

Marines bring firepower to Afghan skies

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

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – “Don’t shoot at the gray ones;” was the simple, no-nonsense warning stated by Marine Sgt. Clay Farlow, UH-1N Huey Gunship crew chief, to Anti Coalition Militants operating throughout Afghanistan, if they valued their lives at all.

The “gray ones” Farlow was referring to are Bagram Air Base’s newest Marine attack aviation assets, the conspicuous, gray painted AH-1W Super Cobra and UH-1N Huey Gunship helicopters of the Marine Light Attack Helicopter “Red Dog” Squadron (HMLA) 773.

HMLA 773 is a Marine Reserve squadron based in Atlanta, which also draws Marine assets from New Orleans and Pennsylvania.

Now called to action in Afghanistan, it’s the main job of the Cobra and Huey combination to provide close air support and convoy security for coalition service members conducting operations throughout Afghanistan.

Since arriving in late October, the Red



Cpl. Sean Maynard, helicopter mechanic, HMLA 773, conducts routine checks on an AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter at Bagram Air Base.

Dogs have found themselves working closely with infantry Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division, most recently during Operation Mountain Resolve and currently on Operation Mountain Avalanche.

“What we do best is work closely

with the man on the ground,” said Maj. Steve Peters, Marine Cobra pilot, HMLA 773. “We bring an appropriate level of punch to what the ground troops want to accomplish.”

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Bush says Iraqis should help determine Saddam’s fate

Story by Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The United States will assist Iraqis in developing a process to bring captured former dictator Saddam Hussein to justice for his crimes, President Bush told reporters here Monday.

Saddam will continue to be detained as the U.S. government

works with Iraqi authorities “to develop a way to try him that will stand international scrutiny,” Bush said during a press conference. The Iraqi people, the president asserted, “need to be very much involved” with Saddam’s fate, since they were the ones who were brutalized during Saddam’s rule. “He murdered them, he gassed them, he tortured them,” Bush pointed out.

Nonetheless, the president maintained that the deposed dictator – who was discovered hiding in a hole and captured

————— See **FATE**, Page 3

English/Dari phrase of the day: *My name is - Naam man (name) asst*

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



An Iraqi man speaks about a bomb explosion with a U.S. soldier in Tikrit.

Bush: former Iraqi dictator should face death penalty

(CNN) – President Bush said Tuesday he believes former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein should face the death penalty after being tried.

“Let’s just see what penalty he gets, but I think he ought to receive the ultimate penalty ... for what he has done to his people,” Bush told *ABC News*.

“But that will be decided not by the president of the United States, but by the citizens of Iraq in one form or another.”

Saddam is in U.S. custody and under interrogation by the CIA somewhere in Iraq.

Members of the U.S.-appointed Iraq Governing Council have said Saddam would be tried before a war crimes tribunal the council established just last week.

No judges or administrators have yet been appointed to the tribunal. The transitional government set to assume sovereignty by July 1 will decide whether it will have the power to impose death sentences.

Attack ‘financier’ captured

(CNN) – U.S. troops have captured a man coalition officials describe as a financier of attacks on coalition forces and a member of the paramilitary group Fedayeen Saddam, officials said.

The financier was one of 74 young Iraqi men of military age captured in a raid early Tuesday as they were apparently meeting at his house in the north-central Iraqi town of Samarra, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of Tikrit, coalition officials said.

The raiders also found 135 pounds of explosives, several mortar rounds, 15 AK-47s, 200 blasting caps and other ammunition and

paraphernalia similar to those used in attacks against U.S. troops, coalition officials said.



High demand from the public means vaccine shortages this flu season.

Congress seeks \$150 million to upgrade flu vaccine production

(CNN) – Federal health officials will seek \$150 million from Congress over the next two years to encourage flu vaccine makers to adopt new manufacturing processes that could speed up production to respond to outbreaks, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said Tuesday.

Thompson also said officials are hopeful that this year’s flu outbreak has peaked, though it remains unclear if it will move from hard-hit western states into the East.

