

Freedom

August 22, 2004

Watch



**CMA reaches out to help Kuchis
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**Regional, PRT commanders discuss progress
Page 3**



Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

Socket to me!

Spc. Joseph Zelidan works on the transmission of a HMMWV at FOB Salerno. Zelidan is part of the 1st Bn., 501st Para. Inf. Regt.'s Forward Support Company. The mechanics of the FSC have done their part to ensure the Soldiers of Task Force 1-501st Para. Inf. Regt. kept moving during their time in Afghanistan.

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Medical personnel from Bagram Air Base brought a Cooperative Medical Assistance to the nomadic Kuchi tribesmen of Afghanistan. Here, Capt. Kristal Horsch, a TF 325 CSH physician assistant, provides care to an Afghan child during the Aug. 5 CMA in Barikab Village, a Kuchi settlement.

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Freedom Watch

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Leaders gather to discuss PRT efforts

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Leaders from the 16 provincial reconstruction teams spread across Afghanistan, three regional commands, the State Department and Combined Joint Task Force-76 met here Aug. 4-6 for the quarterly PRT conference.

The conference provided an opportunity for the leadership to gather and discuss reconstruction efforts, as well as receive guidance from their higher headquarters.

“The concept of the PRT originated at the State Department,” said Col. Phillip Bookert, CJTF-76 civil affairs officer. “They wanted to develop something that could make an impact at the grass-root level — a small footprint on the ground that could affect change.”

And that’s exactly what the PRTs have been doing. Since the last PRT conference in April, several PRTs have opened, with four more scheduled to open in the next month.

“We’ve added a bunch of PRTs since the last time we all got together here,” said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, CJTF-76 commander, as he opened the conference.

The conference allowed Olson to address his focus areas with the leaders of each of the individual PRTs and regional commanders, and also receive assessments from them about progress being made within their areas of respon-

sibility. It also allowed all the commanders to present projects they are working and solicit ideas from others.

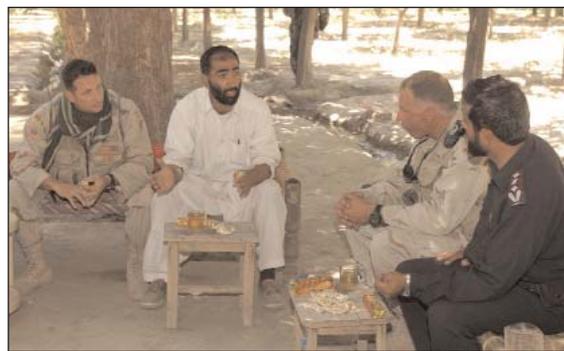
“This is an opportunity for everyone to share their good ideas and for the command to ensure everyone is on track,” said Col. Larry Raaf, Task Force Victory commander. “This serves as a place where good things, good people and good ideas come together ... each working toward one common goal.”

The common goal the PRTs are working toward is a relationship with the Afghan people that results in reconstruction and development of their nation.

“The work the PRTs do gains the trust and confidence of the Afghan people,” said Col. Gary H. Cheek, Combined Task Force Thunder commander. “They help with everything from building and equipping police departments to providing clean drinking water and electricity. Everything they do improves lives, which contrasts with the enemy.”

The area where this contrast has been most apparent is voter registration.

“You are responsible for the success that is voter registration,” said Olson to the PRT commanders. “Your hard work encouraged the Afghan people to get behind their (national) government.”



Pfc. Chris Stump

Members of the Jalalabad PRT discuss security, reconstruction and election issues with the Laghman Province police chief. One of the PRT’s primary missions is to build relationships with Afghan leaders.

Now, as the government becomes more solid, the PRTs are working closely with officials to make even more permanent improvements around Afghanistan, one of Olson’s focus areas.

“We’ve been focusing on high-impact, short-term improvements, but we need to develop more enduring, long-term projects,” he said. “We need to develop a broader-based effort.”

Another one of Olson’s focus areas for the PRTs and regional commands is outreach.

“You need to re-double your efforts in engagement,” he said. “Develop more relationships.”

This is one of the most successful aspects of the PRTs and helps immensely with the Coalition mission.

“You are dealing with government officials at every level,” said Olson. “The relationships you’ve developed have proven absolutely critical on more than one occasion.”

That statement falls right in line with one of the objectives of Combined Task Force Bronco, said Col. Dick Pedersen, CTF Bronco commander.

“Our goal is to establish, foster and maintain positive civil/military relationships,” he said.

To better accomplish this, all of the PRTs are beginning to work more closely with the regional commands.

“The PRT commanders and regional commanders need to integrate and combine into one coherent concept. The lines by themselves are too weak,” said Pedersen. “But together, we can promote a better future for the Afghan people and children. We can spark hope and develop a trust with them.”



Pfc. Cheryl Ransford

Lt. Col. David Ferris, a member of the TF Victory surgeon cell, administers a dose of dewormer mixture to a cow during a CMA in Ghandakia village June 15. CMAs often depend on help from area PRTs and help the Afghan people with needed medication. Visits by Coalition troops also build rapport with the local population.

Hoosiers replace Sooners in Afghan mission

Story and photo by Col. Randy Pullen
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — In an event demonstrating the continuing commitment of the United States to Afghanistan and the Afghan people, the 76th Infantry Brigade of the Indiana Army National Guard assumed responsibility for the training of the Afghan National Army Aug. 5.

Commanded by Brig. Gen. Richard Moorhead and designated as Task Force Phoenix III, the new organization replaces Task Force Phoenix II, which has been in Afghanistan since December 2003. It was commanded by – and primarily comprised of – the 45th Infantry Brigade of the Oklahoma Army National Guard led by Brig. Gen. Thomas Mancino.

Having rolled up and cased the 45th Infantry Brigade colors at this ceremony, the Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix II are returning to the United States for reunions with their families and to prepare for future missions.

Maj. Gen. Craig Weston, chief of the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan, served as the reviewing officer at the transfer of authority ceremony held at Camp Phoenix in Kabul. Among the dignitaries attending the ceremony were Afghanistan's First Deputy Minister of Defense Rahim Wardak, Lt. Gen. David Barno, Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan commanding general, and Canadian Army Lt. Gen. Rick Hillier, International Security Assistance Force commanding general, as well as other Afghan and Coalition military and diplomatic officials.

In his remarks, Weston praised the Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix II for their role in adding a new chapter to the long history of Afghanistan and told the Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix III that they stood poised to put their own stamp on that history. Because of who they were, the Soldiers of both organizations were uniquely fitted for the mission given them.

“The Afghan people could have no better partners in building their new army than these National Guard units of the United States Army, the living descendants of the Minutemen who stepped forward in our own country's time of need some 229 years ago, to create our own Army and win for us – through their courage and sacrifice – the freedoms we enjoy in the United States today,” said Weston.

