

## Schoomaker visit boosts morale in Gardez

Story and photo by Pfc. Kelly Hunt  
4<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment

**GARDEZ**, Afghanistan – Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff, spent time with Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team troops Aug. 18 as part of a greater mission to witness the progress being made in Afghanistan.

Schoomaker was escorted throughout the PRT compound by Lt. Col. Anthony Hunter, Gardez PRT commander, 321st Civil Affairs Battalion, who briefed him on the PRT's mission, improvements and accomplishments.

After the tour, the general joined troops from the 321<sup>st</sup> CA Bn., 407<sup>th</sup> CA Bn., and 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division for lunch where he answered questions from the U.S. soldiers and addressed their concerns of the future role



*Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff, meets with soldiers during his trip to the Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team location. The visit was part of his journey to witness the U.S. progress in Afghanistan.*

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## Air Force firefighters keep Bagram out of the hot seat

Story and photo by Sgt. Greg Heath  
4<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment

**BAGRAM**, Afghanistan – Firemen have always had lot of responsibility resting on their shoulders, from the proverbial rescuing a kitten stuck in a tree, to selflessly entering towering infernos to rescue those inside.

The Air Force firefighters of the 455<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Operations Group are aware of this proud heritage, as evident by the large New York Fire Department stickers placed on their rescue vehicle's door, and although things have been relatively calm at Bagram, they're always busy training and preparing in case their called on to do their job.

The 27 Air Force fire rescue technicians here on Bagram are responsible for providing fire protection and emergency rescue service for all U.S. and coalition military services on Bagram.

They're trained in multiple skills, including airfield firefighting, structural firefighting, hazardous material handling, confined space rescue and emergency medical service.

"We are the equivalent of a civilian airport fire company," said rescue crew chief Tech. Sgt. Jason Theriault. "But we're prepared for much more."

Considering the high volume of air traffic going in and out of the airbase every day, and the thousands of coalition troops living here, having fire fighters is a necessity, according to Theriault.

"No matter where you go, no matter what base you set up, if you have people around airplanes then you need firefighters there to protect them," he said.

The airmen are equipped with many fire fighting vehicles, and their main vehicle, the P-19 Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting vehicle, is capable of carrying 3000 gallons of water and up to 150 gallons of chemical foam for extinguishing jet fuel fires.

Where they differ most from an airport firefighting outfit is with their Rescue Vehicle, which holds equipment to handle almost any situation.

"We're prepared to repel down, break into or cut into pretty much anything,"

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# World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



One of the blasts occurred at a parking lot near the Gateway to India monument during lunchtime.

## India boosts security after blasts

**NEW DELHI, India** – India is beefing up security in major cities amid fears of a violent backlash to Monday's deadly bombings in Mumbai which killed at least 44 people.

While no group has yet claimed responsibility for the blasts, the Indian government has said the attacks bore the "hallmarks of the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and the Kashmiri separatist group Lashkar-e-Toiba".

Police in Mumbai, New Delhi and several major states are tightening security — especially around temples, mosques and public areas — and stepping up spot identity checks following the bombings.

"We have increased the number of pickets around religious places," New Delhi police spokesman Ravi Pawar told *Reuters*.

"Patrolling in markets and crowded areas has been intensified and posters and leaflets are being put up educating the public to be careful about suspicious packages."

The Indian government must tread carefully, however, for fear the Mumbai bombings could spark a new wave of religious violence, particularly between Hindus and Muslims.

Police put the death toll at 44, but hospital officials said 48 had died. At least 153 people were wounded, according to hospital officials.



Bodies of Taliban fighters from previous battles are examined on the border with Pakistan.

## Taliban fighters killed in Afghanistan Monday

**KABUL, Afghanistan** – Backed by U.S. warplanes and Special Operations troops, Afghan forces attacked Taliban fighters Monday in southeastern Afghanistan, U.S. and Afghan officials said.

Afghan officials said more than 40 Taliban fighters were killed in the attack, while the Pentagon put the death toll at 14. No U.S. or Afghan casualties were reported.

Afghan militia were accompanied by American Special Operations troops and airstrikes from U.S. Air Force and Marine warplanes, including F-16 fighters and A-10 and Harrier ground-attack jets, Pentagon officials said.

The fighting occurred in the province of Zabol, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) south of Kabul. Afghan troops had been building up over the weekend after raids by an estimated 200 to 300 Taliban fighters left 14 people dead in the area, Afghan officials said.

The Afghans were backed by a few dozen troops from the U.S.-led coalition battling remnants of the former Taliban regime and al Qaeda in Afghanistan, according to local officials.