“We’re hoping we’ve got the worst behind us because it started early,” he said at a news conference. “But we don’t know.”

To deal with problems with the vaccine supply, Thompson said, his department has a request for \$50 million in a fiscal year 2004 appropriations bill now before Congress and will seek another \$100 million in fiscal year 2005.

He said the current flu season, which has severely stretched supplies, may encourage lawmakers to act.

“I think Congress is going to be much more willing to appropriate the necessary dollars to get into the new technologies,” he said. “Hopefully, it will survive the budgetary process.”

Advisory panel backs over-the-counter ‘morning-after’ pill

(CNN) – Advisers to the Food and Drug Administration voted Tuesday to recommend emergency contraception – or the “morning-after” pill – be available over-the-counter.

The FDA generally follows the recommendations of its advisory committees but it is not

known when the agency will act on the recommendation.

The makers of Plan B contraception say that when it is taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex, it can reduce the risk of pregnancy by about 89 percent.

Plan B, made by Women’s Capital Corp., has been available since 1998, but only with a doctor’s prescription.

“Putting safe, effective back-up birth control on the drug store shelves next to condoms will give many more women a second chance to prevent pregnancy,” said Kirsten Moore, head of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project, a group backing no-prescription emergency contraception.



Chen, left, with Lu after announcing she would be his running mate during presidential elections next year.

China rejects Taiwan barb

TAIPEI, Taiwan – Beijing has rejected accusations by Taiwan Vice President Annette Lu that China’s missile deployments amounted to terrorism, calling the claims unreasonable and repeating its opposition to anyone trying to split the island from the mainland.

“No country would call actions to protect its national sovereignty and territorial integrity terrorism. So I think the comments of the person you mentioned are unreasonable,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a news conference on Tuesday.

“We oppose any person using any excuse or in any name splitting Taiwan from China,” Liu said.

Lu – a fierce advocate of independence from China – said the missiles aimed at Taiwan are a form of “state terrorism” and a referendum calling for their removal is necessary to defend the self-governed island.

COBRA, from Page 1

Although the Cobra and Huey helicopters are easily identified as icons of a military generation past, these lethal birds are far from obsolete, according to Peters.

“While the name Cobra has been around forever, these airframes share no parts commonalities with the older models,” Peters said, adding that most of the Super Cobras have less than 2000 hours flown on them.

Armed with a 20mm gatling gun, 2.75-inch rockets, Hellfire and TOW missiles, the Cobra attack helicopter is extremely capable aircraft for fighting in Afghanistan, according to Peters.

The Huey gunship bears more airframe similarities with the older models than the Cobra, but, like the Cobra, it also brings a lot more to the table than its predecessors.

The Huey can be used to for troop insert and extract, but the Marines of HMLA 773 prefer to load them up massive amounts of firepower.

“Every little bit of weight you add to the Huey detracts from the amount of ordinance that we can carry,” said Peters. “We don’t like to go light on ordnance, ever.”

The Marine Corps’ Huey gunship can be armed with 2.75-inch rockets, the GAU-2B 6-barreled mini-gun, a .50-caliber machine gun, and thousands of rounds.

FATE, from Page 1

Dec. 13 by U.S. troops near Tikrit, Iraq – deserves a fair trial. Saddam’s ultimate fate, Bush declared, “is going to be up to the Iraqis.”

Bush said he doubts any useful information – such as the whereabouts of weapons of mass destruction – would be gleaned from interviews with the former Iraqi dictator.

“I don’t trust Saddam Hussein,” Bush declared, adding, “I don’t believe he’ll tell the truth.”

Bush refused to put a timetable on possible withdrawals of U.S. troops from Iraq in light of Saddam’s capture, noting, “we’ll stay the course until the job is done.”

The capture of Saddam, Bush noted, not only makes America more secure, but also represents a watershed event in Iraqi – and world – history.