Weston listed the accomplishments of



Brig. Gen. Richard Moorhead (left), 76th Inf. Bde. commander and Command Sgt. Maj. James Gordon (center), 76th Inf. Bde., face the colors of the 76th Infantry Brigade, Indiana Army National Guard, as they are unfurled Aug. 5 at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan. With the unfurling of the colors, the 76th Inf. Bde., now designated as Task Force Phoenix III, assumed the mission of training the Afghan National Army from the 45th Infantry Brigade, Oklahoma National Guard, designated as Task Force Phoenix II.

Task Force Phoenix II, including developing the Afghan National Army to almost 14,000 soldiers and fully fielding the Central Corps ahead of schedule; accelerating the training capacity of the ANA from two kandaks (battalions) simultaneously to four, which will allow the army to meet its strength goal years earlier than planned; having the task force's base support battalion serve as the logistics command for the ANA, providing all logistics support for an army conducting country-wide combat operations; and having its trainers not only train Afghan soldiers in garrison, but accompany them as combat advisors when they deployed on missions into the former heartlands of terrorists.

Turning to the Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix III, Weston told them that their challenges would be equally great. They would be helping the Afghan National Army to ensure the security of the country's first free election in its history, assisting the ANA in its ongoing combat and stability operations around the country and establishing the four regional commands of the ANA.

The outgoing commander spoke with pride about how the Task Force Phoenix II Soldiers had served and fought alongside the great warriors of Afghanistan and how,

after seeing the Afghans in action, it was apparent why this country had never been conquered. He also found the reaction of the Afghan people to their army to be heartening.

“Everywhere the Afghan National Army has gone,” said Mancino, “their embedded trainers have gone. And everywhere the Afghan National Army has gone, they have been welcomed by the people of Afghanistan.”

The incoming commander said that the transfer of authority for the ANA training mission to the 76th Infantry Brigade symbolized America's steadfast commitment to the people of Afghanistan. He also acknowledged the debt the new team owes to its predecessors.

“To the Soldiers of the 45th Infantry Brigade,” said Moorhead, “you have set us up for success.”

The American Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix III consist of Army National Guard Soldiers from 15 states, as well as other augmentees from the U.S. Army Reserve. Like its predecessor, Task Force Phoenix III is a Coalition force which contains soldiers from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Canada, Romania, Bulgaria, New Zealand and Mongolia.

Civil Affairs teams help build relationships

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

FORWARD OPERATING SITE CARLSON, Afghanistan — Building relationships with the local population is essential to the success of missions in southeastern Afghanistan. The Soldiers of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) and the 27th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Airborne) convoyed north of Forward Operating Site Carlson Afghanistan to a small village. It was the first time they had gone this far from the base camp.

“We pushed out a little bit north of where we normally do,” said Capt. Dustin Owens, 27th Eng. Bn. intelligence officer. The assessment had two purposes. It moved the unit further north in the operating area along the southeastern border of Afghanistan, presenting a security presence to the villagers in the area. It also helped expand the reach of Civil Affairs, giving them the opportunity to conduct village assessments in other areas.

The Civil Affairs team assesses villages to see how they can best help the local population.

The goal is to identify the location of the village, meet the elders, determine the basic infrastructure of the village and find out the needs of the village, said Capt. Nathan Reynolds, Civil Affairs team leader.

As the convoy rolled into the bazaar area, several men came out to visit with the

Soldiers. The gathering drank chai (tea) and discussed local issues, while Soldiers from the 27th Eng. Bn. pulled security.

The Civil Affairs team took into account the needs of the village as they spoke to the elders. In the past, most elders have asked for generators.

“When we give a village a generator, we are providing electricity and power to a region that has never had power before,” said Reynolds. “They all know what a generator can bring. Not only does it provide power for homes and markets, the power can also expand their livelihood.”

When the Soldiers go into villages, they expect the local population to help with the projects in the area.

“We don’t want to just give things outright. We want to meet them halfway,” said Reynolds. “We may present a generator to a village and make sure the understanding is that it’s for the village as a whole – it’s not for select individuals. And to try to develop the sense of community that it’s there for all of them and they all need to pitch in together. ... They have to come together to obtain all the wiring and electrical outlets. They have to come to a consensus and then obtain the additional resources to put it to use.”

It’s important for the villagers to understand the process of working as a team and make the most of the assistance the Civil Affairs team is providing.

“We don’t want them to become entirely dependent on us. We have a lot more

resources currently than what their government does, but what we’re trying to do is take care of some of the basic needs,” said Reynolds. “However, we also try to push them in the direction of their local government, to the provincial government and the national government to satisfy some of their needs.

“We try to kind of build faith in their government. We’ll be here for a while, but they also need to know that there’s another outlet, another system, established for them,” he said.

While the Soldiers are in the village to try to make life better for the people, they are also collecting information on how to secure the area.

“A lot of information that I get is mostly human intelligence when I go up to these areas. I get to speak directly with the people that are living within the area,” said Owens. “They provide the direct information I need in order to keep the area safe, as well as the guys on FOS Carlson.”

Village assessments have gone a long way toward the Coalition gaining the respect and trust of the local population throughout the country. This village is no exception.

“We’re chipping away at the support of the Taliban and causing people to come to us. While the Taliban and anti-Coalition (militants) use fear to intimidate the people, we help them through projects that sway them to our side,” said Reynolds. “We’re making an impact on the area.”

Enduring Voices

How has Operation Enduring Freedom impacted you?



Pfc. Joseph Workman
58th MP Co.
“It makes you take less for granted and see how fortunate you are.”



Korean Sgt. Kim, Hanjoo
ROK Army 100th Eng. Group
“I have the opportunity to help the people in Afghanistan and work with the Coalition.”



Spc. Allison Urbatsch
CTF Thunder
“I get to meet interesting people from all over the world.”



Chief Warrant Officer Ken Wiley
1st Bn., 211th Avn. Regt.
“I’ve been able to learn a lot in a short amount of time.”

Coalition strengthens ANP for security

Story and photo by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — While security remains the key to reconstruction and successful elections in Afghanistan, Combined Task Force Bronco is taking an aggressive approach in training and equipping the Afghan National Police in Regional Command South.

With all-encompassing reforms to the district police departments in the Kandahar, Zabul and Oruzgan provinces, the aim is to strengthen existing police organizations already working to quell small insurgencies and give the Afghan people more law and order, said Col. John Sanford, CTF Bronco civil military operations advisor.

“We have identified that the Afghan National Army and ANP are the real answers to most security problems,” said Sanford. “It is logical that they would give superior security because they are out in the districts, among the people.”

This answer to many security problems still needs an investment from Coalition forces in many different areas, said Sanford. The primary assistance from CTF Bronco is equipping the local police department with transportation and communication.



Staff Sgt. Matthew Aswegan (left) and 2nd Lt. Vincent Particini, members of the 209th MP Co., talk with ANP Maj. Gen. C. Amir Mohammad, Zabul Province police chief, about potential improvements to area police departments.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Aswegan, 209th Military Police Company, is a member of a police technical assistance team in the Zabul Province. Working from the Qalat Provincial Reconstruction Team site, Aswegan and his team travel to different district police departments, where they assess the needs of each and make rec-

ommendations to commanders for improvements.

