

FREEDOM

June 18, 2004

Watch



Joint Task Force Wings keeps troops moving
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Korean Med. Grp. celebrates 100th day of deployment
Page 3

Shot on one!

Canadian soldiers fire a 105mm artillery round from an LGI Mark II Howitzer during training outside Kabul, Afghanistan. The Canadian army is part of the International Security Assistance Force, a contingent of more than 30 nations that is run by NATO. The Canadian army and other members of ISAF are responsible for helping to create a secure environment in and around Kabul.

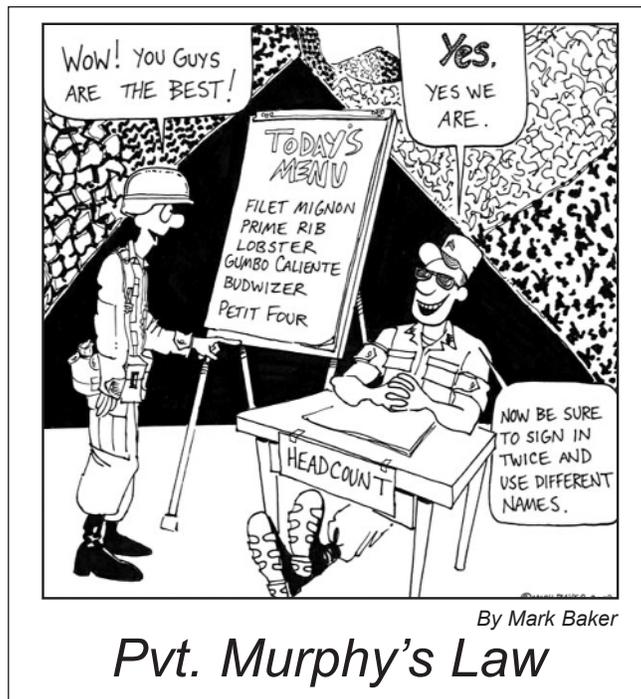


Canadian Cpl. John Bradley

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Cover photo by Maj. Steven J. Wollman, 17th Public Affairs Detachment
A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter approaches for a landing at a forward operating base near the Pakistani border. Other helicopters used here are the CH-47 Chinook, Marine CH-53 Sea Stallion, OH-58D Kiowa Warrior, Marine AH-1 Cobra and AH-64 Apache. These aircraft make up Joint Task Force Wings, which provides aviation support for CJTF-76.



Pvt. Murphy's Law

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Korean hospital marks 100 days

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The Republic of Korea Army's 924th Medical Support Group marked its 100th day of deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom here with an evening filled with dinner and festivities June 4.

Members of the Coalition who have contributed to the hospital's efforts were invited to the event so the hospital staff could show their gratitude for their cooperation in making the unit's first 100 days a success.

"This is not really a celebration," said Lt. Col. Yeoung Deuk Kim, hospital commander. "This is my way of showing appreciation to those who have helped us here, including my own soldiers."

The hospital invited commanders and staff from Task Forces 725 and 325 as well as other Coalition medical personnel who have assisted them in their first 100 days.

"Tonight, we are marking 100 safe, successful days of treating patients — and the (approximate) halfway point of our deployment," he said.

The current rotation is the fifth, six-month rotation at the Korean Hospital here. The

ROK Army and Marines assumed command of operations at the hospital in September 2002.

During their first 100 days, the 924th has accomplished much, said Kim.

In their time here, they've treated the hospital's 100,000th patient, treated thousands of children from the area and tried to improve the life of every individual they've seen in their hospital, said Kim.

But, improvements haven't only been made in the quantity of patients treated, but also in the quality of care provided, he added.

The Korean-run hospital provides level-three medical care to the Coalition and local nationals, as well as their own troops. Level-three care is the treatment of minor, non-life threatening ailments. The majority of their patients suffer from mild illness, such as skin, ear, nose and throat irritations. The other Coalition medical facilities, such as the Egyptian Hospital and the U.S. Army hospital at Camp Lacy treat patients with illnesses requiring more intensive care, such as surgeries and those needing specialists, he said.

