

Coalition Bulletin

A publication of the Public Awareness Working Group of the Operation Enduring Freedom Coalition

Volume # 7, 2003



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Operation ENDURING FREEDOM



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Koreans put

Story and photo by Sgt. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment



BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Some mornings, service members can be seen kicking and punching and heard yelling at the Bagram Civic Center. Don't get this confused with Billy Blank's Tai-Bo; it's far from that – it's Tae Kwon Do.

A group of Korean Marines from the 924th Republic of Korea Medical Group give coalition service members an alternative to normal physical training by offering them lessons in the Korean martial art of Tae Kwon Do. "Tae Kwon Do can help you develop physically, gain confidence and relieve combat stress," Tae Kwon Do head instructor 1st Lt. Jae-Neung Lee said, about the benefits for service members while deployed.

At the lessons they teach the new students various combinations of punches and kicks and also sets of controlled stances, called poomsae. Along with teaching Tae Kwon Do fundamentals, the instructors also mix in sprints, cardio exercises and one-on-one training to give the service members a rigorous workout.

Most of the Korean Marines started Tae Kwon Do training at a very young age and continue with it while in the military. They bring those years of training to the coalition soldiers, most of whom are beginners, just getting their first taste of the martial art. Spc. Elton Thomas, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Mountain Division, joined

kick into morning workout



up as soon as he arrived in Afghanistan more than four months ago.

"It teaches you to be patient with yourself," he said, regarding the large number of movements you have to memorize, but his favorite aspect of Tae Kwon Do is kicking and it's bi-product, stress relief.

"You can take frustrations out from the past day on the kicking pad," he said, referring to the portion of the training where students perform different combinations of kicks on striking pads held by instructors.

For newcomers and old hands alike, the hour-long lessons can be grueling.

"I have to change shirts during every lesson," said Spc. Rowland Valderrama, 3654th Maintenance Co., due to the massive amount of sweating caused by the workout. And he's not the only one, but he says he doesn't mind it because the Korean instructors try to get the most out of their students.

"The Marine Tae Kwon Do instructors are motivated, so it gets you motivated," He said.

For Sgt. Christopher Huff, 3654th Maint. Co., the best part of going to Tae Kwon Do is the camaraderie shared by the instructors and students.

"I like being with a group of people who share a common interest in Tae Kwon Do," he said. "The people around you is what makes it for me."

Although there is a language barrier, it hasn't stopped the soldiers and instructors from becoming friends during the deployment.

"The friendship you gain is so absolutely incredible, it's my favorite part," said Spc. Jennifer Madden, 213th Area Support Group, who was awarded a free Tae Kwon Do uniform for repeatedly coming out to the classes and showing a desire to improve.

For the instructors, all the satisfaction for teaching the class comes with meeting all of the students who come out to learn.

"We do it because we like meeting people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and we get to make new friends and develop good relationships with the Tae kwon Do students," Lee said. "After work we get together and exchange culture and learn many things from each other." During their deployment Lee and the other instructors made many friends, but they're rotating back to Korea on Saturday. A new group will resume the Tae Kwon Do classes in early September.

Lee has one wish for the students he's leaving behind.

"One day I hope that some of the soldiers can work hard enough with the next group to eventually achieve the level of black belt, that's my hope."

Tae Kwon Do classes are held in the Bagram Civic Center next to the gym on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 6 a.m. The classes will resume in early September and are open to anyone.



Korean medical group offers a healing hand

Story and photo by Sgt. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Every morning more than a hundred Afghans, male and female, young and old, line up in front of the gate that separates the medical facility from the local village and patiently wait as the small Korean-lead medical staff works diligently to improve the local Afghans' quality of life, one patient at a time.

The Republic of Korea Medical Group "Dong-yi," named after a medical book written by famous Korean doctor Hu-jun who gave up his

wealth and fame to commit his life to medical aid, has been at the forefront of providing desperately needed medical attention to Afghans in the Bagram area at the Korean Medical Facility for the past 19 months.

Korean medical personnel recently reached a milestone by treating their 70 000th Afghan patient out of their small medical facility on the edge of Bagram Air Base.

"The Afghan people have gone through 25 years of hard times and this is the first time we've had medical care in this area," said Aman Khalili, one of three Afghan Doctors who travels to Bagram every day to assist the Korean medical staff.