“Many police departments have already told us they need not only more vehicles to do their jobs, but better communication,” said Aswegan.

See ANP, Page 14

Conference highlights medical cooperation

Story by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth
TF 1st Bn., 501st Para. Inf. Regt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — There are many ways to win the Global War on Terrorism besides hunting down all anti-Coalition militants. U.S. and Afghan doctors in the Khowst area have found another cure for this battle – cooperation.

Fifty doctors met recently at Forward Operating Base Salerno for a medical conference, which was designed to gain a better idea of the medical assets available in the Khowst area, as well as determine the current needs of the local medical community.

The U.S. doctors came from Salerno and Chapman Airfield, while the Afghan doctors, three of them females, were from the Khowst Civilian Hospital and Khowst University Hospital.

The doctors have long worked together and discussed Afghan health care issues, but this was the first formal gathering for this purpose.

“It is important that we have a good relationship,” said Dr. Muhammad Rasool Habibi, director of the Khowst University

“It is important we have a good relationship.”

Dr. Muhammad Rasool Habibi
Khowst University Hospital director

Hospital. “It is also important because I want to learn, so that I can better help my patients.”

He went on to say that Afghan doctors do not have access to modern equipment, such as ultrasound or X-ray machines – they are

treating people with older methods.

During the conference, the doctors had lectures on several topics relevant to Khowst Province. They discussed basic care for head injuries, as well as external fixation for fracture management – attaching a metal framework to the outside of the body to help broken bones heal.

“One of the most common dilemmas in the Khowst area is head injuries,” said Dr. (Maj.) Peter Ray, medical director for Salerno’s 325th Forward Surgical Team. “A CT scanner is necessary to determine who needs surgery and who doesn’t.”

A CT scanner is used to determine the extent of internal injuries from blunt force traumas. The doctors can find out if there is a need for surgery before they begin the procedure.

The nearest non-U.S. military CT scanner is in Pakistan. The U.S. doctors would like to get a CT scanner using funds from the

See Cure, Page 14

Coalition promotes secure elections

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

GHAZNI PROVINCE, Afghanistan — With the October presidential election just a few months away, the voter registration process throughout Afghanistan is starting to wind down.

At the end of July, more than eight million Afghans, out of an approximate 10 million eligible, were registered for the upcoming presidential election. More than 40 percent of the registered voters are female.

This is an accomplishment that speaks for the success of the Coalition forces operating throughout Afghanistan.

“Our forces are assisting the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police with securing the elections process,” said Marine Maj. Tim Barrick, Combined Joint Task Force-76 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan representative.

This security includes conducting presence patrols and responding to specific threats. In one such case, members of the Coalition responded quickly in Ghazni Province to ensure the safety of voter registration employees.

“When we had a threat against our compound, the Soldiers conducted an extraction to get us out of here,” said Gordon Kindlon, Ghazni provincial logistics coordinator for project services. “I know I’m relying on these guys, and I know they’re serious.”

Kindlon is responsible for the day-to-day logistics of running voter registration sites throughout Ghazni. Though he hasn’t encountered many problems with logistics, he said security was the biggest issue across the board. With the help of the Coalition, this is a problem that has been reduced significantly.

“Thanks to the presence of our forces and a strong will amongst the people, we have helped to develop a more secure and stable environment,” said Maj. Scott C. Ford, Ghazni Civil Military Operations Center commander. This secure and stable environment has resulted in the registration of more than 300,000 people within the province.

Throughout Afghanistan, some locations have recorded more than 10,000 people registering per day. To help promote the registration of women, there are many females working at the voter registration sites as well.

UNAMA representative, Zarmina, spends her time training other women how to oper-



Sgt. Frank Magni

An Afghan instructor teaches a UNAMA-sponsored class on the voter registration process. The students in the class are learning the process so they will be able to register voters themselves.

ate voter registration sites. Zarmina said that regardless of where she has traveled, she has always felt safe, and that people have welcomed her with “open arms.” A sign of the success of the Coalition and the Afghan government’s efforts.

“The backbone of our security is the Coalition,” said one member of the Joint Electoral Management Body. “The general consensus is that without the (United Nations), the Coalition and the ANA working parallel, the registration process wouldn’t be able to go ahead.”

While the Coalition provides the “third ring” of security, according to Ford, there is still another element that is helping on a direct level.

Afghan National Police officers are providing security at registration sites, ensuring that citizens are able to register safely and freely.

To help facilitate the ANP and their ability to provide security for one of the key steps toward a democratic Afghanistan, the Coalition is providing training and vehicles, as well as communications systems to the police force.

“... (We) provide the ANP mentorship to increase their effectiveness and capabilities,” said Barrick. This mentorship has assisted the ANP and other forces in promoting a secure environment for registration.

“The Afghan security forces are the key to securing the elections,” he said. “It’s their country, and they want to be the ones securing their own elections. We are help-

ing them when the help is needed.”

The more developed the Afghan national government and the infrastructure become, the more they are able to independently accomplish the mission.

“We monitor the results of voter registration and serve as a conduit between different organizations,” said New Zealand Maj. Bede Fahey, Combined Task Force Thunder PRT coordination operations officer. “We provide security support where it is needed, and help with the passing of information.”

Fahey has past experience in working with elections. In 2001, he was deployed to East Timor, where he assisted with the elections process.

“The national security state in East Timor was different from Afghanistan,” he said. “In Timor, there was a more stable national security level, but Afghanistan has increased security capabilities. With these capabilities, the registration process has gone very well.”

Soon, the registration process will end and voters will start to decide which of the candidates they will vote for. With ongoing security operations, the Coalition will continue to provide broad security for the elections process, rooting out anti-Coalition militants and those opposed to the election. In the meantime, the ANA and the ANP will continue to provide direct security to those participating in the process, setting the conditions for a fair and unbiased election.

CMA brings care to Afghan nomads

Kuchi tribe receives medical, veterinary aid

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

BARIKAB VILLAGE, Afghanistan — Throughout Afghanistan, nomadic Kuchi tribes travel the open fields and plains of the country, sometimes going months without medical care.

A medical team from Bagram Air Base conducted a Cooperative Medical Assistance in Barikab Village, a Kuchi settlement, Aug. 5 so the people of the tribe could receive some much needed medical attention.

Kuchis are a very different kind of people, said Capt. Cristal Horsch, a Task Force 325 Combat Support Hospital physician assistant.

“They don’t live in actual villages so they don’t have access to things such as schools, pharmacies or veterinary care like people in the villages,” she said.

Since the Kuchi tribes are nomadic, they rarely have the opportunity to buy medicine for the tribesmen or their livestock at pharmacies, said Horsch. Instead, they rely on the land for herbal remedies to stay healthy.

Without access to formal medical care for months at a time, Horsch said she was surprised by how healthy most of the females and children in the tribe were.

