society,” said Herd of his unconventional warriors. “We have the skill sets to do this – identify the problem and identify the solution. We are attacking terrorists who attacked our home. We want Afghanistan to no longer be a host for these parasites.”

Herd’s unconventional warriors use original tactics to win. His SOF teams operate by occupying the insurgents’ sanctuary. His teams are always looking for the enemy.

“Intelligence is putting all the pieces together – sometimes it’s an SF team sitting down at a local tea with elders, and sometimes it’s equipment in outer space.”

See *SF*, Page 10

Civil Affairs helps improve lives of Afghans

Story by Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING SITE CARLSON, Afghanistan — Operation Enduring Freedom isn't just about kicking down doors and searching for bad guys — it's also about building relationships with the people of Afghanistan.

The Soldiers of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), Ft. Bragg, N.C., work closely with the people of Paktika Province in southeastern Afghanistan to accomplish this part of the mission.

The team's job is to interface with the locals and assist with any projects they can, said Sgt. 1st Class Alexis Jimenez, Civil Affairs team member. The civil affairs team works with the local population around the area of Forward Operating Site Carlson to create a better life for the people.

Some projects they have completed in recent weeks include building wells to supply water to the people of the barren land and conducting a medical assistance project outside the gate of the camp. Through projects like these, the Soldiers are able to work hands-on with the people of Paktika Province.

"There are different levels of help that Civil Affairs can provide. Our job is immediate impact kind of help," said Jimenez. The Soldiers recently gave generators to the elders of a nearby village. They meet weekly with the elders to gain a

better understanding of the needs of the people of the area.

But the Soldiers aren't here to just give handouts. They are here to impact the lives of the people for years to come.

"Our job isn't so much to give stuff away, but we want to be able to have them help themselves," said Jimenez. Providing healthcare education and schools for the children are just some of the ways Soldiers are positively affecting the future of the region.

With force protection a major concern, the work of these civil affairs professionals also benefits other Coalition forces operating in Operation Enduring Freedom, said Sgt. 1st Class Ramon Cardona, Civil Affairs team member. The camp is small and far from any other Coalition forces. Having a positive relationship with the people in the area is important for the safety of the troops on the ground.

"The more you do for them, the more they feel like part of the family. That means they want to help us out," said Cardona. "They turn in weapons and tell us when people they don't know come into the area. It's actually supporting our mission when it comes down to safety. We can then spend more of our time and

effort on helping them."

Working with the local population and building relationships with the Afghan people is rewarding work, said Jimenez. Because of the efforts of the civil affairs team, a bond is being built between the Coalition forces at FOS Carlson and the people in the area.

It brings the people together, because basically the civilian population is getting some help," said Jimenez. "They know the things we can do for them. It shows that we are really here to help and that way we can bring them to our side and show them, 'Hey, we're not here to conquer you. We're here to help you.'"



Pfc. Chris Stump

A 27th Eng. Bn. medic and a Civil Affairs medical sergeant treat a patient during a MEDCAP at FOS Carlson June 15.

Enduring Voices

How is working with other Coalition forces benefiting you?



Ahmadzia Kocer
Local Contractor
"I am able to experience other countries' traditions."



Marine Master Sgt. Joel Schultz
6th Marine Rgt.
"I am able to learn about the cultures of other countries."



Ronald Guiao
Local Contractor
"I have had the opportunity to learn about other people and their experiences."



Polish Sgt. Christopher Kwiatkowski
Polish Army
"I have gained more knowledge about other countries."

MEDCAP helps locals at FOS Carlson



Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons



Pfc. Chris Stump

Story by Pfc. Chris Stump
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING SITE CARLSON, Afghanistan — With a health care system that is still developing, local nationals throughout Afghanistan benefit greatly from medical assistance provided by Coalition troops.

To provide medical assistance to the men, women and children near Forward Operating Site Carlson, medical personnel from the 27th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Airborne), Task Force 325 Combat Support Hospital and Army Civil Affairs set up a Medical Civil Action Project May 16, where they assessed many local nationals' medical issues and provided them with medicine and hygiene items.

There were five medical personnel from the 27th Eng. Bn., two from TF 325 CSH and a civil affairs medical sergeant to help with assessing the Afghans at the MEDCAP, while other Soldiers from the 27th pulled security at the site.