Along with the three local Afghan doctors, the main Korean medical staff consists of only three doctors, two nurses and seven medics,

hope that we can help the Afghan people improve the quality of their lives." At the medical facility, the medical staff is able to give physical examinations,

administer prescription medicine, physical therapy, electrical nerve stimulation to treat chronic pains, and can perform minor surgery.

The Korean medical center is only equipped to help patients with minor problems, but according to Song, the Korean staff work in cooperation with U.S. Task Force 44 Medical Team

and the Egyptian Medical Team and in an emergency can send patients to either of their hospitals on Bagram.

Although communication between the Koreans and Afghans can be difficult at times – the nurses usually have to resort to rudimentary forms of body language to move the long lines of patients along – and the medical facility can quickly become swamped with patients, the Afghans patiently wait their turn to be seen.

They know the Koreans are here to help, said Khalili, "I've asked many people and they say they are very happy and appreciative of medical care."



but they manage to treat 100 - 200 patients each day during their morning walk-in hours.

For Korean Capt. Junyoung Song, Doctor of Internal Medicine, he notes how his nation struggled in the aftermath of the Korean War and how many allies came to their aid, so he says it's only natural for Koreans to take a personnel interest in the welfare of the people of Afghanistan.

"When I treat the young kids I fell like I'm treating my own children," Song said, adding, "And although we've treated 70,000 people we still have a long way to go."

Korean nurse Capt. Hyunsuk Jeon agreed, "Just like Korea developed really fast after the war, I

Coalition unites for September 11th ceremony

Story and photos by Sgt. Greg Heath

4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – American service members and coalition military services gathered at the Joint Operations Center yesterday afternoon for a retreat ceremony to honor those who died by terrorists hands on Sept. 11, 2001, and those

Korea Medical Group, who participated in the coalition ceremony.

All of us in the coalition are here to make sure it doesn't happen ever again; it's our duty, Sukhyun added.

For Pvt. 2 Soiban Bell, 10th Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain

help but think about the innocent people who died and how since that fateful day he has hoped to do his part to ensure another tragedy like it never happens again.

"For Americans, the attacks on Sept. 11 is like the attack on Pearl Harbor; it is something we will never



who've subsequently lost their lives in the ensuing global war on terrorism. Hundreds of service members representing nearly a half dozen nations gathered to show the world that even two years after the vicious attacks, the coalition stands unified by their goal of bringing an end to global terrorism.

Although the terrorists' main target on Sept. 11 was the United States, the coalition service members realize that no country is safe from the reaches of the ongoing terror campaign.

"Terrorism isn't only a problem for Americans, something like Sept. 11 can happen anywhere," said Marine 1st Lt. Hwang Sukhyun, Republic of

Division, being in the ceremony in Afghanistan alongside her coalition allies, only two years after the attacks on her homeland, is something she will always remember.

"I'm proud to be a part of this," Bell said, as she stood in formation with her fellow 10th Mountain Div. soldiers. "On Sept. 11, 2001, as a nation we fell far, and now we're far away from home and we're working together with Italians, Koreans, Egyptians, Polish, and (other coalition partners), and we're all fighting for the same cause."

Sept. 11th has left different impressions on everyone, but for Sgt. Robert Gagnon, Company D, 140th Avn. Battalion, 10th Mountain Div., he can't

forget," Gagnon said, adding he was proud to fight for his country, similar to the millions of young American soldiers who fought in World War II over fifty years ago as a response to the attack on Pearl Harbor. "I volunteered to come to Afghanistan and I hope I can help make a difference."

At the conclusion of the ceremony a soldier played retreat from a watchtower overlooking the coalition formation as the American flag was slowly lowered from the flagpole.

The flag was retired for another day, but the fight is far from over.

Root causes of Terrorism

By Colonel Yousef Alhnaity, Royal Jordanian Air Force.

Colonel Alhnaity is a Jordanian living in the Middle East. He has been involved with the coalition fighting the Global War on Terrorism since its beginning in October 2001. In this article he presents his personal views on terrorism, in particular in the Middle East, and what he perceives as a strategy towards a solution.