“Most of the people who came



Lt. Col. David Ferris, a member of the TF Victory surgeon cell, administers a vaccine to a goat at the CMA in Barikab Village Aug. 5. CMA missions are very important to the health of the Afghan people, especially Kuchi tribesmen who spend much of their lives travelling the countryside.

through the clinics were in need of vitamins and Tylenol,” said Horsch. “The most common ailments were things caused by normal aging.”

Many of the tribesmen seen for age-related ailments were relatively young for the symptoms they exhibited, she said. “But overall, the health of the tribe was pretty good.”

The medical teams try to get out to treat the Kuchis once a month, depending on other missions, said Maj. Trudy Salerno, Task Force Victory veterinarian.

While the mens’ and womens’ clinics saw the average amount of people seen in a normal Afghan village, about 370, the animal side of the house was much busier, seeing close to 2,000 animals.

“Most people in Afghanistan own animals,” she said. “However, most

people only own a few animals. But the Kuchis own whole herds since they use them for everyday tasks, as well as carrying their belongings, while they are moving across the country-side.”

Seeing herds is something the veterinary teams don’t see too much of at most CMAs, said Salerno.

Many times, when the villagers bring their animals to the CMAs, they will have sores on their backs caused by the amount of weight they carry, she said.

However, the Kuchis seem to provide better care to their animals since they depend on them for so much of their livelihood.

Even though the Kuchis are very private people, they too need to experience the helping hand of the Coalition, said Salerno.

Being out here to see the people and help them and their animals live healthier lives, not only helps them but also the Coalition mission in Afghanistan, said Horsch.

“By being out in the villages and interacting with the people, we are not only gaining the trust of the people,” she said, “but we are also helping to build relationships between the Coalition forces and the local population in each village we visit.”



Spc. Sean Godinez, a Parwan PRT medic, administers an IV to a Kuchi tribesman at the CMA in Barikab Village Aug 5.

Engineers begin road construction

Story and photos by
Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE TIGER, Afghanistan — Coalition forces are starting to link remote areas within Regional Command South by constructing a road that will run between the cities of Kandahar and Tarin Kowt.

The project represents a team effort from multiple National Guard and active duty units, as well as United States Assistance and International Development and United Nations operations.

Heading up the beginning of the construction of the 75-mile road is the 528th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy), Louisiana National Guard.

Using horizontal platoon attachments from the 204th Eng. Bn. (Combat) (Heavy), New York National Guard, the team began construction 12 miles outside Kandahar city.

The focus for these



Sgt. Antonio Tims, 528th Eng. Bn., holds a marking stake for automated surveying equipment used to plan the route of the Kandahar to Tarin Kowt road.

Coalition units is the construction of the sub-base – a surveyed, cut and filled preliminary road. After the sub-base is completed, USAID and U.N. operations will hire contractors to add gravel and black top to complete the road.

When completed, the road will be the equivalent of a two-lane highway.

“We are designing it for vehicles to travel up to 60 miles an hour,” said Capt. Stephen Harper, a 528th Eng. Bn. civil engineer.

The completed road will cut travel time between Kandahar and Tarin Kowt from 11 to three hours, said Harper.

With multiple challenges facing his crew, Capt. Check Hudson, project officer in charge, said there are many facets that make building a road in Afghanistan different than in the United States.

The primary challenge in construction for the unit is the lack of water.

“We have to use at least 10-12,000 gallons of water a day,” said Hudson. “Water is the most critical item we need to finish this project.”

He said not only finding, but transporting the water to the job site has challenged his Soldiers to find multiple solutions to the problem.

Right now the team is locating wells and water sources to accommodate the enormous amount of water needed for road construction.

Another reason that makes this mission unique is the forward operating base that moves with the construction of the road.

Hudson said moving the FOB will be necessary every two to three months to keep troops and logistical needs close to where the work is being done.

“Logistics is the biggest part of this operation,” he said. “This environment is very austere – maintaining equip-



Spc. James Howard, 204th Eng. Bn., uses a road compactor to smooth out the sub-base of the Kandahar to Tarin Kowt road. When finished, the 75-mile stretch of paved road will reduce the travel time between the two locations from 11 to three hours.

ment is a big concern. Keeping the base as close to the work as possible will not only improve force protection, but reaction time to equipment breakdowns.”

Equipment wear and tear isn't the only part of the mission that leaders are paying close attention to. They are also staying aware of how much stress the conditions place on the Soldiers. With temperatures reaching 110 degrees and more, the team rotates Soldiers from Kandahar Airfield every few weeks.

“It is a lot like working on an off-shore drilling rig,” said Hudson.

“They come out, work and go back in for rest.”

He said he and his team are looking forward to the challenges and are very positive about the mission they have.

Col. Dick Pedersen, Combined Task Force Bronco commander, said this project is one of the most important missions Coalition forces are currently embarking on.

“What we are doing is connecting a very remote region to the rest of the country,” he said.

“By doing this we will not only stimulate commerce and trade, but we will increase the (national) government's influence in the area.”

Construction of the road is expected to last until early 2006.

Thorough inspection keeps A-10s flying

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — All aircraft go through extreme stresses when completing their missions.

Those stresses can cause metal fatigue — tiny cracks in the joints and welds of the frame or invisible fractures in the metal. The sooner these invisible cracks are found, the safer the aircraft will be.

Finding those cracks in a deployed environment is the mission for three Airmen at Bagram Air Base. Here, every aircraft is critical and ensuring they are fully operational is of premium importance. The non-destructive inspection team — part of the fabrication flight — uses various techniques to find cracks in the metal on aircraft here, said Senior Airman Ryan Michalec, 354th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

“We use different scientific methods to find those cracks that can’t be seen by the unaided eye, as well as those which can,” he said.

The tools the team uses are fairly similar



Air Force Airman 1st Class Kevin Louie, a 354th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron non-destructive inspection technician, checks the frame of an A-10 Thunderbolt II.

to those they use at home — however, the tools here are portable. “We had an X-ray machine that we couldn’t bring because of its size,” said Staff Sgt. Brooke Wilke, 354th EAMXS. “The portable equipment takes a little more time, on occasion. For example, inspecting the A-10 main landing gear wheel bolts take a little more time with the magnetic particle unit we have here instead of the equipment we would use at home.”

This gives team members experience with many different pieces of equipment.

“I’ve gotten a lot of training I wouldn’t have at home,” said Airman 1st Class Kevin Louie, 354th EAMXS. “I have gotten the chance to work with other services and on other air frames I wouldn’t be able to work on at home.”

The goal for the team is to avert catastrophic problems without tearing apart the airplane to find them.

“It takes us a few minutes to find cracks, it may take some time for a maintenance crew to get to and repair,” said Wilke.

The team uses many different processes to find that metal fatigue. For instance, with one technique, the technician places a long, thin probe on the aircraft part.

“The probe creates a magnetic current in the metal. We can read changes in that current (called an eddy current) to determine where the cracks are,” said Michalec. He explained the eddy current process by using the analogy of throwing a stone into still water. The stone causes eddies in the water — any obstruction in the water will cause a disruption in the smooth progression of the eddies.

Another technique uses ultrasound — sound waves — to locate cracks.