The hospital is always striving to bring the best care possible to their patients. Upgrading equipment and having a well-trained staff run the hospital is



ROK troops sing a song of friendship for their guests at the observance of their 100th day of deployment. The hospital staff invited some of their Coalition partners to the hospital for an evening of dinner and a talent show.

important to operations, said Kim.

That care also includes alternative medicine, such as acupuncture, he said. The treatment often works where more conventional methods fail and is one of the unique things the 924th brought to the hospital.

The hospital tries to use all techniques to treat patients and give them quality medical treatment, said Kim.

Medicine is the 924th's main mission, but since they've been here, they've also provided hope to many of the patients they've treated, said Capt. Ju Hyoung Lee, 924th Med. Spt. Grp. operations officer.

An important part of the hospital's mission is the people of Afghanistan themselves, he added. The hospital has held events to show the people they care and are looking to help with a bright future for the country. They've hosted both a Children's Day celebration and a day for adults in which, beyond treating them, they gave them food and clothes.

Medicine and reaching out to the people are two important missions the hospital undertakes, but equally important are the partnerships they've formed with other Coalition units.

"Without support from Coalition units, what the hospi-

tal does wouldn't be possible," said Lee.

To show thanks for the support they've received up to the 100th day of their deployment, the Koreans prepared a meal for the Coalition troops that featured traditional Korean foods such as kimchi and guk (Korean soup), as well as Western foods — including the typical American barbecue fare of hamburgers and hot dogs.

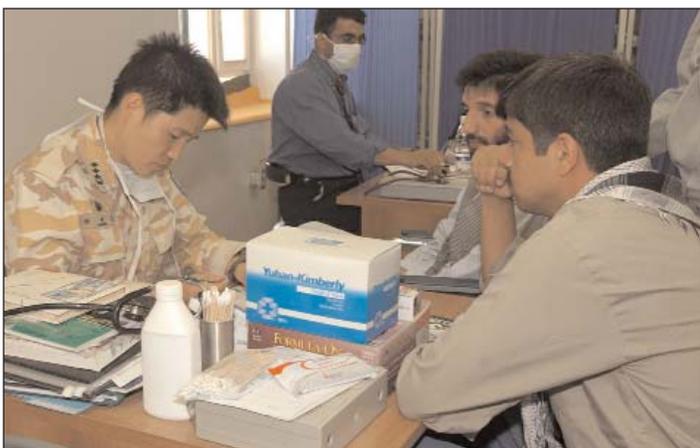
The highlight of the dinner, however, was the grilled camel.

"We not only wanted to show them (Coalition personnel) a bit of Korean food and their own food, but also something local to Afghanistan," said Maj. Choung Un Oh, 924th Med. Spt. Grp. executive officer.

After dinner, the hospital staff put on a talent-comedy show to present some Korean-style comedy and ROK Marine humor to their guests.

As the last part of the dinner and show wound down, five ROK soldiers sang a song of friendship for their Coalition partners, followed by more thanks by Lee.

"We appreciate all Task Force 725 and 325 have helped us with in making this a successful deployment," he said, "and we look forward to working together for the rest of our mission here."



Korean Army Capt. Jae Heong Park (left), 924th Med. Spt. Grp., fills out medical paperwork for Nesar-Ahmed.

'Operation Sandbox' brightens lives in Kabul

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Robert Ramon
 Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix
 Public Affairs Office

Kabul, Afghanistan — Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix Soldiers fighting terrorism in Afghanistan took the time recently to brighten the lives of some of the victims hit hardest by the 25 years of war that ravaged this country — the Afghan children.

During what would normally have been at least a partial day off for CJTF Phoenix Soldiers, several used their free time to travel to a nearby orphanage to visit with local children and deliver donations sent by family and friends back home. The donations came to support a humanitarian assistance program — dubbed "Operation Sandbox" by supporters back home — that was organized by the 45th Infantry Brigade, Oklahoma National Guard.