Throughout the day, Afghans with ailments arrived for medical assessment and treatment for everything from indigestion to colds and influenza, as well as diseases not often seen by American doctors, said 2nd Lt. Wun Augustin, 27th Eng. Bn. medical officer.

"This (MEDCAP) is a good opportunity to see things we wouldn't normally see and help the local nationals," he said.

Many of the people in Afghanistan have easily treatable ailments, such as diarrhea



Pfc. Chris Stump

and common colds. However, they don't have medicines to treat these common ailments, he said.

Many who came to the site not only received medical care, but also bags with hygiene products, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and soap. In addition to being given these items, they also learned some tips about living healthier.

Most of the people who came to the site to be treated were from the local area and walked to the site for care. The visitors heard about the MEDCAP from Soldiers who frequently go into town on patrols and disseminate information, he said.

One of the men who came in for treatment was Marana Goma Ghy, who said he had ulcer-like symptoms. Even after seeing a doctor in Pakistan, he wasn't able to find the cause of the problem or a way to ease his pain. The medical personnel at the site quickly came to the conclusion that it was an ulcer. They gave him suggestions on how to lessen the pain through diet

Top left: Staff Sgt. Alesa Rice (center), TF 325 CSH, checks a patient's reflexes. The elderly woman had recently suffered a stroke.

Above: 2nd Lt. Wun Augustin, 27th Eng. Bn. medical officer, conducts a physical examination on Alam Khan, local youth.

Left: A Soldier from the 27th Eng. Bn. escorts a female patient and her children into the MEDCAP to be treated by female medical personnel.

and gave him antacid.

Even simple medicine is often hard to come by in this very remote area of Paktika Province, so it benefits the locals when medical aid is provided to the people, said Augustin. But assessing patients and giving them medication aren't the only thing events like the MEDCAP are there for, he said.

The 27th Eng. Bn. tries to interact with the people of the area often to show they are there to help. The MEDCAP was just as much about security and relationships as it was medicine, he said.

"This is our first MEDCAP mission here. Hopefully it improves the relationship between the Soldiers here and the people," he said.

Building trust with the locals is one of the most important tasks of Coalition troops here, he said.

"I am glad for what the Soldiers are doing here today," said Ghy. "We all appreciate their help."

CMA projects target Bamian, Afghanistan

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAMIAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Medical assistance and training are just two of the ways the Coalition is assisting in the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Events like medical and veterinary civilian aid projects are popular, but are usually conducted near provincial reconstruction teams and their areas of operations.

But the needs of the Afghan people are widespread and PRT sites aren't always located nearby.

Bringing together teams of doctors, interpreters and veterinarians from individual units throughout Combined Joint Task Force-76 for each mission, Cooperative Medical Assistance teams are filling that void. They provide medical assistance to local nationals, and veterinary care to animals throughout remote areas of the country.

One CMA team recently visited Bamian Province in support of the area PRT, run by the New Zealand armed services.

The Bamian CMA project targeted remote villages just

outside a small forward operating base in the Kahmard Valley region. Although New Zealand forces operate from the FOB, this was the first time the PRT provided medical assistance to the region.

"We requested a CMA travel to this region because it would achieve two things," said New Zealand army Maj. Bede Fahey, PRT cell operations officer for Task Force Stonewall. "To provide much needed medical care to the local people and display a resolve that the Coalition could and would operate in the area."

With multiple requests from throughout the theater for CMA teams to travel to different areas, Maj. David Ferris, Task Force Victory surgeon cell operations officer, said Bamian was chosen because of the potential improvements in the health care for women and animal vaccination the team could make there.

Ferris said many PRTs are requesting CMA projects to expand the relationships they have with surrounding communities.

"Our goal is to strengthen the relationship the villages have with the PRT," said Ferris. "In addition, we are trying to build better rapport with the Afghan government and Afghan Ministry of Health."

He said the CMA projects require coordination with all the government organizations and the local elders within the villages, fostering a stronger relationship.

"We listen to their suggestions on where to set up and operate," he said. "We also take the medical information we learn from treating patients and feed that back to the government."

CMA projects also enlist the help of local care providers to train along side the Coalition doctors and veterinarian.

"Every project is different," said Ferris. "If we are traveling

to a region with a significant amount of livestock, we will take more veterinarians and supplies."

Other CMA projects, like the one in Bamian, concentrate on the treatment of women.