“If there’s a crack in a part, you get a signal loss or a reduced signal from the ultrasound, if you use this technique,” said Louie.

However, not everything is as technically complex. One of the techniques used most often by the NDI team is oil analysis, where the technician checks how much worn metal is in the engine oil by burning an oil sample in a special machine.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Brooke Wilke, 354th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron non-destructive inspection technician, reviews results from an oil sample analysis. The technicians test a sample of oil from each engine daily to help determine its mechanical condition.

“We can determine if an engine is starting to go bad by examining the oil,” said Wilke. “Sometimes you can go a long time before getting a “hit” — indicating a deteriorating engine — and then you might have one or two in a few weeks.”

So far, in the four months the team has been deployed to Afghanistan, they have had less than five “hits,” said Wilke.

“The level of flying hours here generate a lot more activity on the aircraft — each plane flies regularly,” she said. “That makes a lot more oil samples for us to check.”

Keeping the aircraft safe is extremely important to the team.

“I want to do anything I can to prevent a show-stopper — something that will keep the aircraft from doing their mission,” said Michalec. “If no one was checking, we might have more mishaps. This job is really important. It makes me feel good to know I have such a vast impact in keeping the plane operational.”

Their focus on NDI sets the team apart from other services as well.

“In most of the other services, this job is in addition to the maintainers’ normal job,” said Michalec. “We are dedicated to this mission, and are specifically trained to do it.”

Supporting the mission here has other benefits for the NDI team as well.

“I am totally for our mission here, bringing democracy to the (Afghan) people,” said Wilke. “This is the second time I’ve been here, and it’s great to see the difference within two years.”

MPs expedite customs process from KAF

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Matthew A. Fearing
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — An Airman is ready to go home. A unit is finally ready to rotate back state-side. A Soldier is heading home on leave. For each of these scenarios, one of the servicemembers' last stops before heading to the United States will be with the 209th Military Police Company which provides the Military Customs support for Kandahar Airfield.

The 209th MPs provide 24-hour operations at the Kandahar Air Terminal, said Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Lewis, whose platoon has been assigned the first rotation of Military Customs duties. "It (manning) varies depending on the need, but we always have someone at Military Customs."

Military Customs supports U.S. Customs officials by expediting entry of U.S. forces, their family members and their equipment back in to the United States. U.S. Customs agents may perform spot checks, but generally the certification by a Military Customs inspector is accepted for clearance into the United States.

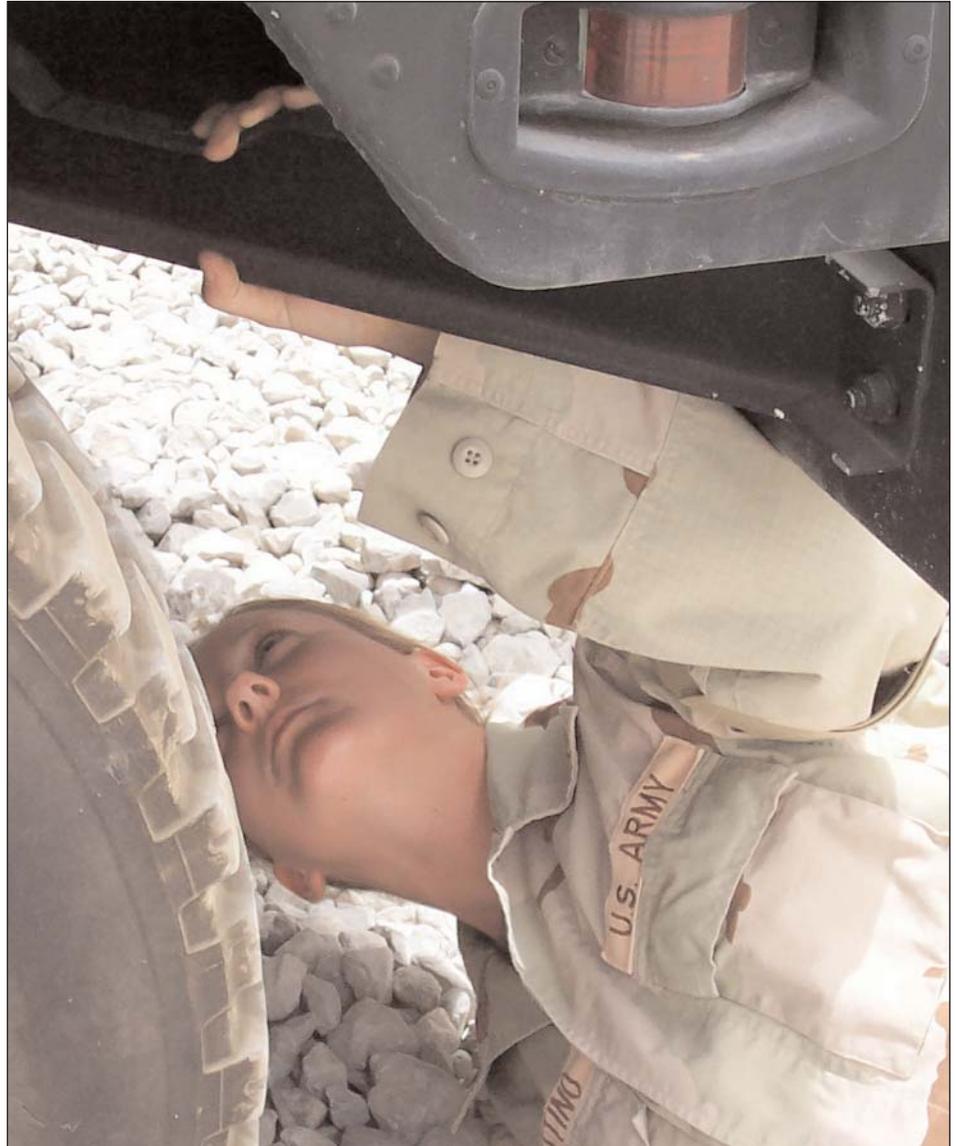
The Military Customs inspectors check for prohibited items such as controlled substances, pornography, destructive devices and lottery tickets, as well as restricted items like firearms, protected merchandise, knives, alcoholic products and agricultural products.

"We check every type of equipment going to the States. We inspect for fruit, rocks, soil, animals and contraband," said Military Customs inspector Sgt. Scott Austin.

All of the luggage and equipment that goes out through Kandahar Airfield to the United States is inspected, said 2nd Lt. Vincent Particini, a 209th MP Co. platoon leader. After bags are inspected, they are put into a sterile area and palletized. Once palletized, a Military Customs inspector seals it to certify it has been inspected. Hand-carried items are gathered on a separate pallet until the passengers are ready to move to the aircraft.

An amnesty period is given just prior to the inspection.

"Some things that can't be shipped are brought in just through ignorance such as cigarette lighters that look like weapons," said Particini. After the amnesty period, if a military member tries to take back drugs or other items that are violations of



military regulations, they will be processed in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice, he added.

