

TF-44 keeps medical 'stronghold' on forces

Story by Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson
4th Public Affairs Detachment

KARSHI-KHANABAD, Uzbekistan – Looking at the tranquil environment one could reasonably assume that the personnel here are operating under the conditions of a peacetime mission; however, talk with the Soldiers of Task Force 44 Medical North and their words deliver just the opposite – that the service members of Camp Stronghold Freedom are akin to the rest of the service members in the combined joint operations area 180 – they are in combat.

“Our mission is to provide essential medical care for the U.S. troops and contract workers at (Camp Stronghold Freedom),” said Maj. Jessie Huff, commander of the TF-44 Med. North. “We are responsible for supplying level one and two (sick call and injury stabilization) care for personnel here.”

The 52-Soldier medical team, a National Guard unit from Louisville, Ky., acts as a one-stop shop providing a genre of services for personnel at Karshi-Khanabad.

“Our team treats everything from routine to veterinarian care,” said Huff. “We have a dental clinic, lab, X-ray, pharmacy, behavior science and other essential facilities available.”

Huff added that the team also provides classes such as combat lifesaver, stress management, field sanitation and a weight control program.

“We are like a community hospital that (service members and civilians) see back home,” said Lt. Col. Karen Likins, head nurse of TF-44 Med. North. “We provide services that help them take ownership of their medical care.”

Umbrella under the command of the 452nd Combat Support Hospital at Bagram

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Happily recovering...



Photo by Spc. Kelly Hunt

“Happy,” as she’s known throughout the Egyptian Hospital located on Bagram Air Base, has a reason to smile now as she quickly approaches her release date from the hospital that helped her and her fellow Afghan neighbors survive a Kandahar explosion Jan. 6. “Happy” suffered lacerations to her leg during the recent incident that claimed dozens of victims. She and the other patients taken in by doctors at the Egyptian Hospital were successfully treated in a combined effort with the U.S. Hospital on base.

Red Dogs seek support for Afghan children

Story and photo by Cpl. Lana D. Waters
MARFOR PAO

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Every year at Christmas, Reserve Marines are posted in shopping malls throughout the United States wearing their dress blues to collect

toys for needy children. These children get a little more happiness in their lives and the Marines get a sense of pride knowing they were able to help.

However, not all of the children throughout the world are so fortunate to have an organization look out for them and they often go unnoticed.

That’s why the Marine Light Attack He-

licopter Squadron 773 “Red Dogs” decided to help out their host country’s kids and came up with Operation Red Dog-Afghanistan’s Children.

Operation Red Dog-AC is a Toys for Tots type program where the Marines are accepting donations of toys, clothes, school sup-

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Voters take their turns at a polling station in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Kerry projected to win N.H.

MANCHESTER, N.H. – *CNN* is projecting Sen. John Kerry will win the hotly contested New Hampshire Democratic primary Tuesday night.

With 59 percent of precincts reporting, the Massachusetts senator was at 39 percent, followed by former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean at 25 percent. Exit polls sponsored by *CNN* and other news outlets also showed Kerry in the lead.

The battle for third place was especially tight, with Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina and retired Gen. Wesley Clark at about even, followed by Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut.

Trailing the pack were Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio and civil rights activist the Rev. Al Sharpton.

Results in the Democratic primary – colored by expectations and winning margins – promise to set the stage for how the nomination fight unfolds as the candidates fan into more states next week.

If Kerry prevails in New Hampshire, it would follow his come-from-behind victory in the Iowa caucuses a week ago Monday. And it marks a significant turnaround from polls in New Hampshire, where as recently as two weeks ago had him trailing Dean by 17 points.

President Bush defends Iraq war in face of WMD findings

WASHINGTON – President Bush remained steadfast Tuesday that the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq had made the world safer, even as investigators have failed to find

weapons of mass destruction – a key reason cited for going to war.

“There was no doubt in my mind that Saddam Hussein was a grave and gathering threat to America and the world,” Bush said, speaking to reporters at the White House in an appearance with Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski, a U.S. ally in Iraq.