"I needed to get female care providers and female interpreters for this trip," said Ferris. "Many times, cultural restrictions prevent men from treating women, but we don't want that to prevent us from providing care to anyone."

While the primary objective of CMA projects is to provide medical care, they often bring reciprocal benefits to the Coalition.

"Many times after we have conducted one of these projects, it improves the relationship between the community and the nearby PRTs or FOBs," said Ferris. In some cases, locals in the same villages that received medical assistance from the CMA, have volunteered locations of weapon's caches.

Aside from improving security, CMA projects also

improve relationships within the Coalition.

This CMA project was the first time there was a combined operation of its kind in Bamian, said Fahey. Experiences like the project are positive for everyone involved.

"This CMA project has been very successful," said Fahey. "We achieved all the goals we had in Bamian," agreed Ferris.

With another successful CMA complete, Ferris said preparations are in the works for the next project. More medical supplies and another team is all it will take to advance the Coalition one step closer to a more secure Afghanistan.



Sgt. Frank Magni

Maj. Trudy Salerno (left), a CMA veterinarian, discusses treatment for an infection on a goat's leg with its owner.



Sgt. Frank Magni

Villagers from Ruye Sang line up early to receive medical care June 14.



Pfc. Cheryl Ransford

New Zealand Army Lance Cpl. Kelly Roberts, Bamian PRT, distributes medication to a woman at the Ruye Sang village June 14.



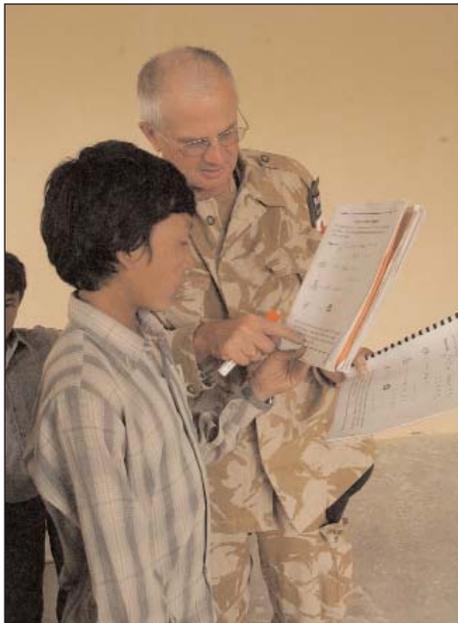
New Zealand soldiers educate Afghanistan's future generations

Story and photos by
Pfc. Cheryl Ransford
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAMIAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Sitting in a classroom in the rear part of the school, students eagerly await the arrival of the New Zealand soldiers and the start of their next English class.

Three times each week, a few Kiwis from the Bamian PRT in Bamian Province take one hour out of their day to visit Bamian School and teach the boys and girls English.

“When the program first started two months ago, we were expecting Afghan teachers to be teaching the children with us just overseeing what was going on,” said New Zealand Staff Sgt. Dawn Boxer, Bamian PRT. “Instead, we have



New Zealand Chaplain Brian Fennessy, Bamian PRT, helps Gholm Riza read a paragraph in his workbook during the advanced English class at Bamian School June 21.

ended up teaching the classes, which has turned out to be very rewarding.”

The school where the classes are being taught isn't a registered school, meaning anyone can start coming to school at any time, no matter what part of the school year it is, said Boxer.

“We are constantly having new students want to learn English, so we set up two different classes,” she said. “One class is for the students who have progressed quite far, and the other is for those who are still working on understanding the basics of the language.”

Each class has workbooks that are used for the lessons, said Boxer.

“When the program was first getting started, we received several parcels in the mail from a school in the States that were full of workbooks, paper, pens and pencils, and other various school supplies,” she said. “We used those supplies to get the classes set up and have something to work from.”

The beginning class, which is taught by Boxer and New Zealand Pvt. Mandy Hall, is working on letters, numbers and colors, while the advanced class is working on the more complex areas of the English language.

“In the advanced class, we have progressed to the point that the students are now ready to move on to sentence structure and basic grammar,” said New Zealand Chaplain Brian Fennessy, Bamian PRT. “It is amazing how well the students have improved in the two months that we have been coming here to teach them.”

“Each week we have students who are coming to class for the first time and we have to get them caught up to where we are with the other students,” said Boxer. “But the children are very eager to learn and pick up on the lessons very quickly.”