A recent upsurge in attacks by the Taliban — the Islamic militia that ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 — has wreaked havoc in parts of Afghanistan in recent weeks.

Numerous Afghan police and soldiers have been killed, and a member of a U.S. Special Operations unit was killed last week.

A U.S.-led campaign ousted the Taliban in 2001 as part of a move against al Qaeda in retaliation for the September 11 terrorist attacks.



The Bush administration promises "renewed energy" in the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

## Afghanistan aid set for \$1 billion boost in coming weeks

**WASHINGTON** – The Bush administration is expected to announce in coming weeks a major increase in aid to Afghanistan in an effort to boost reconstruction in the country.

"There is a renewed focus and a ... renewed energy and hopefully new resources that we're going to try to put on the Afghan project," the administration's coordinator for Afghanistan, William Taylor, told reporters recently.

"What we're trying to do is focus attention, people, energy, resources on Afghanistan, and we're looking for ways to do that."

A senior administration official said the additional funding would be about \$1 billion over the current \$900 million being spent this year by the United States for reconstruction. Rather than go to Congress for a budget supplemental, the official said the administration would scrape up the funding from various arms of the U.S. government.

Taylor said the renewed effort is urgent because the United States wants to demonstrate significant progress with reconstruction before Afghanistan holds national elections next year.

"We really are eager to move these projects forward quickly," Taylor said. "We really want to have these projects, these programs, these schools, these clinics, these roads built in a hurry so that again the people of Afghanistan can see that the international community does come through on its commitments to [President Hamid Karzai's] government."

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they would play in the area.

“We are committed to the future of Afghanistan; we’re in this for the long haul,” said Schoomaker.

This is where the War on Terrorism began, he said, and the United States is going to be involved in these types of missions for a long time.

“We’re committed to things all over the world (and) we have to (be) because we’re in a struggle right now for our way of life,” said Schoomaker.

“If we don’t stand up and do something about it, we’re going to continue to have these kinds of problems,” Schoomaker added.

During his visit, the general participated in a promotion ceremony

of a noncommissioned officer. Schoomaker said he was proud to be part of the ceremony and was glad he was there to witness the event.

“This is the backbone of what we do; the basic element in our foundation,” he said to the troops after the ceremony referring to the support provided by the noncommissioned officers of the Army.

“It doesn’t matter what the Army Chief of Staff says should be going on (because) if it isn’t going on from here and below, it isn’t happening,” he added.

The general expressed his appreciation for the troops, for the contribution they make to Afghanistan and for their dedication to their country.

“This is important,” he said. “We’re doing this for our nation (and) for our families. And I’m proud to be here with you.”

## Rumsfeld says U.S. faces two options in war on terror

Story by Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** – Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told service members at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, yesterday that only two options faced the United States in its war on terror: Fight the terrorists where they live today, or fight them in America tomorrow.

Rumsfeld said the war on terrorism is unlike any war the United States fought in the past. Sept. 11 ushered in a new age of asymmetric warfare. “The threats we have faced have not been so much large armies, large navies and large air forces locked in great battle, but suicide bombers, cyberterrorists and low-intensity warfare and the spreading contagion of weapons of mass destruction,” he said.

These unconventional dangers threaten the safety and security of Americans and free people around the world as certain as the totalitarian regimes the World War II generation confronted. “Like the greatest generation that saved the world from the tyranny of their time, your generation has been called to greatness as well,” Rumsfeld said.

“Our freedom, our future depends on the courage and the determination of our forces and what they bring to this world. All across the globe, people long for what we have, for what each of you has volunteered to defend - liberty, democracy, tolerance and a future without fear.”

Rumsfeld said the United States did not ask for the war on terrorism. “But it is a war we

have to fight and we have to win,” he said. “There is no safe, easy, middle ground. Either we take the war to the terrorists and fight them where they are - at this moment in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere - or at some point we will have to fight them here at home.

“This war is real, it is difficult, it is dangerous and it is far from over, but we are making good progress,” he said.

In the 22 months since the attacks in New York and Washington, the United States has made great strides against the shadowy enemy, Rumsfeld noted. “Two terrorist regimes have been removed and two peoples have been freed from years of fear and years of oppression,” he said. “We’re working to lay the foundations of freedom and helping to build the pillars upon which liberty and representative government will rest.”

The 100-plus days since Iraq’s liberation have been days of difficulty, but also progress, he said. The secretary mentioned the establishment of the Iraqi Governing Council, the formation of dozens of local city councils, the establishment of a central bank and the resumption of oil exports as examples of the progress.