Staff Sgt. Tim Wilkens, CJTF Phoenix, prepares to hand out toys and school supplies to children in Kabul.

"Today we brought two five-ton trucks loaded with food, toys and candy," said Staff Sgt. Tim Wilkens, 45th Inf. Bde., after helping to unload the large trucks in the orphanage courtyard.

Children of all ages watched excitedly as the Soldiers unpacked each box. After organizing all the items, the Soldiers handed out toys and school supplies to the visibly happy children.

"When you see the children when the Soldiers are here, a smile comes across their face," said Mohammad Hafiz Karimi, an Afghan interpreter working with the Soldiers. "These are smiles not seen in many years."

It was hard to determine who was happiest this day — the children or the Soldiers.

"For me it's great," said Wilkens. He added that he has been on numerous combat missions, and this was his first time participating in something like a visit to an orphanage. "It's great to actually be able to come out here and be with the little kids."

The children waited with great anticipation all morning according to the orphanage employees. They were happy to know that the Soldiers cared enough to visit them.

"When the Soldiers are here the children forget they're orphans and have no parents," said Karimi. "They know there's someone there to take care of them. The kids really appreciate it and I'm very happy about that."

During their visit, the Soldiers created a makeshift playing field in the courtyard and taught the children to play one of



A CJTF Phoenix Soldier enjoys a game of baseball with a local boy in Kabul during a visit to an Afghan orphanage.

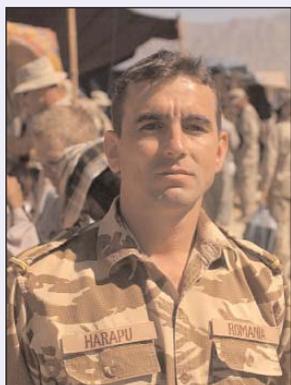
America's favorite sports — baseball. As the game went on, a group of adults stood at the gate and took in the rare sight of American Soldiers playing games with Afghan children.

"It's showing goodwill toward them and letting them see a different side to us other than just combat operations. We're able to show that we do care about the Afghan people and their children," said Wilkens, as a small Afghan boy about two or three years old ran over to give him a "high-five."

"That right there makes being here in Afghanistan worth while. I'd like to be here (at the orphanage) more often."

Enduring Voices

What is the most interesting souvenir you've purchased here?



Romanian Maj. Stefan Harapu
 CJTF-76, CJ-6
"I bought a chain, earrings and a bracelet."



Capt. Jim Seward
 109th Eng. Grp.
"I bought a bracelet."



Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Robert Richey
 Expeditionary Logistics Unit
"A tea set for my wife."



Staff Sgt. Ruben Reyes
 CJTF-76, CJ-4
"I bought an Afghan chess set."

Development group aids PRT in Bamian

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

BAMIAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Providing reconstruction support to an entire province can be a difficult task for just one organization, so a development group has been incorporated into the Bamian Provincial Reconstruction Team to financially assist its projects.

The development group consists of representatives from the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the New Zealand Agency for International Development and the British-funded Department for International Development. Each organization in the group plays an important part in providing financial support to the PRT.

These groups work with the PRT to provide the citizens of Bamian Province with more than what is readily available, using military funds and equipment for various projects, said Lt. Col. Dave Pirie, Bamian PRT deputy commander.

The projects undertaken by the various agencies include everything from funding the reconstruction of roads and bridges, to donating financial aid and equipment to the local radio station and police force, he said. The agencies are located in the PRT and work together to make sure all

the different needs of the province are met.

At Bamian Radio, Ali Erfan and Salman Moradi run operations and broadcast 12 hours a day to the local community – keeping the public up to date with news and entertaining them with music.

Most of what the privately-owned radio station has for broadcasting equipment was given to them by USAID and the U.S. State Dept., said Erfan. Without aid from organizations such as these, small radio stations like Bamian Radio wouldn't have what it takes, financially or mechanically, to operate on the level they do, he said.