The 209th MP Co. received a week of U.S. Customs training prior to deploying, said 1st Sgt. Freddie Florentz, the unit's first sergeant.

"This is one of the duties we knew we would be doing (in Afghanistan)," he said.

The Soldiers of 1st Platoon are splitting duty between Kandahar Airfield's Military Customs Operations and the Law and Order function. The platoon will rotate those duties during the course of their year-long tour with the other platoons currently filling the 209th MP Co.'s other obligations at Kandahar Airfield — gate security and operating a temporary holding facility for persons under Coalition control.



Top: Pfc. Jennifer Schettino, Military Customs inspector, thoroughly checks underneath a vehicle for mud before it is shipped back to the U.S.

Bottom: A Military Customs seal is placed on a vehicle that has been cleared for shipment to the United States. Vehicles and other equipment must remain in the Customs Sterile Area until departure.

Marine corporals learn leadership basics

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Learning the fundamentals of Marine Corps leadership was the focus of a two-week training program conducted at Bagram Air Base July 12-23. The Corporal's Noncommissioned Officers Program, commonly referred to as the Corporal's Course, was conducted by NCOs of the Heavy Marine Helicopter-769 Squadron and focused on preparing the 16 students for situations they can expect to encounter as NCOs.

"A leader is not born. You are given the tools to become a leader," said Marine Staff Sgt. Rafael Viveros, a squad advisor for the course. "This course gives you the knowledge and tools to lead better."

Combining classroom instruction with hands-on practical exercises, the course's wide range of subjects included counseling subordinates and understanding the military Leave and Earnings Statement, as well as conducting physical training and drill procedures.

The course isn't designed to teach the Marines all there is to know about being a leader, but it gives them a foundation for becoming an effective one, said Marine Sgt. Maj. Rudy Frazzini, HMH-769 sergeant major.

"They get the fundamentals here and that's what it's all about," he said. "These guys are at the base of the leadership of the Marine Corps. If we've trained them, we've trained a better Marine."

The curriculum is based on guidance published by the Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Quantico, Va. The Corporal's Course is usually conducted at the battalion-level, and the unit adds

additional tasks based on the mission, said Frazzini. For example, urban warfare and crew-served weapons training was added to the course held here to enhance the corporals' capabilities in a combat-deployed Marine aviation unit.

"The benefits of doing the Corporal's Course lays the foundation for the future of the unit here, as well as when we get back," said Frazzini.

The course is not mandatory for all Marine corporals, but those who had the opportunity to attend the course when they were corporals say it benefited them.

"Without the course, you don't know what is expected of you," said Viveros.

For many of the Marines, their promotion to corporal places them in the first leadership position of their career, he said. This means they are looked to for guidance from their subordinates and must be able to take charge in any situation.

But without formal instruction, many are often left to figure it out on their own, like Marine Cpl. Robert E. Bogar who has been a corporal for the past two years.

"Over two years I've been taught little things about what I need to do as an NCO, but I've never been sat down and told 'This is what you need to do,'" he said. "... I was kind of in a gray area. But the Corporal's Course has taught me exactly where I need to be as an NCO and it's given me the tools I need to improve myself as a leader."

The two weeks were filled with various aspects of leadership to help guide the corporals along their path as junior NCOs. But of all the information discussed during the training, Marine Cpl. Warren Begay felt the most important thing that was emphasized about being an NCO is having integrity.

"That's the main characteristic of leadership," said the corporal. "If you can't tell the truth, what can you do?"

The course also provides an environment to grow on a personal level.

"I gained more self-confidence," said Begay. "At the beginning of the course I was quiet, now I'm trying to get a lot more involved."

"I talk a lot more now," he added, smiling. Thanks to past experiences with the suc-



Top: Marine Cpl. Jonathan Schmidt (center) describes to Marine Gunnery Sgt. Luis Atkins Sr. (right) how he would direct his unit's movement during a sand table exercise July 21.

Bottom: Marine Cpl. Christopher Buscemi (left) gives instructions to align his squad during the drill testing portion of the Corporal's Course July 22.



Marine Cpl. James Todd (right) marches his squad during the drill testing portion of the Corporal's Course July 22.

cess of conducting the Corporal's Course, Frazzini is a strong advocate.

"There is no doubt in my mind that this course has been successful," said Frazzini. "I've seen the change in these guys already."

The course concluded with a Warriors Night (a combat version of Mess Night), a PT test and a final written examination. A second course was conducted in August.

Electricity shouldn't be taken lightly

Safeguarding the Coalition

Story by Pfc. Cheryl Ransford
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — Being safe in Afghanistan goes beyond personal safety. It also includes the safety of those around you.

One way to keep your coworkers and bunk mates safe is to ensure the electrical outlets in both living quarters and offices are wired properly and not overloaded.

"Older circuits get overloaded easier than newer circuits being used," said Staff Sgt. Harold Palmer, 210th Engineer Detachment, New Hampshire National Guard, electrical job supervisor. "If an old socket is found, it needs to be replaced so the chance of a fire starting is reduced."

The most frequent causes of such fires are short circuits, over-loading damage and misuse of extension cords, reported the Consumer Product Safety Commission, www.cpsc.gov.

"When fires start because of faulty outlets or extension cords, it only takes half an amp (or half the electricity to power a 60 watt light bulb) and the correct combination of elements," said Palmer.

The misuse of extension cords can cause shock to anyone close to the faulty cord as well as start a fire, said Staff Sgt. Thomas Evans, 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) contracting officer technical representative.

"There are several ways a circuit can be over-loaded," he said. "The most common way is by having too many things connected to the same receptacle. Even with an adapter to add more sockets, the circuit can still only put out 20 amps."

If the pull of energy is greater than its output, it can short out the receptacle, causing both the breaker to trip and the power to the receptacle to be knocked out. It can also overheat the wires and the insulation, in both the wire and the structure, causing a fire, said Evans.

Electricity works both ways, though. Sometimes it's not the equipment pulling too much power — it's the power source

surging and putting out excess power, said Palmer.

To protect electrical equipment from power surges, a surge protector should be placed between the power source and the equipment connected to it, he said.

Even with the safety measures that are in place, you can never be too careful.

"One way to prevent a fire caused by extension cords is to only use them when necessary and only on a temporary basis," said Palmer. "Also, when using any type of cord, make sure the prongs are plugged in all the way. If they aren't plugged in completely, an arc of electricity could jump from the outlet to a combustible item in the area and catch fire."

An arc is a spark that connects multiple items together without direct contact, he said.

There are a few things to remember that will help keep you safe around electricity. A big one is staying away from exposed wires, said Evans.

"If exposed wires are seen (anywhere), it should be reported. A work order can then be put in so they can be buried and no one gets injured," he said.

Also, extension cords should never be daisy-chained, or connected to each other and several appliances, because even if it is the only plug in the outlet, the pull can still be too strong and short out the power, said Evans.

To extend the life of extension cords and prevent static electricity from mixing with the electricity coming from the outlet, power cords should not be covered by any type of object while in use. This includes rugs and clothing, according to the CPSC. Also, an extension cord should be uncoiled prior to use.