The secretary observed that setbacks in the war on terror will continue. “But there will be more successes and the outcome is not in doubt,” he said. The fact that enlistments and retention figures are up is indication of the morale and dedication of the U.S. military. “They are doing important work,” he said.

Rumsfeld said he did not know how long the United States will remain in Iraq. He said the answer is “not knowable” today. “I wish it

were, but it really depends on when the Iraqi people are able to get themselves on a path towards a sovereign and representative government,” he said. “This much is certain: The president said we will stay as long as it takes to finish the job and not a day longer. Our task is to lift the threat of terrorist violence from our people and our future.”

Rumsfeld answered some questions from the estimated 3,000 assembled service members.

One asked about proposals to raise the military retirement age. Rumsfeld said he has not made a specific recommendation but noted there are some jobs that people need to serve in longer. He said quick turnovers mean turmoil, more permanent change of stations and so forth. “It also creates a situation where people move through jobs so fast they don’t have a chance to clean up their own mistakes,” he said. “That’s an important learning experience.”

Rumsfeld discussed the deployment and redeployment process and said he didn’t want to call it “ugly” but rather “imperfect.”

In the case of the Army, “at one point, they were averaging only five days’ notice for a call-up for reserve and Guard,” he said. “Now that’s just not right. It’s not fair to the families. It’s not fair to their reservists. It’s not fair to their employers.”

“The people are the most important thing we have, and we’ve got to see that we manage that force in a way that’s respectful of people and that gives them a degree of certainty, a degree of predictability,” he continued. “So we’ve got to fix that.”

**FIRE**, from Page 1

said Theriault, referring to the equipment which includes the Jaws of Life, ropes for scaling buildings, metal cutters and high powered saws.

Along with fighting potential fires, the airmen provide monthly fire prevention and inspection throughout Bagram, which includes checking fire extinguisher units and all smoke detectors.

When on duty the airmen firefighters work 24-hour shifts which allows them to respond to a fire on the airfield or in someone's tent as quickly as possible.

"We're required to be on the scene within four minutes for a structural fire and three minutes for a flight line fire; on the scene searching for people, victims and the fire," said Theriault.

Their tour in Afghanistan has been relatively calm so far. Their biggest incident was when a AV-8 Harrier ran off the runway.

They've also had to put out a handful of brush fires outside of Bagram, according to Chief Master Sgt. George Chambers, Bagram fire chief.

Although they've only had to face a few incidents, training up on their firefighting skills and knowledge keeps them busy day to day.

"The job never gets boring, there's always something new," said Senior Airman James Hannigan, crew chief. "We never stop learning; there are always different certifications and schools and new practices to learn."

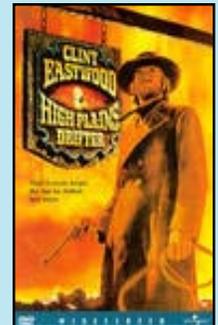
They're also required to learn about all the different aircraft that come in to Bagram so they know how they would handle the situation and retrieve the pilot if an aircraft were to ever go down, according to Theriault.

For the firefighters, the job hours are long and busy, but they learn to depend on each other and the camaraderie they share to accomplish the mission.

"There's a brotherhood aspect to it," said Hannigan. "We stick together, inside the fire and out."

# Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "High Plains Drifter." A small town with a dark secret hires a mysterious, vengence-minded drifter to protect it from three criminals.



Tomorrow's movie will be "Darkness Falls."

## Local weather

### TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>
<b><u>Bagram:</u></b>	<i>Mostly clear</i> H: 95F L: 64F	<i>Mostly clear</i> H: 93F L: 72F
<b><u>Kandahar:</u></b>	<i>Dusty</i> H: 104F L: 70F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 102F L: 73F
<b><u>Kabul:</u></b>	<i>Dusty</i> H: 91F L: 63F	<i>Scattered TSTMS</i> H: 91F L: 63F
<b><u>Uzbekistan:</u></b>	<i>Clear</i> H: 98F L: 61F	<i>Clear</i> H: 99F L: 60F

*Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team*

Freedom Watch falls under the supervision of the Combined Joint Task Force - 180, and is published daily, Monday - Saturday.

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Freedom Watch, an Army newspaper



publication, is produced by the 4<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

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In accordance with AR 360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of Freedom Watch are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

All submissions are subject to editing for size and content by the 4<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment, located in Motel 6, CJTF-180, Bagram Air Base.

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# Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)

## Ortiz posts league-leading 18th win with Braves victory

**DENVER** – Acquired in a trade with San Francisco last December, Russ Ortiz has fit seamlessly into the Atlanta rotation just like almost every other Braves starter over the last dozen years.