The United States invaded Iraq in March after the Bush administration argued that Saddam Hussein’s regime had failed to comply with U.N. resolutions requiring it to give up all chemical and biological weapons, long-range missiles and efforts to develop a nuclear bomb.



Three U.S. Soldiers and an Iraqi civilian were killed by a roadside bomb in Khaldiya, west of Baghdad.

Widespread attacks kill 13

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Five attacks claimed the lives of 13 people in Iraq on Tuesday, including six U.S. Soldiers, two *CNN* employees, four Iraqi policemen and an Iraqi civilian, according to police and military sources.

Three Combined Joint Task Force 7 Soldiers were killed and three were wounded in a roadside bomb attack near Iskandariyah at 8 p.m. (noon ET) Tuesday.

They were traveling in a convoy when their vehicle struck the device. The wounded Soldiers were evacuated to the 28th Combat Support Hospital.

In Khaldiya, west of Baghdad, a roadside bomb killed three U.S. Soldiers and an Iraqi civilian at about 1 p.m. (5 a.m. ET), a U.S. military spokesman said. One U.S. Soldier and three Iraqis were wounded in the blast, the spokesman said.

Khaldiya is between Fallujah and Ramadi, and also lies in the Sunni Triangle.

The military said it is investigating the attack.

On the outskirts of Baghdad Tuesday, two *CNN* employees were killed and a third was wounded when the cars they were traveling in came under fire. They were returning to Baghdad in a two-car convoy from an assignment in the southern city of Hillah when they were ambushed on the outskirts of the city.



“Work at home and in the world for the growth of international cooperation,” the pope told Cheney.

Cheney, pope meet at Vatican

VATICAN CITY – U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and Pope John Paul II briefly met at the Vatican on Tuesday as both sides worked to play down differences over the war in Iraq.

Cheney presented the pope with a crystal dove, delivering greetings from U.S. President George W. Bush.

Without making direct reference to the war, John Paul told Cheney that in a world “marked with conflict and injustice” it is important that all nations seek international cooperation and work for peace and respect.

“The American people have always cherished the fundamental values of freedom, justice and equity,” the pope said in offering his greetings to Cheney and, in turn, to the president.

“I encourage you and your fellow citizens to work at home and in the world for the growth of international cooperation.”

The Vatican has been highly critical of the U.S.-led war in Iraq but has softened its tone in recent months.

Cheney also was holding talks with the No. 2 official at the Vatican, Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano.

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Air Base, Afghanistan, TF-44 Med. North, oversees the care of more than 1,300 persons based in Uzbekistan.

Though the task force offers “peacetime” classes and programs to help personnel maintain or improve their health care while in Uzbekistan, the task force routinely assesses their wartime-mission skills to keep their knowledge up to date.

“There is not a lot of trauma here,” said Spc. Amy Baker, emergency medical treatment Soldier with TF-44 Med. North. “But nevertheless we know our role. We continually host mass casualty exercises and other exercises to stay ready.”

“It’s easy to get lax (in one’s job) when the threat level isn’t as high as it is in other areas of the CJOA,” said Likins. “So, we rotate Soldiers to the other areas and that helps keep us on our toes.”

Huff added that TF-44 currently has Soldiers in Afghanistan (Kabul, Mas-e-Sherif, and Kandahar) supporting other medical units.

“There are a lot of mission in the CJOA and as a medical team we have to be ready to relieve or fill in for other units if and when necessary,” he said.

“A lot of firebases don’t have the capabilities we have,” said Staff Sgt. Dan Collier, noncommissioned officer in charge of pharmacy services for TF-44 Med. North. “We are able to provide information and

supplies to them quickly. Also we are located where all of the medical units (in the CJOA) get their pharmaceutical supplies from, so we are a valuable asset (high threat level or not).”

Huff stated that TF-44 is also an area support medical company and is capable of evacuating and evaluating casualties to a combat hospital.

While the task force’s primary responsibility is the well being of U.S. personnel, their services do not exclude Uzbekistan citizens.

“We provide emergency care for local nationals that have a threat of losing eye, limb or life,” said Huff. “We will not stand by and let a person suffer if we can help. We provide care for them until we can get them to the Uzbekistan hospital.”