“It's a good day for Bamian when people can listen to the radio and hear about news and important things like elections,” said Erfan.

“It's very important to be able to get news out to the people,” added Moradi. “Without the aid, this (radio station) wouldn't be possible.”

And to help the Bamian community listen to what Erfan and Moradi have to say, the PRT, with the help of DFID, has been handing out radios to the citizens of Bamian, said Pirie.

Assisting with projects like these is what government agencies in Bamian are all about, said New Zealand Navy Lt. Cmdr. Tania Koberstein, Bamian PRT NZAID project manager, whose organization contributes financially to the Civil Training Course and other local projects, such as the rebuilding of Bamian University.

The agencies also work together with the PRT to fill in where NGOs may have left off, said Pirie. For example, many NGOs have built roads and bridges, but the PRT, with extra financial backing from its aid organizations, keeps an eye on them and maintains them when necessary.

A dam high in the Hindu Kush Mountains is one such example of the projects that are built by an agency outside the PRT and its development group, but whose upkeep is taken on by the PRT with monetary backing by the group.

A United Nations organization built the



Salman Moradi (right), and Ali Erfan broadcast from their radio station, Bamian Radio. The two are the owner-operators of the small station in the town of Bamian. The station, which is aided by the Bamian PRT and its development group, broadcasts news, public information and music – with emphasis on information about the upcoming elections. Citizens of Bamian are becoming more aware of what the station is doing due to the aid agencies' gifts of radios to the local community.



New Zealand soldiers (right) from the Bamian PRT talk to Afghans from a mountain village in Bamian Province about a local dam that needs repair. The New Zealand-led PRT has frequent patrols in the area to see how they, and other aid agencies, can best assist the Bamians.

dam, but the PRT, through its interactions with locals, saw the need for repairs and stepped up to solve the problem, he said. The different aid groups contribute financially to the reconstruction and upkeep of projects like the dam, while soldiers from the PRT, or contractors hired by the aid groups, perform the maintenance.

The PRT consults with its development group to think of the most effective way to help in different situations, whether the PRT will send its own engineers out to do repairs or a government agency will contract the work. The aid groups sit in on the PRT's daily update briefings to gain perspective on what they can do to help, said Pirie. And often a representative from the PRT's development group accompanies patrols so they can see for themselves how they can best help the people.

The aid agencies, both government and NGOs, rely on each other to build and maintain a variety of projects for the Afghan people, he said. This combined effort is improving life for the people of Bamian, one day at a time.

“Any day we can get out to help the people and show them we care is a good day,” said Koberstein. “We want to show them that we're all here working for the common goal of rebuilding and helping Bamian become a better place.”

JTF Wings links ground forces in OEF

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – For ground forces spread throughout Afghanistan, one aspect remains constant – if they are getting supplies, transportation or close air support, chances are it is coming from a rotary wing aircraft.

While mountainous terrain and unimproved roads make ground travel a slow process, Combined Joint Task Force-76 relies heavily on the support of Joint Task Force Wings.

Controlling all conventional-force aviation operations within Afghanistan, JTF Wings is made up of U.S. Army active duty, Reserve and National Guard units, as well as two Marine squadrons. Using its variety of aircraft to support

the entire gamut of Operation Enduring Freedom missions, the 2,000-person task force is constantly engaged in operations.

“We first give the ability to lift Soldiers and equipment and deliver them anywhere they are needed in the battlefield,” said Lt. Col Frank W. Tate, JTF Wings operations officer. “We move the bulk of supplies from the major hubs (airfields) to the smaller fire bases.”

Primarily using the Army CH-47 Chinook, UH-60 Blackhawk and the Marine CH-53 Sea Stallion on “ring flights,” aircraft are linking the forward operating bases with troops, transportation, supplies and even medical aid.

“We have nine aircraft that conduct medical evacuation operations everywhere in the country,” said Tate. The



Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau

The crew chief of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter secures his side of the aircraft with an M-60 machine gun while another Blackhawk flies nearby.