The Middle East is a region renowned for instability where the political and security environment is dynamic and overlaid with a wide spectrum of war crimes, violence and terrorism. Sources of tension and instability in the region are numerous and multifaceted. The international

As I see it, there are two main factors that lead to terrorism. First is the **domestic factor**, which includes a combination of poverty and unequal distribution of wealth, dysfunctional and corrupt social infrastructure, frustration in the minds of the developing youth over inequity and lack of the basic necessities of life i.e. food, shelter, health care and safety. Second is the **international factor**, which includes distrust of the West, particularly the United States; frustration at the treatment of the Arab world by the West (no respect from the West for the Arab Government or people); failure of the international community to foster a sense of justice, truth, and peace in the region (e.g. the Palestinian issue); and the intervention of Western governments in the region's political, social, and educational systems. There has also been support from the West for corrupt regimes in



“The only people who win when Americans feel divided from their Arab and Muslim friends are the extremists and haters. Let’s not allow these enemies of peace to do any more violence than they already have. Now, more than ever we need to stand together, as allies, partners and friends”

***King Abdullah II of Jordan
Sep 14, 2003***

community has, through a history of failed policy decisions in the Middle East, fostered feelings of deep humiliation and injustice in the region. This in turn has created the breeding ground for extremism felt from Palestine to Afghanistan. As we have seen recently, many young Arabs have volunteered to fight the coalition forces in Iraq. This will continue whenever there is an opportunity to fight any outsider who is viewed as an aggressor coming into the region for purposes of oil, foreign occupation or other ulterior motives.

Terrorism has occurred throughout history for a variety of reasons and in many regions of the world. In some cases, national governments have aided terrorists to further their own domestic and foreign policy goals. State sponsorship has proven invaluable to some terrorist organizations by supplying arms, money, safe haven and other means of support. In so doing, it has transformed ordinary groups with otherwise limited capacities, into more powerful and dangerous opponents of peace. Terrorism has become a global and transnational threat that endangers the stability of the whole international community.

the region. Ignorance by the West of Arab and Muslim culture, civilization, heritage and religion also plays a part. Finally, frustration with western media, particularly that of the US, is a significant factor. A perception in the Arab world is that US media are often one-sided and anti-Arab.

Operation Enduring Freedom is playing and must continue to play an important part in the Middle East and the fight against terrorism. Nevertheless, the long-term strategy for OEF must incorporate a mutual understanding of cultural and religious ideologies, and it must take into consideration the feelings of the people of the region in order to determine the best approach to tackle the problem. It must also integrate the views, opinions, and commitments of the coalition members, especially those who are part of the Middle East region. While acts of terrorism are expected to continue in the world, by understanding and addressing the root causes of terrorist acts, an all-encompassing strategy has a good chance of success.

In my opinion, a terrorist organization must be fought by using both **direct** and **indirect** approaches. The direct

approach is based on the coalition first knowing the terrorist ways, means and ends. However, a comprehensive understanding of terrorist ways, means, and ends is a significant challenge. The means include the finances,



armaments, and personnel to achieve their objectives. The ways involve how they go about imposing their will by attacking the will of those they target for military or political purposes. The ends vary depending on the group, but group affiliation can be important in order for progress to be made in achieving their goals. Like military organizations, they also rely on unity of command, economy of effort, and unified mission and purpose to a certain extent. Knowledge of their training, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and then being prepared to interdict the terrorists as they move between sanctuaries or from sanctuary to targets is important. This requires established international agreements to enable coalition forces the freedom of movement necessary to counter terrorist operations. Another key element in the direct approach is the exchange of information between countries. This is vital to ensure intelligence and operational information is shared to enable timely intervention.

However, the long term strategy must always be to remove the root causes of grievances at their heart. The indirect approach involves addressing fragile political regimes with limited economic resources, poor populations and a minimal security mechanism to deal with internal problems. This requires that the international community understand the needs of the particular country and provide it with all that it requires in terms of governance, economic aid, and security support.

The current direct approach alone will not eliminate the root causes of terrorism and distrust.

All sides need to understand that without building bridges of understanding between all nations from different cultures, races or religions, it will make things more difficult and will increase antagonism. Winning the peace is far more difficult than applying kinetic solutions. Progress towards more flexible and democratic governments and greater willingness between the states of the Middle East to coexist peacefully is the key.