At the end of each class the students are given homework to work on between classes. “The students are given simple

tasks of working on what they learned during each class,” she said. “At the beginning of each class we do a review of what was taught during the previous lesson to see if the students are ready to move on, or if they need some more time to work on a particular area.”

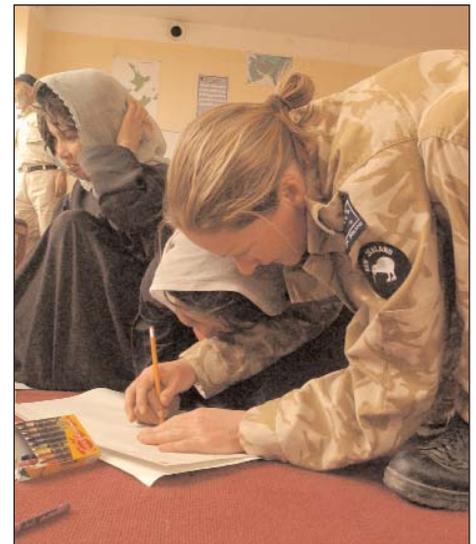
For some of the children, this is the first time they have been given the opportunity to learn English, said Boxer.

“We are very excited to learn English,” said Ghollm Riza, Bamian School advanced class. “Without the New Zealand soldiers, we wouldn't be able to communicate with people from other countries.”

As the students progress in the class, they are also progressing as a generation, said Boxer.

By educating the children, the Kiwis are influencing the future of a nation.

“Our hope,” said Boxer, “is to give the children a glimpse into another world that they haven't had the opportunity to view in the past.”



New Zealand Pvt. Mandy Hall (right), Bamian PRT, helps Hamida spell the name of a color during English class at Bamian School June 21.

Coalition helps Konar women progress

Story and photos by
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Detachment

KONAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — After 25 years of turmoil, the people of Afghanistan are working to rejuvenate their country. Part of this revival is a stronger role for women within the government and the communities.

The women here aren't just seeking a forum for their voices, however. They are looking for ways to provide for their families.

"During 25 years of war, we didn't have jobs for the men, let alone the women," said Shoila. Shoila — the head of the women's shura, a group that addresses women's issues — represents the other women of her province before the government.

Now, one of the biggest issues Shoila

and the other women of Konar are facing is the poor state of the economy.

"Many of the women here are widows," she said. "Their husbands were killed during the wars, and they were left to take care of the children."

Still more of the husbands returned home disabled, with no way of caring for their families. This left even more of the fiscal responsibility to the women of the household.

The population of females well exceeds the males in Konar Province. This allows the women to play a more active role in society, particularly in the capital, Asadabad, said Wajma, a Coalition interpreter working in the province.

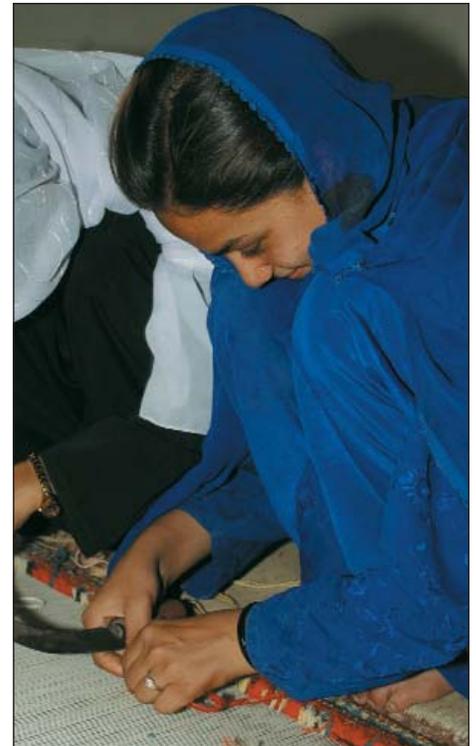
This progression in women's liberties is enabling the Konar Provincial Reconstruction Team to assist the women in finding ways to provide for their families. One project, a women's center, is in the planning phases.

"We've already had the plans drawn up by a local contractor," said Maj. Seth Hoffer, a member of the PRT who is helping coordinate the project. He explained that the project is in the approval process, and that construction can begin two weeks after it has been approved. "It will be on the grounds of the girls school, and will give the women a place to gather and learn different skills."

By learning these different skills, the women will have a craft they can sell for a profit at the bazaar.