MEDEVAC unit balances between the needs for military and civilian casualties.

JTF Wings commander, Col. B. Shannon Davis, said the MEDEVAC mission not only saves lives, but also shows the local population we care about them. “We transport injured Afghans every day and have saved many lives in the process.”

Tate said the support JTF Wings provides also extends into the combat arena. In fact, air assaults and close air support are operations the task force conducts almost daily.

“We have both Army and Marine Corps attack helicopters that provide close combat attacks in support of our infantry and Marines on the ground,” said Tate.

But using Army AH-64 Apache and Marine AH-1 Cobra helicopters does more than provide firepower to the ground forces. Many times it keeps the peace, said Davis.

“The AH-64 is quite an intimidating platform,” he said. “When the (anti-Coalition militia) see it out there, they know that aircraft being in the air is so mobile we can cross any ridgeline, we can cross any river at a moment’s notice. Many of (the ACM) have seen

the business end of this aircraft, so when the AH-64 is in the area it really brings a calm to things.”

With nearly half of JTF Wings made up of U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard troops, effectively supporting ground forces required extensive preparation before coming to Afghanistan.

“That is a significant number (of U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard),” said Tate. “It made the training leading up to coming here very important.”

Training for the mission in Afghanistan is essential because, in many ways, the conditions in Afghanistan are some of the most challenging in the world, said Tate.

“Joint Task Force Wings’ primary challenge is not the enemy, the primary challenge is the environment,” he said. “This is a tremendously difficult environment to fly in because of the high altitudes, high temperatures and high winds. In addition, you have the heavy dust conditions as well.”

He said with the increased heat and increased altitude, rotary wing aircraft have



Pfc. Chris Stump

Marine crew chiefs perform post-flight checks on a CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopter after a ring flight to Bamian Province. They are assigned to the Marine Helicopter Squadron, one of the elements of JTF Wings, which provides aviation support to CJTF-76.

See *JTF Wings*, Page 10

Egyptian forces provide medical treatment

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — For the past 11 months, the Egyptian army has done its part to help Coalition efforts in Afghanistan.

The Egyptian army is providing medical services to Coalition members and local nationals on a daily basis at El Salam Field Hospital at Bagram Air Base.

Local and third country nationals travel to El Salam Field Hospital from throughout Afghanistan and from as far away as Iraq, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan for treatment, said Col. Mohamed Shamel, El Salam Field Hospital commander.

Since the current rotation of soldiers arrived in December, they have treated 22,200 patients and have performed 300 surgeries, he said.

“We treat between 120 and 150 patients, on average, each day throughout the hospital,” said Shamel. There are seven clinics within the hospital — internal medicine, surgery, gynecology, pediatrics, radiology and a laboratory.

“We also have two to three surgeries daily, ranging from minor surgery to cesarean sections,” he said. “A couple months ago, after receiving the proper equipment from the American hospital, we performed brain surgery on a patient who was in a coma, and he made a full recovery.”

El Salam Field Hospital has 65 personnel, including the commander. There are 17 doctors and 17 nurses who provide care to patients every day, said Shamel.

“We are here in the best interest of the people,” he said. “Although we don’t have female doctors, we are doing everything we can to provide medical treatment without changing or going against Afghan traditions.”

If facilities like the Egyptian hospital weren’t here to provide medical care for the people of the surrounding villages, they would have to go to a clinic in another province, she said.

As a result of the cooperation and relationship the Egyptian forces have with the American and Korean hospitals, as well as the Combined Joint Task Force-76 command, they have been able to build a good relationship with local nationals in the area, said Shamel.

“We are here to provide humanitarian and medical services to all who come here — regardless of race, religion or gender,” he said. “We are doing that to the best of our ability with the limited supplies that are available in theater.”

Although there are limited medical supplies and medications in Afghanistan, the Egyptian soldiers are working to provide the best care possible to all of their patients, he said.