My recommendation to resolve the Middle East terror problems is to focus on the settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, leading to a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arab countries. This will involve enhancing security cooperation for the prevention and control of terrorism, developing a mechanism to eliminate anti-Jewish, anti-Arab, and anti-US sentiments from media reporting and from among the people themselves, as well as the development of shared political views on both sides. Enhancing cooperation to eliminate threats by states and non-state actors will require the establishment of greater understanding between Arabs, Jews, and Christians. More understanding from the West of the Arab culture, civilization and heritage is also required and on the other hand Arabs and Muslims should do the same. Coping with the challenges of providing more jobs, food, water and investment will require greater integration into the international economy. For Iraq, the focus should be on the sovereignty of the Iraqi people in their richness and diversity, and Iraqis should have a substantial say in their future as quickly as possible. The west should influence the minds of the local youth living in the CENTCOM AOR positively reinforcing that the west is not against their religion, culture, or their homeland. This can be achieved with sincere commitment from all parties in the economic and social areas whereby the youth can see a visible development of infrastructure, improvement in the educational system, provision of resources, exchange programs and encouragement of academic freedom. One final thought: outside intervention alone will not solve the problems, we have to be on the same sheet of music with other parties (Middle East people and governments) to figure out our own domestic problems and fix it to achieve our goals.

If progress can be made in these areas, then **Operation Enduring Freedom stands a good chance of success in its quest to win the Global War on Terrorism, not just in the Middle East, but throughout the world.**



Danish help train young Marines

Story and photo by Sgt. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – When Cpl. Charles Freeman and Lance Cpl. Shane Proulx of 374th Marine Wing Support Squadron, discovered that Danish airmen who shared their same job were working with equipment the Marine Corps will be fielding in 2005, they knew they had to seize the chance to get a head start on the rest of their Marine counterparts.

For the last five months the two Marine airfield recovery specialists have been receiving training by members of the Royal Danish Air Force on how to operate the Danish built Bac-12 Arresting Barrier, or M-31, as newly classified by the Marine Corps.

When asked by the two young Marines back in February to give some training on the equipment, Danish A.F. Sgt. Kim Carsten, said, “We were happy about (training them.)”

The Marines and Danish airfield recovery specialists’ primary jobs are very comparable, with the main difference being they work with different aircraft, the Danish with the F-16 and the Marines working with the F-18. Their main responsibility is to quickly stop fixed-wing aircraft on a small airfield (normally 4000 feet or smaller).

They stop the aircraft using an arresting barrier, which is composed of two machines anchored on each side of the landing strip, with a steel cord between them. As the

aircraft lands its tail hook catches the steel cord, and the two machines quickly stop the plane, usually no more than 900 feet down the landing strip.

For the young Marines, getting the opportunity to train on the new gear was a wish come true.

“It’s ‘dream gear’ to us,” said Freeman. “Day to day it’s almost maintenance free. There are just a lot of visual checks and a lot of simple preventive maintenance.”

The Danish M-31 will be replacing the M-21 gear, which has been used by the Marine Corps since the Vietnam War.

“We fight everyday with the M-21 gear, it definitely keeps us busy,” said Freeman, and adding jokingly, “We have a lot of job security, but we’d more than welcome the M-31 gear. It would make our job that much easier.”

At their stateside duty station 29 Palms, Calif., Marine squadrons from throughout the United States come to train on landing techniques. And as airfield recovery specialists their main mission is to make sure pilots are confident using the tail hook landing equipment.

Besides being lower maintenance, the M-31 is also “smarter” than the M-21, according to Proulx.

“With the M-21 we have to adjust our gear and set our throttles manually,” Proulx said. “(The Danish) braking system is self adjusting, depending on the speed and weight of the plane.”

Freeman and Proulx aren’t the first



Marine Lance Cpl. Shane Proulx, 374 MWSS, inspects the cable used on the Danish Bac-12 Arresting Gear on Bagram Airfield. The Marine Corps will begin fielding the Bac-12 in 2005.

in the Marine Corps to train on the equipment, their training experience is significant because they get to train with airmen who've been working with the landing equipment since the Danish Royal Air Force first fielded it 14 years ago.

"We feel training with these experienced professionals that find it all second nature definitely gives us a head start," said Freeman.

The Danish airmen are currently trying to even further the two Marines, education by attempting to reserve them a slot in the Bac-12 Arresting Barrier certification school in Denmark.

According to Carsten, this is a class that not many Foreign Service members are given the opportunity to attend, but after working with the Marines for the last five months they wanted to try and get them in.

Proulx hopes to attend the course so he can possibly go back to Pensacola, Fla., and be an instructor at the Marine Airfield Recovery training school. He said his goal is to help Marines get comfortable with the M-31 by the time they field it in 2005.

The Danish airmen had never worked with American service members before their deployment here, and they admit the first time they heard they were going to help Marines, they were a little apprehensive.

"The first time I heard they were Marines I thought they might be 'tough guys,' said Carsten. "But they are just normal people."