"We would be happy just sewing clothes or rugs or making beaded jewelry," said Rahila, Shoila's sister. Many of the women in Shoila's family already have the ability to make these products — what they don't have is the initial financial support they need to get started.

"If we could just provide them with the initial materials they need or with a loan to purchase these materials, they would be able to start turning around a profit," said Lt. Col. Jennifer Caruso, Combined Joint Task Force-76 Equal



Top: Mna, a young girl from Konar Province, weaves a rug at the women's shura building in Asadabad.

Bottom: Lt. Col. Jennifer Caruso (right) shares a laugh with a group of women during a visit to Asadabad June 24.



Top: Capt. William Boyd (left) points out features on the plans for a women's center to 1st Lt. Christine Ray and Maj. Seth Hoffer at the Asadabad PRT June 25.

Bottom: Students at Fatima Girls School in Asadabad sing for visiting CJTF-76 staff members June 26.

Opportunity program manager. Caruso leads a group of female Soldiers from CJTF-76 who are currently evaluating women's roles throughout Afghanistan and looking for ways the Coalition can support efforts to expand these roles.

"We are willing to do whatever it takes to help our families," said Shoila. "We just need some help getting started."

Members of the Coalition are also focused on helping the families, as well as Afghanistan in general.

"We want to provide security and peace in Afghanistan," said Wajma. "Most importantly, we're here to help provide a future for the children of Afghanistan."

Malaria prevention begins with medications

Safeguarding the Coalition

Story by Pfc. Chris Stump
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — Of all the dangers troops face in Afghanistan, none is more or less important than others. Not all can be predicted, but some, like malaria, can be easily prevented.

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease that afflicts 300-500 million people in many parts of the world every year and kills approximately one million of them, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site. Afghanistan is among the many areas in which malaria is endemic, along with the rest of southeast and southwest Asia. Malaria is a parasitical infection, not a virus or bacteria. It enters the human bloodstream through mosquito bites.

Mosquitoes become carriers of malaria when they bite a person infected with the disease. The mosquito then bites another person, transmitting the malaria from the first person, said Col. Scott H. Burner, Task Force 325 Combat Support Hospital emergency physician.

Soldiers in this area of operations can prevent malarial infections and the problems that accompany it by taking a few preventive steps, said Burner.

The most important thing Coalition troops can do to prevent malaria is to take their prescribed anti-malarial medication, he said.

"Malaria is only a problem because people don't take their meds," said Burner.

To ensure troops are taking their medication and preventing possible malaria,

leaders need to check for compliance with the standard, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery L. Dawson, Company C, 125th Signal Battalion platoon sergeant.

"I am ultimately responsible for my Soldiers' health and welfare," he said.

Dawson supervises a signal shop that provides 24-hour communications support to much of Afghanistan. Just one Soldier out sick with malaria could throw off the entire operation. To keep this from happening, his squad leaders verify at the beginning of each 12-hour shift that all their Soldiers have taken their medication, said Dawson.

with taking preventive medicines and using repellents will almost eliminate the possibility of becoming sick with malaria, said Burner.

Sleeves on uniforms should always remain down to put a physical barrier between the person and the mosquitoes, he said. Uniforms should also be treated with permethrin, an insect repellent that lasts the six-month-life of the uniform, prior to deployment to a region where malaria is prevalent. Uniforms may be re-treated as necessary throughout the deployment.

Insect repellent should also be worn on personnel's exposed skin, he said. Insect repellents are available to troops through individual unit supply and medical systems.

Malaria may cause kidney failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma or death if left untreated, according to the CDC.

The most common signs of infection are fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may also occur, as well as anemia and jaundice due to the lack of red blood cells.