“The emergence of a peaceful Iraq,” Bush pointed out,



Courtesy photo

Sgt. Clay Farlow, crew chief, HMLA 773, mans the 6-barreled minigun, on a Marine Corps UH-1N Huey gunship helicopter. The Huey and AH-1W Super Cobra are two of the newest additions patrolling the sky's of Afghanistan.

Along with providing close air support during combat missions, Cobras and Hueys can also be used in an attack role against Anti Coalition Militant ground troops.

And one of the things they’re most proud of is their night fighting capability.

“We have around the clock capability,” said Peters, who added that he experienced the longest mission of his career during this deployment, when he flew a 10-hour mission one night.

To the Red Dogs’ chagrin, the enemy hasn’t put up much resistance as of yet. For Maj. Dave Deep, Cobra pilot, HMLA 773, it’s not a big mystery why, he said, “When we come during a mission, it’s an intimidation factor to whoever’s down there to see and hear our Cobras and Hueys flying overhead,” Deep said. “So they don’t have much of a tendency to shoot at us.”

And if they do, Farlow warns, “It’s not going to be pretty.”

“will transform the (Middle East) region in a positive way that will make it more likely that the world is more peaceful.”

The commander in chief saluted the efforts of U.S. troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world serving in support of the war against terrorism, noting that Iraq is one of the principal battlefields of that struggle.

Saddam’s fall from power eight months ago and his recent capture represents a case of “good riddance,” Bush asserted.

“The world is better off without you, Mr. Saddam Hussein,” Bush declared. It was interesting, Bush said, that the formerly fearsome, boastful dictator was found hiding in a hole in the ground and gave himself up without a fight.

“Our brave troops, combined with good intelligence, found you,” Bush said to the captured former dictator.

Saddam will be brought before justice, Bush pledged, which he said was something the former dictator didn’t afford his own people.

Saddam's capture 'big step' toward democracy

Story by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait – The capture of Saddam Hussein was just one more step - “admittedly a big step” – in the path to Iraqi freedom and democracy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers said Monday.

Myers is bringing United Service Organizations-sponsored entertainers to the U.S. Central Command area. With him is Academy Award winning actor Robin Williams, Olympic Gold Medalist and current WWE wrestler Kurt Angle, NASCAR driver Mike Wallace and Fox Sports Net personality Leeann Tweedon.

The chairman expects the group will meet and talk with up to 30,000 American service members during their stay in the region. “The purpose of the trip is to show the service men and women that America cares,” Myers said during an interview with reporters traveling with him.

Myers discussed the U.S. capture of Saddam Hussein, saying the capture will have symbolic and substantive effects on the situation in Iraq. “There’s great symbolism in seeing the leader of a country ... finally being captured in such an ignominious way,” Myers said. “(He was) coming out of a hole in the ground, disheveled, probably demoralized, disoriented, and obviously frightened.”

The chairman said the video of Saddam looking so bad gives hope not only to those in Iraq but also around the world. “Leaders that behave in that way and perhaps cause the death or torture or disfigurement of hundreds of thousands of people eventually will be brought to justice,” he said.

The general said there will also be an impact on Baath Party loyalists who held on to the shred of hope that Saddam would lead them back to power. Coalition forces have said since April that that is not an option, but now there is another nail in the coffin.

Myers pointed to other steps as signs of progress in Iraq. The 160,000-member Iraqi security forces, economic development in the country and improvements to the infrastructure are all further hopeful signs, he said.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

“Mussolini and I”

1530Z at the MWR building:
Detested by his people. Defied by his family. Destined to failure.

Tomorrow’s movie:
“The Legend of the Drunken Master”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
Bagram:	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 50F L: 23F	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 52F L: 25F
Kandahar:	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 50F L: 27F	<i>Haze</i> H: 50F L: 32F
Kabul:	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 48F L: 23F	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 50F L: 25F
Uzbekistan:	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 48F L: 23F	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 58F L: 32F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)

Horn to get \$30,000 fine for celebration

NEW ORLEANS – New Orleans Saints receiver Joe Horn was fined \$30,000 by the NFL on Tuesday for making a choreographed cell-phone call in the end zone to celebrate a touchdown.