“If we don’t have the equipment to care for a patient, we either borrow the equipment from one of the other hospitals or we refer the patient to one of the other hospitals on Bagram so they can receive the proper care,” said Shamel.

Borrowing equipment and referring patients is only part of the work that is done in conjunction with the Coalition forces, he said.



Lt. Col. Hussein Abdel Hamid, orthopedic surgeon, checks the mobility of Mohamed Amim’s legs during his visit to El Salam Field Hospital May 29.

“There are many benefits to being a part of the Coalition mission in Afghanistan,” said Shamel. “One benefit is being able to share medical expertise with medical personnel from other countries.”

The Egyptian soldiers are learning different medical techniques from the Coalition forces and applying them to the way they practice medicine in their own hospital, he said.

By working with the Coalition forces, the Egyptian forces are able to provide medical aid to the Afghan people both in and out of the hospital, said Shamel.

Along with working at the hospital, the Egyptian doctors and nurses travel to the surrounding villages and provinces to conduct cooperative medical assistance missions for the people of Afghanistan, he said.

During the CMA missions, local nationals of all ages receive medical care and their livestock often receive veterinarian care as well, he said.

The Egyptian troops are happy to be able to provide these services to the people of Afghanistan, he said. “This is one of the greatest missions we have been a part of. We are proud to be able to help in the efforts being made to improve the lives of the Afghan people.”



Capt. Saleh Tamtway, Egyptian army doctor, hands a prescription to Khanumzia at the end of her office visit at El Salam Field Hospital May 29.

Secure deployment cash with investments

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — In general, the average U.S. service member deployed to Afghanistan tends to accumulate more money while deployed. A combination of additional entitlements, lower living expenses and fewer opportunities to spend money results not only in the growth of many troops' bank accounts, but confusion on what options they have in saving money.

With a plethora of options from both the military and outside financial institutions, some would be content just to take the cash they have made in Afghanistan and stick it underneath a mattress to simplify their options. However, there are many simple, and much more rewarding, options for stashing away cash.

The first unfortunate aspect to having a stack of money underneath a mattress, aside from the discomfort, is every year that stack of money loses value due to inflation.

Inflation

Inflation is a natural trend in each nation's economy that results in a continual rise of prices for goods and services, directly proportionate to the volume of money and credit available. Each year the value of a dollar decreases a few percent, making the value of the dollar less in 2004 than what it was in 1999. Therefore the overall value of \$10,000 will be less five years from now.

Insurance

Keeping the money under a mattress also lacks security. Because security is a concern for most people saving money, most banks and financial institutions are insured through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The FDIC is a government organization that insures all deposits in a financial institution up to \$100,000.

This means if something happens to any FDIC-insured bank, depositors would be reimbursed for any loss up to \$100,000. This is a very important question to ask whenever depositing money, because without the FDIC a depositor lacks protection if money is lost.

Checking/Savings Accounts

Because the Army requires direct deposit for every paycheck, most service members bypass withdrawing money and storing it in their homes. The money is deposited into a checking or savings account, most of which are FDIC-insured, but gains little interest. The most appealing aspect to checking and savings accounts is the ease in which money can be withdrawn and deposited — the drawback is they aren't designed for the benefit of the account holder, and eventually will behave the same as it would underneath a mattress. Although it is recommended that every person have easy access to some form of savings, the general rule of thumb is to keep the equivalent of three months' worth of expenses in these types of accounts.

Taxes

Even the interest gained off of checking/savings accounts are

subject to what is called Capital Gains Tax. When looking into savings options some of the most important aspects are whether the interest will be taxed or whether the investment will qualify for deductions.

With all these factors in mind, the following options are available through most financial institutions, companies or the U.S. government:

Money Market Deposit Accounts

These accounts usually earn slightly higher interest than a savings account, but still allow easy access to money. Some banks and financial institutions require an initial deposit and continuous balance of \$1,000 or more, and limit the number of withdrawals or transfers made during a given period of time.

Certificates of Deposit

CDs usually earn more interest than a savings account and are a very low-risk financial vehicle. Generally, the FDIC insures the deposits. The depositor agrees to keep money on deposit for a fixed period of time.