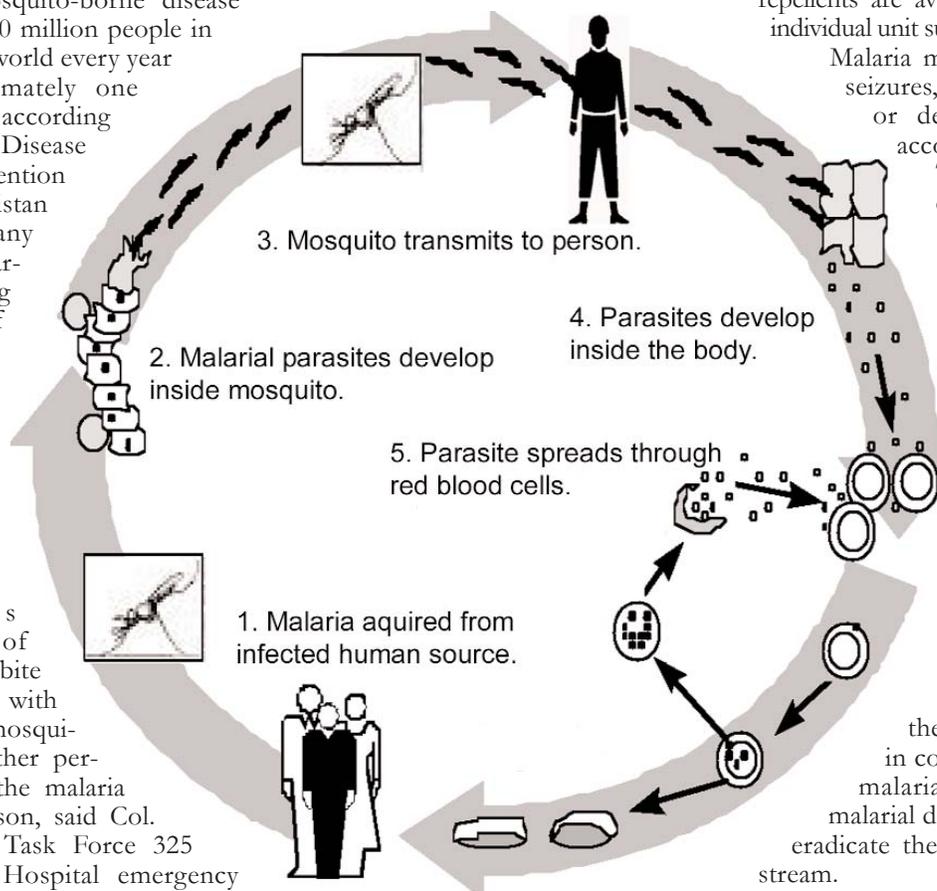
Signs of malaria may show in as little as a few days or up to a year after becoming infected.

If malaria is contracted, the patient can be treated in country. The treatment for malaria involves using anti-malarial drugs in stronger doses to eradicate the parasites in the bloodstream.

Although a serious disease, it can be cured, said Burner. The common misconception that if one gets malaria they have it for life is false.

But it's still not something to take lightly, he said. Soldiers should take all the precautions they can to reduce their risk.

It's very simple to take the precautions necessary to prevent malaria, said Burner. Taking a daily or weekly pill that could save lives and reduce illness is one of the easiest things Coalition troops can do to safeguard themselves against a serious, but very preventable, disease.



"I don't need any of my Soldiers getting sick," he said. "It would decrease our ability to provide communications support to this area of operations."

There have been four cases of malaria in recent weeks at Bagram Air Base, said Burner. All were infected because they failed to take their prescribed medication.

"Malaria meds are almost completely effective against the parasite," he said.

Obeying uniform rules in conjunction

Red Cross links troops to families

Story and photo by
Spc. Dijon Rolle
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — You've heard the name or seen the red and white logo countless times. In fact, it's become a universal symbol of comfort for many during times of emergencies, disasters and war. Now the American Red Cross is bringing some of that same familiar comfort to troops deployed throughout Afghanistan.

The humanitarian organization has a deployment center located in the air passenger terminal here. The center's main mission is providing emergency communications to all service members and government civilian employees in theater.

"We are the link between the service member and his or her family," said American Red Cross Team Leader Sharron Gilkey. Gilkey is one of two National Staff Red Cross workers who run the deployment center. Her co-worker, Georgia Kingkaid, works the night shift. Between the two, the doors of the Red Cross are kept open nearly 24 hours a day.

The center receives emergency Red Cross messages from all over the world through an internal computer network used by the organization. Workers also use the network to verify and track emergency messages and enter updated information. They then use

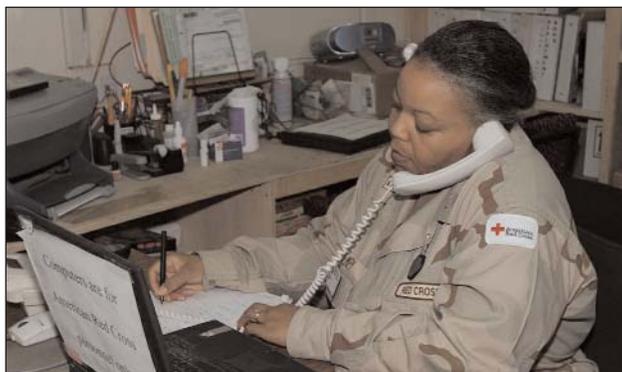
the information from the actual message containing the service member's name, rank, unit and social security number to notify the service member's unit of the message. The unit is responsible for relaying this message to the service member.