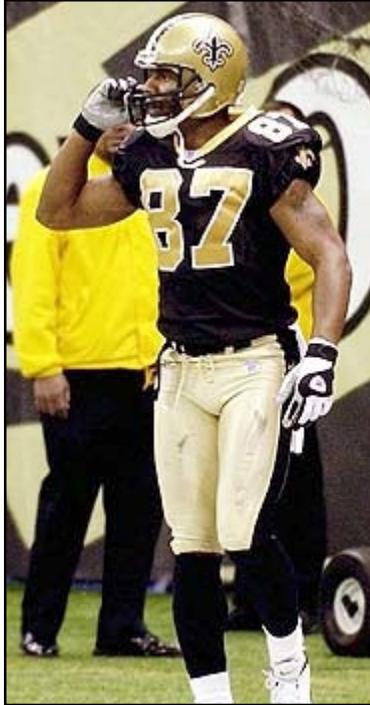
NFL spokesman Greg Aiello confirmed the amount of the fine. Horn's agent, Ralph Vitolo, said the player will appeal.

"Fining him is one thing, but to me that's very excessive. This is not a murder case," Vitolo said.

The Saints did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

Return specialist Michael Lewis was fined \$5,000 for helping orchestrate the stunt, and Horn told Vitolo that he would pay that fine.

After catching the second of four touchdown passes in a 45-7 victory over the New York Giants on Sunday, Horn was handed a phone by Lewis, who pulled it out from under the padding used to protect the goal post. Horn was still wearing his helmet when he punched in numbers, put the phone to the earhole and spoke into it for a few seconds. "Would I take it back? No, no. I knew exactly what I was doing," Horn said after the game. The Saints were penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct for the stunt.



Joe Horn said he had no regrets about his now-famous celebration.

Former Blackhawks defenseman, head coach killed in auto accident

CHICAGO – Former Chicago Blackhawks defenseman and coach Keith Magnuson was killed in an auto accident in suburban Toronto Monday, the team said. He was 56.

Magnuson played for Chicago from 1969-80 and coached the team for 1 1/2 seasons. He was riding with former Toronto Maple Leafs captain Rob Ramage, Blackhawks spokesman Jim DeMaria said.

"We're still investigating, but it looks like one car crossed over the center median," York Region Const. Steve Morrell told the Canadian Press.

Magnuson was a member of the Blackhawks' 75th anniversary all-star team which was selected in 2001. He had 14 goals, 125 assists and 1,442 penalty minutes in 589 NHL games. In 68 playoff games, he had three goals, nine assists and 164 penalty minutes.

Magnuson coached the Blackhawks from 1980-82 and had a record of 49-57-26.

Knee injury could keep Iverson out

PHILADELPHIA – Allen Iverson could be sidelined until January with a right knee injury and wishes the Philadelphia 76ers would put him on the injured list.

The NBA's leading scorer has missed two of the team's last three games and said Tuesday he thinks he'll miss the 76ers' West Coast road trip that starts Dec. 26 at the Los Angeles Clippers.

The 76ers play four games before then, starting Wednesday at home against the Miami Heat.

"I don't want to go out west if I'm not able to play. The only thing that's going to do is bother me," Iverson said. "One day, I'll wake up and feel a little better and try and go out there and play, and that might not be the best thing."

Asked whether team doctors have let him know when his swollen knee will be healed, Iverson said: "They can't tell me. Nobody's been able to tell me how long it's going to take."

He's averaging 28.9 points, 6.1 assists and 3.8 rebounds for the Atlantic Division-leading 76ers (12-12). He also is playing 43.7 minutes per game.



Iverson's current status is day-to-day.

Oilers send Mike Comrie to Flyers for minor leaguer, 1st round draft picks

PHILADELPHIA – The team with the best record in the NHL just got even better.

The Philadelphia Flyers acquired the rights to restricted free agent Mike Comrie from the Edmonton Oilers on Tuesday for former first-round pick Jeff Woywitka and two draft picks.