Extension cords can also be damaged by foot traffic and heavy furniture, said Evans.

Another problem that causes electrical fires is deteriorated outlets from repeated use, such as constantly plugging-in and unplugging appliances, according to the CPSC. As a result, plugs fit loosely into receptacles and may slip partially or completely out.

If plugs don't fit tightly in the sockets, it can allow the flow of electricity to jump to other objects causing shock or a fire, said Evans.

While many service members in Afghanistan have electrical outlets available, there are still more who only have

electricity from generators, said Evans.

"For the personnel who have generators as their only source of electricity, they need to make sure the generators are well-grounded, and all wires and cables are off the ground," he said.

Most wiring in Afghanistan is maintained to standard and hooked up to a ground fault circuit interrupter, he said. The GFCI is a device that monitors electrical currents going through the ground and when it reaches a certain level should trip the breaker and cut power to that outlet. The device is installed in any electrical receptacle that is within three feet of a water source or outside where the elements can affect the currents.

No matter where Coalition personnel get their power, they must be cognizant of the fact that all power sources aren't the same strength, said Palmer.

Power sources range from 110-volt to 220-volt, he said. Stronger electrical currents than what equipment is rated for can burn out the hardware and render it inoperable.

The different voltages of power sources can often be recognized by different types of plugs.

If unsure of the voltage, check with an electrician or other qualified personnel to verify the power.

A simple guideline — "If the plugs don't match up, don't plug it in," said Palmer.

Paying attention to electrical safety will be particularly important in a couple months when the temperatures start to drop, said Palmer.

"If people decide to buy space heaters for living areas or offices, there are a few things they should remember," he said. "The most important is to not turn it on when you go to bed. If something happens while you are sleeping, it could cause a fire."

Also, space heaters should never be blocked. They should be kept in the center of the room, not against a wall. If the heat can't escape from the heater it can cause it to overheat and start a fire.

Being in Afghanistan doesn't allow for much living space, but there is still enough room for safety, said Palmer.

Safety is everyone's responsibility, said Palmer. If everyone does their part to make sure all electrical hazards are corrected, or don't happen in the first place, the level of safety will increase and injuries are less likely to occur.

ANP: Security paramount to stability during rebuilding

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The unit responsible for the Zabul province – 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment – is responding to the needs of the police departments using resources from the Commander's Emergency Response Program. Already the unit has purchased 13 pickups and one motorcycle from the local economy to give to the police departments, said 1st Lt. Ron Allen, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., CERP coordinator.

Allen said the vehicles are just one part of the equation. His unit also equips the trucks with lights, sirens and radios, in addition to distinctive paint jobs.

The radios on the trucks are also being supplemented with a network of towers being placed throughout the country to link individual police officers to their local village station, as well as up the chain to the district and province level.

"The terrain here in Afghanistan will prevent radios from being effective," said Capt. Jonathan Narvaes, Combined Joint Task Force-76 signal officer. "We are placing these towers in strategic areas so the radios will always link police officers to

home base." Linking the ANP is the key, said ANP Maj. Gen. C. Amir Mohammad, Zabul's provincial police chief.

"The radios will be my primary tools to command and facilitate my police officers throughout the province," said Mohammad. "It will also give my officers better piece of mind, because they know help is only a call away."

With the vehicles and radios rated as the higher priorities for the police department, training is also taking special precedence.

"Receipt of the vehicles is contingent on reforms within the department, including training at the Regional Training Center," said Sanford.

The RTC is located just outside Kandahar city and is boot-camp style training for local police officers. The RTC teaches the officers techniques in self-defense, as well as marksmanship and proper police procedure.

In addition to the training, CTF Bronco is also providing uniforms, boots and office supplies, and helping with building improvements, all in an effort to assist the police force.

"The more assistance my forces are

receiving, the more they are excited about providing security in their areas," said Mohammad. "Once we are better equipped, we will be better able to secure our own villages."

Sanford said once reforms take place, the police will focus on individual problems that make up the larger insurgency.

"Right now, in many areas ACM forces are not massing," he said. "They are hiding in two- to three-man teams throughout the country. A well-trained and equipped police force could repel these low-level activities."

He also said the police forces could focus on narcotics and larceny, both prevalent problems in Regional Command South.

"It is going to take a monumental effort to help the ANP, but we are making progress," said Sanford.

Mohammed said his forces look forward to the challenge of stabilizing Afghanistan.

"We feel it is our job, this is our home," he said.

And with the help of CTF Bronco, that challenge will gradually decrease as the country becomes more stable.

Cure: Teamwork between Coalition, locals key to success

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Commander's Emergency Response Program.

This fund – which enables military leaders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs – has already purchased an ambulance for the

university hospital so they can transport patients to their homes after surgery.

As the local doctors get more training and start performing more surgeries, another need arises – blood.

"It doesn't do any good for them to perform surgery on a patient and then not have blood to replace what is lost," said Ray.

Unlike in the U.S., there isn't a Red Cross blood-mobile traveling to local cities collecting blood. The doctors used the conference to talk about what is needed to start up a blood bank in the local hospital.

Besides discussing the care of people who are already sick or injured, the conference also spawned conversations on the prevention of malaria in Afghanistan.

"Malaria is the biggest problem in Khowst," said Habibi. "We have to look at preventing it as well as curing it, because the parasites are becoming resist-

ant to the drugs."

Habibi thinks this is because when an Afghan is infected with malaria, they purchase chloroquine but do not take all the medication. They take just enough to reduce the fever and then stop taking it. Therefore, they don't kill the parasites, but actually make them stronger.

But knowledge is not a one way street. Ray said that there are diseases in Afghanistan that are not prevalent in the United States. The U.S. doctors asked their Afghan counterparts how they treat those diseases in order to better care for U.S. service members who exhibit symptoms of an unfamiliar disease or infection.

The conference was such a success that the doctors want to make it a regular event. Future conferences and working together will help Ray meet a goal that he has.

When the coalition forces leave Afghanistan, Ray wants to be sure that they have not created a void in medical treatment for the locals. He wants Habibi and his colleagues to be able to give the Afghan people the same level of treatment that they receive from American doctors.



Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

Dr. (Maj.) Peter Ray (left) performs a surgical operation as Afghan Dr. Muhammad Rasool Habibi (center) observes and Dr. (Maj.) James Frizzi (right) assists.

Tropic Lightning Band plays for Bagram

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — For many Soldiers, one of the last memories they have of their home station prior to deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom is the deployment ceremony while the band marched and played on the parade field.

But bands aren't just for garrison missions — many military bands deploy in support of their comrades in far off places such as Afghanistan.

One such band is the 25th Infantry Division (Light) Tropic Lightning Band which was recently here to provide entertainment to Coalition forces throughout the area.

The sound of familiar popular music and concert band classics filled the “clamshell” here Aug. 7-8 when the band brought their music to the troops.

The band is here making stops in the theater of operations to perform for the division's Soldiers and Coalition troops deployed here.