This process can be done quickly if all the information in the message is correct, according to the Red Cross staff. That's why it's extremely important troops make sure their families can provide as much accurate personal information as possible.

"Having all of the right information will avoid any delay in message delivery," said Gilkey. "It takes time to track down missing information, and we want to get the message out as quickly as possible."

Not all the messages that pass through the center are bad news or an emergency, however. Families can also send birth announcements to deployed loved ones through the Red Cross. Workers say they receive between 80 to 100 messages per week.

Another way the American Red Cross is supporting troops is by providing them with free videos, personal hygiene items, coffee and snacks. There's even a phone troops can use to call home to keep in touch



Sharron Gilkey, Red Cross Deployment Center team leader, receives an emergency message. The Red Cross plays an important part in linking deployed troops and their families back home.

with loved ones. Sgt. Vecente Pantoja, 65th Engineer Battalion, is one of the troops taking advantage of the phone. "I got a chance to finally call my wife. It's my anniversary," he said.

To help deployed troops out even more, the center recently started a volunteer program. This lets troops use some of their personal time to give assistance to those who need it.

"We have volunteers that come in during their free time and who want to be a part of the Red Cross while they're deployed and that's an awesome thing. The volunteers are the backbone of the Red Cross," said Gilkey. "We couldn't function without our volunteers."

SF: Counter-insurgency ops helping to win war on terror

continued from Page 3

Set up in A-Camps, the SOF teams serve as an extension of the Coalition influence and national government. By September, a country that once harbored a repressive, terrorist regime will enjoy the chance to vote for its president.

"COIN is building indigenous capabilities, security and infrastructure," said Herd, who also served in Iraq and as the director of operations for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

"Once on patrol, an Afghan National Army officer called an impromptu 'shura' with about 30 elders and 60 little boys. ... He was like Thomas Jefferson — talking about democracy, their nation and freedom, in a place

that looked much like it might have in the year 1300," said Herd. "Elders may not be (formally) educated, but they are smart. We are all winning one valley at a time — some are easier than others."

Unconventional warfare calls for a leader who thinks differently. While the CJSOTF-A commander makes decisions, he leaves the specific details of getting the mission done to his subordinate commanders.

"I'm very proud of the Coalition and what they do in an ambiguous environment," said Herd, a 21-year Army veteran and fifth generation military service member. "They get general mission type orders and move out."

His SOF members conduct

an array of missions, often in the most remote and austere locations in Afghanistan. Herd's SOF teams spend days conducting patrols to search for weapons caches or find enemy insurgents hiding out in caves or along mountain ridges.

In exchange for good, old-fashioned neighborly help from SOF, Afghans are turning in weapons and telling where insurgents hide out.

"Afghans have brought in truckloads worth of munitions — more than 50 truckloads in about two months," said Herd.

"The mission is as much non-military as it is military. In COIN, you need all elements of the military and help from the inter-agencies. Right now we have the right mix of conven-

tional and unconventional forces," he said. "But with a counterinsurgency, we want to change socio-economic conditions as well."

The CJSOTF-A commander approved millions of dollars that his Coalition SOF teams used for the construction of schools, clinics, roads and mosques. More than 1,000 Afghan patients receive weekly medical care from Green Beret medics and attached SOF personnel, including civil affairs doctors and physicians assistants.

While helping Afghanistan to get back on its feet, Herd's men will continue to fight the insurgencies that challenge the safety and stability of the Afghan people.

KAF bazaar boosts morale of deployed service members

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing
and Spc. Claudia K. Bullard
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — “Sir, a very good price.” It is the voice of a vendor as he waves his hand above his wares arrayed on a table. He is polite, yet insistent, with a passing Soldier who takes a glance to consider the Afghan’s offering. The two men begin to dicker over the price of a watch. Similar bargaining occurs at several displays in the Kandahar Airfield bazaar held each Saturday just inside the outer gate.