Proulx didn't know what to expect from the Danish airmen at first either, professionally or personally, but once they met, things went fine.

"If anyone gets the chance to work with another coalition force I would say do it because it's an awesome experience," Proulx said. "We talk all the time and ask them about Denmark; the cultural differences are remarkable. The experience you get is great, not only getting to know them, but also working closely with them, we learned so much from them, and we're grateful."

10th Mountain assumes command of Salerno FOB

Story and photos by Sgt. Greg Heath

4th Public Affairs Detachment

KHOWST, Afghanistan – Italian Task Force Nibbio handed over the reins of Salerno Forward Operating Base to 10th Mountain Division during a transfer of authority ceremony a few weeks back. Task Force 187 of 10th Mountain Division now takes over operations at the Forward Operating Base (FOB) near the southeastern border of Afghanistan. Their main responsibilities will be providing security for the firebase, and protecting the forward landing strip and helicopter-landing zone. "It's an important mission we have here," said Company B commander Capt. Justin Pelkey, 1st Bn. 87th Infantry Regiment, who's unit had been at Salerno since late August. "We have to have this FOB for fixed wing, rotary wing, resupply missions, and for the Apache quick reaction force, (among other things.) We make sure that we get aircraft in and out of here as needed."

The Italian light infantry battle group had been in control of daily operations out of Salerno since March and after six months of distinguished service is set to return to Italy. Among TF Nibbio's many accomplishments while in Khowst are the conduct of the first air assault in the history of the Italian army, participation in Operations Haven Denial and Warrior Sweep with the 82nd Airborne Division, Afghan National Army and Special Operation Forces, the conduct of over 2000 conventional patrols which led to the disposal of many weapons caches, and the development of a strong relationship with local Afghans, according to Brig. Gen.(P) Lloyd Austin, commander of 10th Mtn. Div. and deputy commander of CJTF-180. "They should feel good about their contribution to the global war on terrorism," said Austin, during the change of authority ceremony.

The night before the change of authority, the FOB came under its first rocket attack in many months, and



according to Pelkey, it shows that the work here is far from done.

Pelkey expects Task Force 187 to pick up where the Italians left off, and add to TF Nibbio's many successes.

"I expect the soldiers to remain ever vigilant, stay alert and stay alive," he said.



German Naval Air Task Group in Mombassa, Kenya: Between Terrorism and Humanitarian Assistance

Article and pictures courtesy of the German US CENTCOM delegation

Under Operation Enduring Freedom, in support of the fight against global terrorism, a German Naval Air Task Group conducts Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) operations in the Horn of Africa. The German soldiers are stationed at MOI International Airport in the Kenyan port of Mombassa, East Africa.

Out of this base three BREGUET 1150 ATLANTIC maritime patrol aircraft of the German naval aviation force from Nordholz in Northern Germany conduct surveillance flights along the Somali coast, over the adjacent waters up to the Horn of Africa.

Their mission is an active contribution to the surveillance of the sea routes in the North and East of Africa to deny terrorist groups supply of personnel and material.

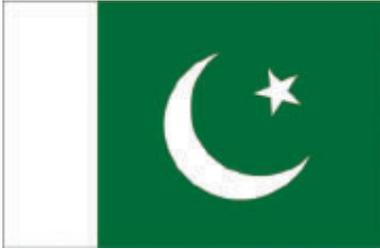
In addition to the fight against worldwide terrorism the German soldiers are active fulfilling humanitarian tasks in the region. Since their deployment began in March 2002, an orphanage, called the WEMA Center, has been constantly extended in various individual projects: a field was laid out, a chicken coop built, a well drilled and a bathing/wash house set up.

In addition, animals were purchased for ensuring the self-sustained supply of eggs and milk. A new kitchen with solar hot water heating and a dining hall to serve 250 children is another project that has been implemented. And, of course, a playground was built for the "little inhabitants".

"All these measures helped to substantially improve the living conditions for the orphans. And when you look into the bright and grateful childrens' eyes you know that you are making an important contribution, not only to the fight against terrorism but also to the humanitarian field. To invest into the future of our children means to invest into a better world."