According to Sgt. Joshua Eickholt, X-ray technician with TF-44 Med. North, their mission is simple, “Our main goal is to heal – U.S. or otherwise.”

Though TF-44 Med. North is not operating under the combative environment of their counterparts, their mission objective is the same – improving the conditions of their host country while changing their attitude about America.

“We’re changing the attitude and the way the (Uzbekistan citizens) perceive us,” said Likins. “They see that we are here trying to help and that we want their country to succeed. We are changing a long engrained opinion of us.”

Hawaii units train for Afghanistan deployment

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

Although the terrain and conditions of Oahu are vastly different to that of Afghanistan, training simultaneously in the Kahuku, Dillingham and East Range training areas replicated the challenges Logistics Task Force 325 might experience in its upcoming deployment.

Supporting the 3rd Brigade Combat Team during exercise Bronco Stampede, LTF 325 had to take their focus away from finding the best way to push supplies and support to units here, and decide how best to do it in Afghanistan.

“Our focus for this exercise is on using air transportation because this is exactly how we will have to do it in Afghanistan,” said Capt. Jennifer Krueger, assistant support operations officer.

“We have done more aerial re-supply missions during this exercise than any I’ve seen before,” said Sgt. 1st Class John Gearhart, support operations noncommissioned officer in charge.

With all supply routes closed to units during Bronco Stampede, their only solution to gain the much needed food, ammunition, fuel and water was to come from LTF 325.

“Traditionally, units will do ‘administrative’ moves whenever necessary during a field exercise like this,” Krueger said. “They just don’t have the option now because they won’t have the option in Afghanistan.”

Even with an increased emphasis on air assault operations during Bronco Stampede, the task force’s trucks still didn’t get a rest.

To further replicate what the units would encounter in Afghanistan, LTF 325 also acted as ‘local contractors’ for ground transportation.

“With all ground transport in Afghanistan done by local Afghans, the units must get used to coming through us for requesting equipment and direct support, even if it is by ground,” Krueger said.

But with transportation only one part of the mission for LTF 325 — composed mainly of the 325th Forward Support Battalion, with slice elements of the 725th Main Support Battalion — the rest of the unit worked on other support roles they would encounter in Afghanistan.

Along with simulated mass casualty exercises, the combat health support personnel from the unit also participated in a Combined Medical Assistance Exercise.

“The combat health support has been a huge aspect of the exercise,” Krueger said.

Testing their equipment and skills, humanitarian assistance teams traveled to the forward operating bases during Bronco Stampede the same way they will travel to villages in Afghanistan.

“During this exercise, we replicated exactly they would do in villages,” said 1st Lt. Shaun Roland, combat health support officer.

With capabilities to provide dental care, vaccinations, medical treatment and veterinary services, the unit’s training was put to a practical use.

“The humanitarian assistance teams went to forward operating areas to perform category IV dental exams to not only obtain training, but to help enhance deployment readiness for the 3rd BCT,” Roland said.

In the end, it appears that the combination of elements is working well together and the Soldiers of LTF 325 will further enhance the capabilities of the 3rd BCT while deployed later this year.



Operation Red Dog-AC is a Toys for Tots type program where U.S. Marines accept donations of toys, clothes, school supplies and hygiene items from people back home to deliver to the less fortunate Afghan kids in nearby villages and in local hospitals.

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plies and hygiene items from people back home to deliver to the less fortunate Afghan kids in nearby villages and in local hospitals.

“I saw some videos of a refugee camps down here and I thought I could be doing more in my down time to help these kids out,” said Cpl. Anthony A. Weiss, project coordinator for Operation Red Dog-AC. “I got with our public affairs officer, Maj. Deep and it just got going from there.”

Since he started the project about a month ago, Weiss has had a pretty good response so far.

“Maj. Deep wrote up a letter and I sent it out to all of my family and friends,” Weiss said. “I’ve been getting about a dozen e-mails a day from different organizations wondering what they can donate.”

A few packages have already begun to trickle in, but Weiss is hoping for a lot more.