The bazaar offers the Kandahar Airfield denizens a variety of bargains for the smart shopper. DVDs, knives, watches, lapis jewelry, antique firearms and rugs are among the many treasures that can be purchased for a fraction of the price one would pay in the United States.

One Soldier revealed that for a mere \$20, she bought a Cashmere scarf that would likely demand \$250 in the United States.

Chief Warrant Officer Tim Gaby, 221st Ordnance Company, left the bazaar with a small rug slung over his shoulder. “I got a great deal on a rug,” he said with a grin. “And I got to barter.”

Gaby compared the bazaar to flea markets back home in Wawaka, Ind., pointing out one major difference — “You don’t do as much bargaining,” he said, referring to his hometown.

Visitors came to the bazaar for a variety of reasons. Some came to shop for Christmas gifts, others for themselves and still others just to see what it was all about.

Sgt. 1st Class Keith Hall, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, came away from the bazaar with glass figurines, two DVD collections, an “excellent marble desk set” and several inlaid vases, he said.

Hall said he was shopping for himself. “I collect stuff from around the world,” said Hall, who has also been to bazaars in Orgun-e and Shkin. “That way I can decorate a different room in my house for each country I’ve been to.”



Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing

Above: Kandahar Airfield bazaar is a bustling hub of activity June 12. The bazaar provides local products for purchase by the residents of the Kandahar Airfield compound.

Right: Chief Warrant Officer Tim Gaby, 221st Ord. Co., carries an Afghan rug back to the Kandahar Airfield compound June 12.



Spc. Claudia K. Bullard

Sgt. Simmie Brown, HSC, 528th Eng. Bn., pauses to look at some cutlery while searching for a tea set for his wife.

Sgt. Simmie Brown, Headquarters Support Company, 528th Engineer Battalion, stopped to look at some knives a vendor held out to him.

Brown said he was there to shop for his wife. “I have sent her a quilt and a tea set and she wants another tea set. This time copper or brass,” said Brown, who was also considering buying what he called “trinkets,” or small pieces of jewelry.

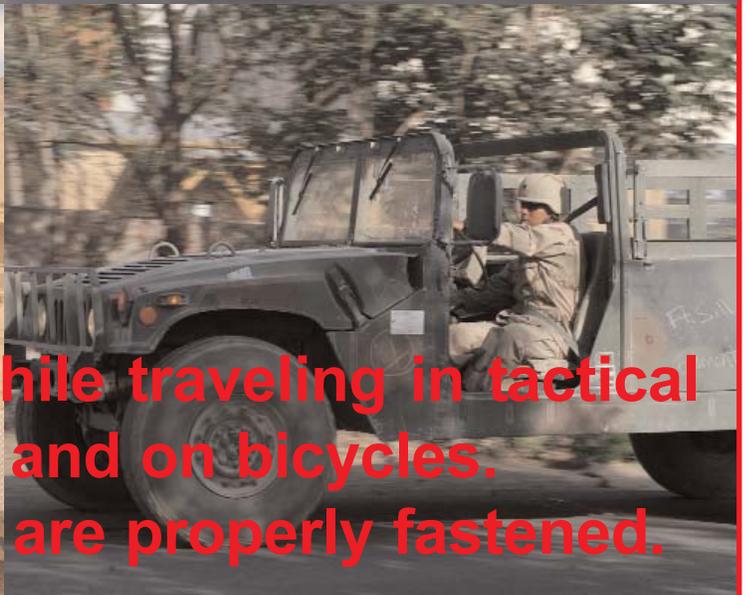
Marine Sgt. Alex Owen, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, browsed for a gift for his mother. “I’m just picking up something for Mom,” he said. He picked up a watch and turned it in his hand. He placed it back on the table, then smiled and moved over to another display.

As the day wore on, the sun’s rays bore down on the bazaar shoppers. The traffic continued back and forth through the bazaar gate at a steady pace. A couple of Air Force Civil Air Patrol employees, Matt Marshall and Matt Axberg, found respite from the heat by sharing tea with one of the rug vendors under a canopy. As it turns out, the bazaar is more than just a shopping experience. It is also a cultural exchange of the West and Southwest Asia.



Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing

Safety First: Headgear



Wear a hard helmet while traveling in tactical and open air vehicles, and on bicycles. Make sure chin straps are properly fastened.