“We're trying to get out to where the division has troops to give them, and all the Coalition troops, something familiar,” said Sgt. 1st Class Eric Basora, lead vocalist for the band's rock section.

“We like to give some feeling of home through our music,” he said.

The band was here for about a month and played for service members throughout the country. Kandahar, Salerno, Orgun-E, Jalalabad and Asadabad are just some of the places they brought music to the troops, said Chief Warrant Officer Jesse O. Pascua, Tropic Lightning Band



commander and bandmaster.

Within the band there are separate groups making up the smaller bands, such as the concert band, rock band, jazz combo and brass quintet, he said.

“We try to play all different kinds of music to give everyone at least a little of what they like,” said Pascua.

The music the band played during their two days at Bagram ranged from Toby Keith's “American Soldier” to Creed's “My Sacrifice,” and even marching band tunes such as the “Army Song” and the “Tropic Lightning March.”

And the Soldiers appreciate what the band does.

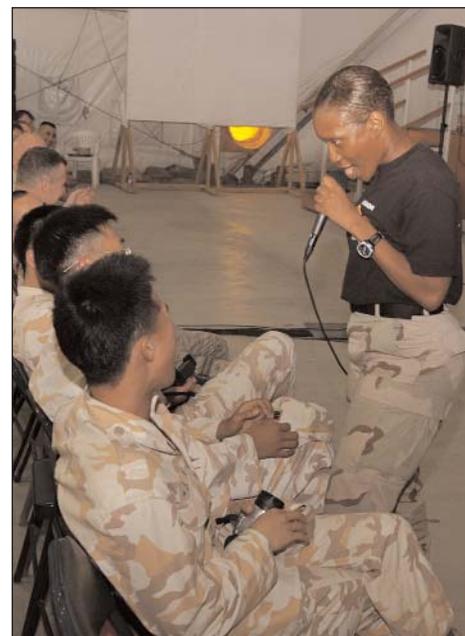
“I appreciate them coming out here for us,” said Pvt. Jonathan Braccio, Combined Joint Task Force-76 personnel specialist.

“I think it's really good that they come out here and show their support for us.”

The band showed their enthusiasm for their mission by not just playing music and singing songs, but actually getting into the crowd and getting the troops involved in the show.

“We just love playing for the troops and giving them a good show,” said Pascua.

“It's all about getting out to the Soldiers,” said Basora. “We really enjoy what we do — bringing something familiar from back home to the troops in the field.”



Top: The Tropic Lightning Band's rock group entertains listeners with rock and pop music Aug. 8.

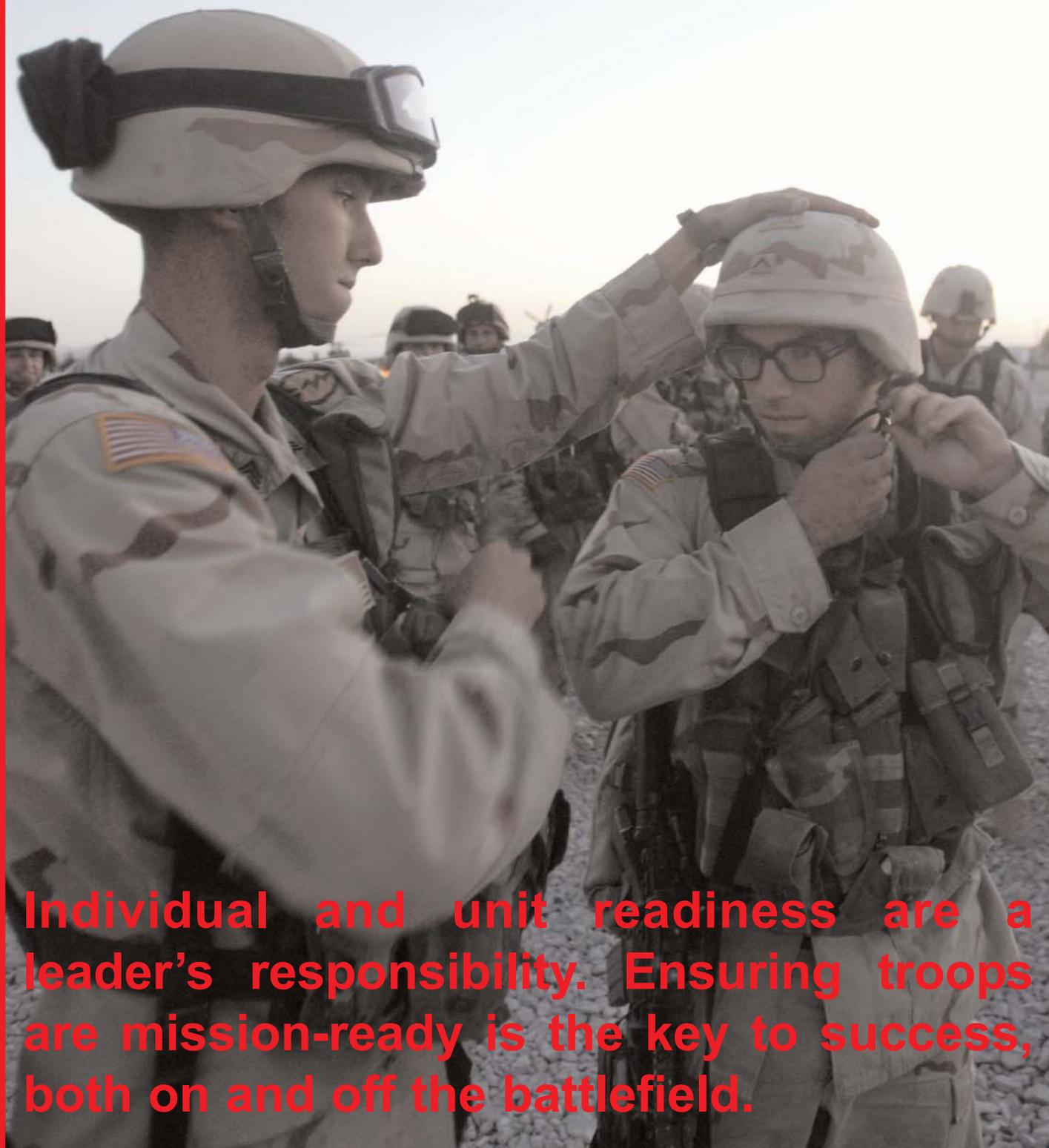
Above: Sgt. Tanzy Flakes, the lead female vocalist for the rock group, sings to a group of ROK Army soldiers during the band's performance.



The Tropic Lightning concert band plays familiar tunes for their audience at the “clamshell” Aug. 7. The band is on a six-week tour of Afghanistan to play for Coalition troops.

But the great shows don't end with band's six-week visit here, he said. They plan to return to Afghanistan after a brief stay back in Hawaii. Also planned is a tour through Iraq to take the Tropic Lightning spirit to Soldiers deployed there in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Leadership



Individual and unit readiness are a leader's responsibility. Ensuring troops are mission-ready is the key to success, both on and off the battlefield.