Philadelphia, which entered Tuesday night's games with the most points in the league, strengthened its lineup without depleting its current roster.

"This was an opportunity to get a player as good as Comrie and not take anyone off our team," Flyers general manager Bob Clarke said before Tuesday's game against Calgary. "We think Woywitka is going to be a very good defenseman, but for us to get a highly skilled center now and for the future, it was the right move."

The Oilers will get a first-round pick in the 2004 entry draft and a third-round choice in the 2005 draft. Comrie has not played this season and will still have to come to terms with the Flyers.

"We wouldn't have traded for him if we didn't think we could sign him," Clarke said.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Afghans celebrate opening of highway

By Aijaz Rahi

DURANI, Afghanistan (AP) – Several dozen delegates broke away from a crucial constitutional assembly on Tuesday to celebrate the inauguration of the Kabul-Kandahar highway, a vital artery linking the capital with the lawless and poverty-stricken south.

Helicopters brought the delegates - many wearing traditional flowing robes and sporting turbans or flat woolen hats - to a sparse stretch of the highway about 25 miles southwest of the capital. President Hamid Karzai cut a ribbon stretched across the smooth new tarmac.

The project, funded mostly by the American government, was vital to Afghanistan's recovery after 23 years of war, Karzai said. "I'm sure it will have its effect and its impact on the economy."

"We are standing, literally, on the road to Afghanistan's future," U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said. "The opening of the Kabul-Kandahar road is not the end of our work - it is just the beginning."

Early Tuesday, Karzai called President Bush, who congratulated him on the completion of the road and called it "an important development for the Afghan people," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said.

The road has been built amid increased attacks by Taliban insurgents, many in the rugged provinces it winds through - Ghazni, Wardak, Zabul and Kandahar.

Loya Jirga leadership voting draws complaints from women

KABUL, Afghanistan (FOX News) – The opening celebrations over, Afghanistan's constitutional council hit its first controversy Monday, with women delegates denouncing their colleagues for trying to shut them out of leadership positions.

After much wrangling, one woman was granted a deputy chairman's position, but some still expressed anger over second-class treatment.

"From the very beginning, the process was flawed because we are totally outnumbered here by the men," said Palwasha Hassan, a delegate from Kabul. "It was symbolically important for a woman to be in a high position, but the bigger battle will be over the constitution."

Women's rights are a hot-button issue for the council, or loya jirga, which began Sunday in a huge tent on the grounds of a Soviet-built university in Kabul. Some 500 delegates are meeting to hammer out a new charter for this war-ravaged land, a major milestone ahead of elections scheduled for next June.

The council is taking place under intense security, with hundreds of soldiers lining the roads and helicopters hovering overhead. Three rockets struck some six miles north of the council site before dawn Tuesday, damaging a mud house but causing no injuries.

The target of the rockets was not clear, but the U.S. military has warned that Taliban insurgents might try to strike the council. Leaflets denouncing the gathering have been appearing in several towns.

The peacekeepers said a missile was fired toward its downtown headquarters Saturday, landing well short and causing no injuries.

After a day of procedural back-and-forth, delegates selected three men – Mirwais Yasini, Mohammed Ahzam Dadfar, and Mawlawi Qiamddim Kashaf – to fill deputy chairman positions.

Another man, moderate former president Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, was selected chairman on the council's opening day Sunday.

The voting produced outrage from many of the women delegates.

"It is a betrayal of women," said Jameela Mujahed, a delegate from Kabul and the first female radio news anchor to go back on the air after the fall of the hardline Taliban regime.

Mujaddedi later broke with protocol and selected a woman – Safia Sediqi, a lawyer from eastern Nangarhar province – to a created fourth deputy position. He named two other women as deputy's assistants.

Several women delegates said they were satisfied but determined to fight on to ensure women's rights that were eroded under the Taliban. The religious militia barred girls from school and banned women from all public life.

"What's the matter, honey, I thought you wanted an SUV?"



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support