Usually, the longer the term, the higher the interest rate, but there are penalties for early withdrawal.

Bonds

When a customer purchases a bond, they are essentially loaning money to a corporation, the U.S. government or a local government for a certain period of time, called a term. The bond certificate promises that the issuing entity will repay on a specified date with a fixed rate of interest. Bond terms can range from a few months to 30 years.

Bonds are generally considered a safer investment. Although there are no penalties for selling a bond before it matures, the value of the bond is subject to interest rate fluctuations. It is also possible that the bond's yield will turn out to be less than the rate of inflation. Some of the bonds available include: savings bonds,

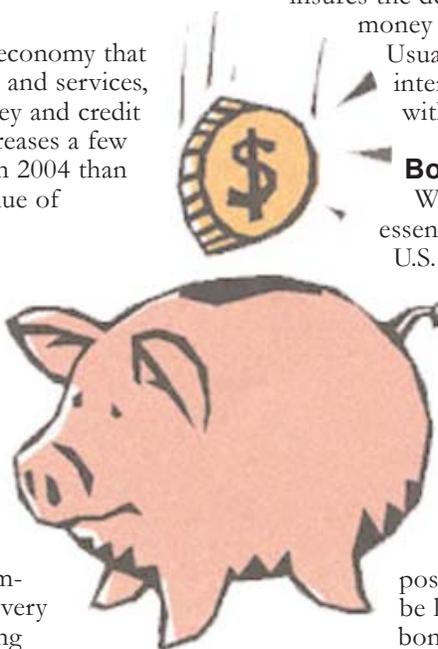
Treasury bills (commonly called T-bills) and other securities issued by the U.S. government.

Stocks

When a consumer buys stocks, they acquire shares of a company's assets. This is one of most volatile investment options. There is no guarantee on returns and many factors dictate how stocks behave. If the company does well, stock owners may receive periodic dividends and/or be able to sell stock at a profit. If the company does poorly, the stock price may fall and the investor could lose some or all of the money invested.

Mutual Funds

A mutual fund is a professionally-managed pool of money from a group of investors. A mutual fund manager invests funds in securities, including stocks and bonds, money market



Weapon awareness keeps troops safe

Safeguarding the Coalition

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Throughout Afghanistan, Coalition forces carry loaded weapons on a continuous basis. Mission readiness and personnel safety are seriously affected when weapons are not carried and handled in a safe manner.

Lapses in unit and individual weapon discipline can cause serious damage to equipment, not to mention injury or even death to fellow Coalition troops.

“Weapon safety is a force multiplier of all resources,” said Master Sgt. Steve Vandersande, Combined Joint Task Force-76 ground safety officer.

Without following proper safety procedures when handling weapons, the biggest risk to the Coalition is negligent

discharge.

A negligent discharge is identified as an unintentional discharge of any weapon system as a result of using improper clearing, loading or unloading procedures or standards, thus resulting in a Soldier being wounded or causing material damage to military resources.

“Soldiers need to be treating their weapons as though they are loaded all the time,” said Vandersande.

But the onus for weapon safety doesn’t just fall on the individual service member – it falls on everyone around them, and, notably, it is reflected in the leadership.

Leaders are responsible for ensuring their people pay close attention to weapon safety.

“As leaders, we’re responsible for stressing safety at all times,” said Staff Sgt. Lynn Irvin, Joint Logistics Command personnel NCO in charge. “The fact that we are all carrying live ammunition makes it even more important for leaders to enforce standards.”

Another important aspect of weapon safety is muzzle awareness. This is

another area where everyone becomes a safety officer. A service member should never have their weapon pointed at anything that is not a target, regardless of whether or not the weapon is loaded. Anyone who witnesses such an act has the responsibility to correct the individual committing this violation. Some areas where service members tend to become lax on muzzle awareness are entering and exiting vehicles, in dining facilities and while relaxing with fellow troops.