Russ Ortiz

So much so, that manager Bobby Cox seems somewhat jaded by it all.

“Russ pitched his normal game again — just a duplicate of all the other ones,” Cox said Sunday after Ortiz pitched Atlanta to a 12-6 win over Colorado.

Ortiz posted his major league-leading 18th win as the Braves swept a three-game series, rebounding from being swept in three games by San Francisco last week.

Gary Sheffield homered and drove in three runs. Rafael Furcal, who homered, and Chipper Jones each had four hits and two RBI for Atlanta.

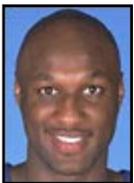
Vinny Castilla also homered as the Braves got 17 hits, one shy of their season high.

The Rockies were swept at home for the first time this season.

Ortiz (18-5) allowed seven hits and four runs in 6 2-3 innings, walking one and striking out five. He matched his career high of 18 victories set with San Francisco in 1999.

## Miami or bust: Clippers decline to match offer for Odom

**LOS ANGELES** – Lamar Odom is free to join the Miami Heat after the Los Angeles Clippers refused Monday to match the Heat’s offer worth nearly \$67 million.



Lamar Odom

“In the final analysis, the decision was based on issues of character and other risks involved,” Clippers vice president Elgin Baylor said in a statement.

Heat spokesman Tim Donovan declined to comment until the team received official notice from the NBA that the Clippers dropped their offer. The offer sheet expires at 11:59 p.m. ET on Tuesday.

After more than two decades without signing a high-priced free agent or retaining a marquee player, Clippers owner Donald Sterling has committed \$124 million this off-season by matching offers to restricted free agents Elton Brand (six years, \$82 million from Miami) and Corey Maggette (six years, \$42 million from Utah).

Letting Odom go to Miami represented significant savings for Sterling, but it made Odom the fourth significant L.A. free agent this summer — along with center Michael Olowokandi, point guard Andre Miller and sharpshooter Eric Piatkowski — to leave the club without compensation.

Odom averaged 14.6 points, 6.7 rebounds and 3.6 assists in 49 games last season. In 230 career games, he has averaged 15.9 points, 7.3 rebounds and 4.6 assists.

## Charlotte sets Labor Day as expiration date for Jordan

**ESPN** – Charlotte Bobcats owner Bob Johnson, having twice extended an original deadline, has set Labor Day as the final date for Michael Jordan’s decision to join the franchise’s management team, the *Charlotte Observer* reported Monday.

Johnson has, since May, expressed publicly on several occasions his interest in having Jordan join the expansion franchise as team president and a minority owner.

Originally, Johnson wanted a decision by July 1, saying he wanted Jordan in place when the NBA free agent period opened and players, as well as executives, were free to negotiate with other teams.

## Fight club: Romanowski breaks teammate’s nose Monday

**ALAMEDA, Calif.** — Oakland Raiders linebacker Bill Romanowski was suspended from Monday’s practice and fined an undisclosed amount after breaking teammate Marcus Williams’ nose during a fight in practice a day earlier.



Bill Romanowski

Raiders coach Bill Callahan said no criminal charges will be pursued over the scuffle, which occurred during a practice drill — though Williams reportedly called Alameda police after the incident. Williams was treated at a local hospital and released Sunday night.

Romanowski is entering his 16th NFL season and second with the Raiders, who signed him as a free agent before their run to the AFC championship last fall. He has appeared in five Super Bowls and played in 240 consecutive regular-season games.

## Canseco released from jail after Florida drops charges

**MIAMI** — Jose Canseco was released from jail Monday after prosecutors dropped charges alleging the former baseball star violated his probation by taking steroids.

Assistant State Attorney Kathleen Hoague said the state could not determine when Canseco took the muscle-enhancing drug because of conflicting expert testimony on how long it would stay in his system.

Canseco had been behind bars since June 20, when probation officials said he tested positive for steroids. He has denied any drug use while on probation.

Canseco has probation since November, when he pleaded guilty to aggravated battery for a 2001 nightclub fight with two tourists.

# Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

## Afghan officers soon to lead under one flag

**KABUL, Afghanistan** (*The Globe & Mail*) — The first military officers in 25 years to lead Afghanistan's national army graduated Sunday, a milestone in the country's mission to build an army under one flag for the first time since the Soviet Union invaded in 1978.

"Every person who lives in this country wants security, and security isn't available without our young people in the army," said Brigadier-General Ghulamsaki Asifi, head of the Kabul Military Training Centre where the 31 men underwent training. "We will fight against those who want to take our independence."

The newly formed corps of staff officers will lead a brigade scheduled to begin active service on Saturday. This brigade, the first of three planned brigades, will carry out orders given by the Defence Ministry.