AFGHANISTAN'S RECONSTRUCTION - PAKISTAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS



By Cdr Irfan M Khan, Pakistan representative,
photos courtesy of Pakistani delegation to US CENTCOM

For a quarter of a century Afghanistan has been the venue of many battles. While foreign invasion took its heavy toll, the civil war amongst the tribal warlords/warring factions was no less brutal. War has shaken the very foundations of the brave nation. Through all of this, Pakistan has adopted the role of the 'Big Brother' to Afghanistan. In 1979 when Russia entered Afghanistan, thousands of Afghans fled to Pakistan. Out of over 3 million refugees in Pakistan, considerable numbers have been repatriated under UN auspices. However, a large Afghan population is based in Pakistan. Pakistan has taken on the responsibility to assimilate a large refugee population, providing food, shelter and employment. Later on when Al-Qaida made Afghanistan a launching pad for its terrorist activities, Pakistan came to the rescue again and helped the US led forces to rid the country of the menace. During the same period thousands of Afghans again took refuge in Pakistan.

Even now under the newly installed Karzai government, Pakistan continues its support. Afghans face a big challenge of rebuilding their country from the ashes. In doing so Pakistan has once again taken on the responsibility to help their Afghan brethren in their efforts to reconstruct their country. Despite its own economic constraints the Pakistan Government has pledged its strong active support in all the fields of socio-economic sectors. These sectors include finance, power and telecommunications, health, food and agriculture, petroleum and natural resources and education sectors.

Each ministry of a certain sector has undertaken long term and short-term projects to contribute to the 'Reconstruction Programme for Afghanistan'. For example, the Ministry of Finance has pledged US \$10 million as cash assistance for the Afghan Government and many other forms of grants and loan assistance. It is also working on highway construction projects to facilitate the transport industry development in Afghanistan.

In addition to financial assistance, the various ministries are also trying to supply agricultural goods, industry



equipment and other materials together with human resources. Human resource is provided through training programs, rehabilitation centers, survey studies and technical information. So the aim of the Reconstruction Programme is to not only provide financial assistance but also to provide the efficient and effective means to handle that assistance. Such programs will also have a long lasting and durable effect on the development and growth of the industrial infrastructure in Afghanistan.

Apart from the government-to-government contact, some notable NGOs and private sector entrepreneurs are also actively involved in humanitarian activities inside Afghanistan. It is pertinent to mention that as the rebuilding activities are gaining momentum, gradually the Afghan people are getting employment, which in turn is improving their economic conditions. A large, growing pool of trained workers will thus be available in the near future.

The projects undertaken by the Pakistan Government to help rehabilitation of the war torn country are not only ambitious but also very effective. They will not only provide immediate assistance but help provide for significant future economic growth in Afghanistan.

New Runway Effort of Multiple Nations

By Staff Sgt. Russell Wicke

455th Expeditionary Operations Group Public Affairs



BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - Multiple nations are making headway working together in the reconstruction of the runway at Bagram AFB.

Completion of this Army funded project is anticipated to be in November thanks to the combined efforts of the Thai, Korean, Polish and Slovakian militaries, U.S. Army engineers and the 455th Civil Engineer Squadron, said Capt. Elton Sledge, 455th CES chief.

The reconstruction of this runway is necessary because of its current dilapidated condition, said Sledge. "This runway has been here a long time," said Sledge, "and it wasn't maintained very well by the Taliban. There are drainage problems and sections of the runway are sliding, sinking and cracking."

Because this runway is the only one here, half of it must remain open for incoming and departing aircraft. "We're working on the west side of the runway right now replacing pads," said Master Sgt. David Lennemann, 455th CES superintendent for airfield repair and operations. "Right now aircraft are using a 90-foot wide landing strip, which is pretty tight."

Lennemann explained a standard width for runways is about 180 feet, which is about how wide the finished product will be here.

"August 4 will be about the time we'll open up the west side and start working on the eastern half," he said. Although the project is now running seamlessly, it hasn't always been without its challenges.

"Everything is pretty simple now that we've started construction," said Senior Airman Joe Bauer, 455th CES

main escort, "but it was organizing all the efforts that was difficult." It is not all without challenges now.

"Because of the different people from different countries out here, sometimes communication is a challenge," said Bauer. Despite the bumps in the road, however, Bauer said a quality product is what Bagram will receive.

"Everyone working this project is doing a great job," said Sledge, "but one particular group that stands out is the Thais. They are very hard workers - very dedicated." Moreover, everyone involved in this project have been a valuable asset to the end result, added Sledge. But he isn't the only one who's proud of the progress so far.

"Without a doubt, we have a great team of people and a good quality product," said Lennemann. "We work hard and we play hard." Sledge said he believes ingredients like that will result in a good future runway for military operations and a commercial Afghan airport.