“I want this project to have such a response that it will take a five ton to pick up all of the packages from the post office,” Weiss said.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Operation Red Dog-AC can log on to the Red Dog’s website at www.inthesands.jktf.com.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

“The Crow: Salvation”

1530Z at the MWR building:
Alex Corvis returns to the world of the living to solve the murder of a young woman that he was wrongly accused of.

Tomorrow’s movie:
“Dragon”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Thursday
Uzbekistan:	Cloudy/Rain H: 56F L: 35F	Cloudy/Snow H: 38F L: 29F
Bagram:	Cloudy/Rain H: 46F L: 28F	Cloudy/Rain H: 45F L: 30F
Kabul:	Cloudy/Rain H: 46F L: 27F	Cloudy/Rain H: 45F L: 30F
Kandahar:	Cloudy/Rain H: 63F L: 39F	Cloudy/Mist H: 50F L: 34F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)

Heatley to play first game since crash

ATLANTA – Dany Heatley is ready to return less than four months after reconstructive surgery on his knee. It couldn't come at a better time for the Atlanta Thrashers.

The star right wing plans to play Wednesday night for the first time since surviving a car wreck in September that killed teammate Dan Snyder.

Heatley's scheduled return against St. Louis at home will cap a recovery from two torn knee ligaments and a broken jaw. He had surgery in October to repair the anterior cruciate and medial collateral ligaments in his right knee.

"I met with the doctors Saturday for about the 17th time about his status," Thrashers general manager Don Waddell said Tuesday. "They assured us he was 100 percent."



Heatley was the Thrashers' leading scorer last year and MVP of the All-Star Game.

Panthers seem to relish underdog role

HOUSTON – The Carolina Panthers not only embrace their role as underdogs, they think it could give them an edge in the Super Bowl against the New England Patriots.

"We definitely feel like it," linebacker Dan Morgan said Monday. "We like that role. It fit the past three weeks in the playoffs and why would we want to change it now?"

"We like proving people wrong."

Odds makers, who made the Patriots a seven-point favorite, have been wrong in recent Super Bowls. Last year, Oakland was a 3 1/2-point choice and was routed 48-21 by Tampa Bay. Two years ago, New England came into the big game a 14-point underdog to St. Louis and not only covered, but won 20-17 on Adam Vinatieri's last-second field goal.

Since the 1996 Super Bowl, only two favorites have covered – Denver in 1999 and Baltimore in 2001.

"I didn't even see the line. We really don't care what the line is," Morgan said. "It don't matter to us. The game's got to be played out there on the field. All the outside stuff can really get thrown out the window once the opening kickoff starts."

While Carolina has won six straight, including three in the playoffs – the last two on the road against NFC favorites St. Louis and Philadelphia – there is no debate the Patriots should be favored. They have won 14 in a row, only the second time in NFL history a team has done that.

Andy Safin bounces No. 1 Roddick

MELBOURNE, Australia – Andy Roddick lost to Marat Safin in the Australian Open quarterfinals Tuesday, a five-set defeat that will cost him his No. 1 ranking.

Safin's 2-6, 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (0), 6-4 upset came on his 24th birthday. The crowd serenaded him with a rendition of Happy Birthday after the match – not long after Roddick smashed his racket and left the court.

"I'm back, that's the most important thing," said Safin, who was unseeded and ranked 86th said.

The Russian said the Happy Birthday tribute was probably the best gift he ever got.

The match ended a dramatic day in which the busiest people at the tournament were the doctors and trainers.

Defending champion Andre Agassi earned a semifinal berth when ninth-seeded Sebastien Grosjean defaulted with a groin injury after losing the first set. Agassi, eyeing his fifth Australian Open title and ninth Grand Slam crown, will face Safin in the semifinals.

Amelie Mauresmo, the fourth-seeded woman, didn't even start, forfeiting in tears with a torn back muscle and handing No. 32 Fabiola Zuluaga of Colombia a free pass to the semis.



Marat Safin's underdog status won over much of the crowd during his victory.

Boston coach O'Brien steps down

WALTHAM, Mass. – Jim O'Brien quit as coach of the Boston Celtics on Tuesday, after half a season under new boss Danny Ainge, the team announced.