The military school is part of the international mission to train 70,000 soldiers in the next three years, as set out by the Bonn agreement, the road map to rebuilding Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. There are 4,000 soldiers in the national military trained by French, British and U.S. forces as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.

But that figure is tiny compared to the vast private armies commanded by warlords such as Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid Dostum and his Tajik rival Atta Mohammed. For the past two decades, men with few job or educational prospects have signed up with the warlords' armies, who give licence to loot and plunder villages after successful raids.

It is hoped that a new, disciplined army loyal to a sovereign government will usher in a stable Afghanistan able to maintain security without the assistance of foreign peacekeepers.

General Tajmahot Jahid, a former Northern Alliance guerrilla who fought against the Taliban, is one of the new graduates. Appointed to command the 55th Division, he's glad the years of Afghanistan being occupied are nearing an end.

"The whole world is in Afghanistan now," he said. "I hope they are here to make sure we are not invaded again, maybe not out of interest for Afghans, but out of interest for themselves."

He's headquartered in Bala Hissar fortress, which towers 50 metres above Kabul. Its foundations date to the 5th century, and it's been the epicentre of foreign occupation since the British attempted to colonize Afghanistan in the 19th century. The British twice occupied the building; the Soviets moved in during the 1980s. After Moscow abandoned Afghanistan a decade later, the Taliban claimed the building — and eventually, the country — in the 1990s.

Now the fortress is home to 2,000 soldiers belonging to the 55th who receive a well-rounded education that includes combat training and Persian literature. There is a practical appeal for prospective new recruits. In a country where illiteracy and

unemployment rates are high, soldiers receive food, accommodation and a paycheck.

The new recruits are also a model of Afghan multiculturalism, where majority Pashtuns, Tajiks and Uzbeks serve with minority Hazaras, Turkmen, and Nuristanis.

"We have no problems with the different groups," Gen. Asifi said. "Everybody shares one dining room to eat, one room to sleep."

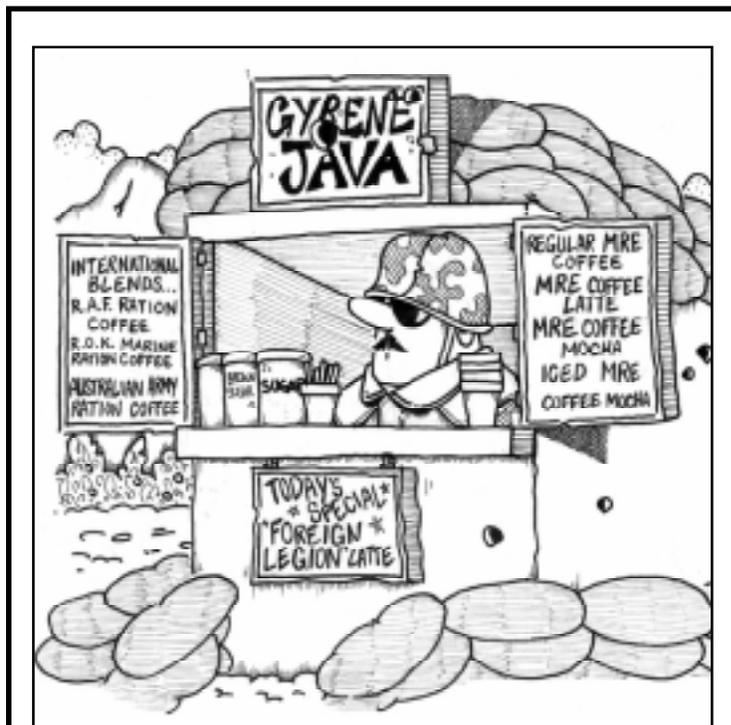
Ethnicity aside, the new officers face a daunting challenge in pacifying the Afghanistan's countryside, largely ungoverned outside Kabul.

Five Afghan soldiers and at least four Taliban guerrillas were killed in the restive province of Zabul over the weekend, the latest combat in the bloodiest week since the Taliban were ousted.

There is also the hazard of jumpy U.S. soldiers patrolling the capital. On Aug 1, U.S. soldiers mistakenly fired on a taxi carrying three Afghan soldiers being trained by ISAF.

Salaries are another problem. At \$50 (U.S.) they are on par with the national average, but there are frequent reports of soldiers deserting because they have not been paid in months. Gen. Asifi dismissed those reports as rumours.

"Whether it's enough or not, we pay them \$50," he said, adding, "I've never met anyone who thinks they are paid enough."



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By Kevin Kilgore

## Laugh Support