Ainge announced O'Brien's departure at a news conference at the Celtics practice facility.

He said O'Brien told him he wanted to resign at a meeting Tuesday morning, one of their regularly scheduled sitdowns to discuss "philosophical differences" on running the team.

"The philosophical differences, I thought, were much smaller than Jim thought," said Ainge, who was surprised by O'Brien's decision.

Ainge said assistant coach John Carroll would take over for the rest of the season, while another assistant coach, Dick Harter, was let go. Ainge said that he took a more long-term view of building the team, while O'Brien was more concerned with short-term results.

He said he was willing to work through the philosophical differences, but "Jim did not see that long-term vision that I saw."

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Canadian peacekeeper, Afghan killed

KABUL, Afghanistan (*Reuters*) – A Canadian Soldier with the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Afghanistan was killed and three countrymen wounded on Tuesday in a suicide bomb attack the Taliban later said it had organized.

An Afghan civilian died of wounds inflicted in the attack near the Canadian base on the southern outskirts of the capital, Kabul.

“One Canadian Soldier has been killed and three others wounded,” said Col. Joerg Langer, a spokesman for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The bomber, who threw himself in front of the Canadians’ vehicle, was killed in the blast and eight other Afghan civilians were wounded, two critically, police and hospital workers said.

Spokesmen for the Taliban, which has regrouped as a guerrilla force since being driven from power by U.S.-led forces in late 2001, claimed responsibility.

“This attack was carried out by us. Yes, we take responsibility for this,” Hamid Agha told *Reuters*.

Another Taliban official, Abdul Latif Hakimi, said there were several hundred Taliban supporters waiting to carry out similar attacks against foreign “infidels.”

The casualties were the first among the NATO-led ISAF since two Canadian Soldiers were killed in October when their car hit a mine on the outskirts of Kabul.

Canada has about 2,000 Soldiers in the 5,700-strong multinational force, making it the largest contingent.

ISAF said the name of the Soldier who was killed was being withheld until his next of kin had been informed. It did not give the condition of the wounded troops.

Bystander Ahmad Skekib said he saw the attacker throw himself in front of the Canadians’ jeep as it was negotiating a speed bump.

“There was a big explosion, then flames and smoke. Then I saw five people lying in the car and on the road.”

Peacekeepers and police cordoned off the scene, but part of the bomber’s body could be seen lying on the road. In the distance was a badly burned Canadian military jeep with its windows blown out standing on a patch of blackened road.

A burned-out civilian vehicle was nearby.

Kabul’s deputy police chief Khalil Aminzada said the wounded Afghans were pedestrians.

A statement from President Hamid Karzai said he was “deeply disturbed” by what he termed a terrorist attack.

Tuesday’s was the second suicide attack on foreign peacekeepers in Kabul since their deployment after the overthrow of the radical Taliban regime.

Officials have blamed previous attacks on Taliban guerrillas and their Islamic militant allies including the al Qaeda network of Osama bin Laden.

Karzai signs new Afghan Constitution

KABUL, Afghanistan (*Agence France Presse*) – President Hamid Karzai signed into law Afghanistan’s new Constitution Monday, more than three weeks after a grand assembly, officially enshrining a presidential system of government for the country, approved the document.

The president, surrounded by members of his Cabinet, the former King Mohammad Zahir Shah and members of the international community, signed a decree, which promulgated the Constitution at a brief ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul.

After signing the decree, Karzai turned to those around him and said “congratulations”.

“I declare and enact the new Constitution which was unanimously adopted in 12 chapters and 162 articles by the historic loya jirga (grand assembly) convened in the city of Kabul between Dec. 13, 2003 and Jan. 4, 2004,” the decree states.

It said the Constitution should guide Afghanistan in “observing the provisions of the sacred religion of Islam, to strong national unity, the realization of democratic goals, building a civil society and... ensure peace, equity and brotherhood within the Afghan nation.” On Saturday, Karzai said he was waiting for linguistic and grammatical errors to be removed from the 162-article document first before signing it.

“I’d like to see the dessert tray, if you don’t mind.”



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support