“Muzzle awareness, clearing procedures and functions checks are all important,” said Vandersande. “Everyone should know and practice the proper procedures on all of these.”

Again, it falls on the leadership to make sure Soldiers do, in fact, know and practice the proper procedures.

“We are responsible for providing training to teach our Soldiers proper procedures,” said Irvin. “We are responsible for making sure our Soldiers know what they are doing.”

One of the ways leaders can enforce the standards is by spot-checking and supervising Soldiers during maintenance, clearing and functions checks.

Clearing procedures have been recorded as one of the biggest sources of negligent discharges during recent times.

According to data compiled by the CJTF-76 Safety Office, there have been 21 negligent discharges recorded in Operation Enduring Freedom since November 2003 – five of these resulted in the death of a service member, also known as fratricide. Fratricide is “the employment of friendly weapons and munitions with the intent to kill the enemy or destroy his equipment or facilities, which result in unforeseen and unintentional death or injury to friendly personnel,” according to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine’s Fratricide Action Plan.

This plan was implemented earlier this year as an attempt to raise situational awareness and promote weapon safety.

Following proper procedures and paying attention to detail are two things that will help win the Global War on Terrorism.

Every day, troops in Afghanistan face the threat of enemy fire, not to mention many other debilitating safety hazards. Practicing weapon safety lowers the risk factor and helps protect the Coalition in everything it does.



Pfc. Cheryl Ransford

Staff Sgt. Greg Everhart (right), 125th MI Bn., supervises Pfc. Steven Ryan, 125th MI Bn., as he clears his M16A2 rifle before entering the dining facility. By spending time training Soldiers on tasks like clearing and functions checks, leaders lower the occurrence of negligent discharges.

JTF Wings: Joint Task Force supports ground forces

continued from Page 6

decreased power and capabilities than the same aircraft at sea level. With this in mind, training then focused on a condition aviation personnel call “high, hot and heavy,” said Tate.

JTF Wings, without the luxury of all its components being stationed in the same location in the United States, came together at Fort Rucker, Ala., for one segment of training. There, pilots were instructed by subject matter experts on the conditions they would face in Afghanistan. They also used flight simulators to better prepare them for this deployment.

Pilots also attended a high-altitude aviation training school in Gypsum, Colo., run by full-time Colorado National Guard pilots. HAATS is specifically designed to

train military pilots for methods in managing their aircraft’s power.

“At the school, pilots use vanilla aircraft that are much less powerful than the one they use daily,” said Davis. The aircraft lacked many of the navigational instruments found on updated military aircraft.

“You have to use all the elements and skills you have been taught over the years to make successful approaches and landings,” he said. “The point of the school is, if pilots can fly these low-powered aircraft in high altitude conditions, they can fly the more powerful aircraft we have to a much safer degree.”

Aside from the collective training, many of the units prepped in their local areas.

With a high percentage of Joint Task Force Wing’s units coming from the 25th Infantry Division (Light), Schofield

Barracks, Hawaii, those units took to the Pohakuloa Training Area on the Big Island of Hawaii. With an altitude over 6,000 feet, a warmer climate, heavy wind and dust, the conditions closely matched what pilots would encounter in Afghanistan.

Tate said some of the Task Force’s continued success comes not from the preparation by the units, but by the military as a whole.

“The military recognized years ago that (all the services) had to start working together,” said Tate. “Here in Afghanistan you are starting to see the benefit of years of joint preparations.

More common terminology, more common systems and more common equipment allow us to work together without the major hiccups.”

He said Army and Marine aircraft flying in the same formations is offering advantages to JTF Wings.

“We don’t have the power alone, as one force, but together we can get any mission accomplished, anywhere,” said Tate.

He said the Marine CH-53s provide longer flight time than any other aircraft in the task force. “They can carry more fuel and also have the ability to do air-to-air refuel. That gives a capability that we would otherwise not have.

“They also come heavily armed with .50 caliber machine guns which allows them in some cases to go without an attack helicopter escort,” he said.

As JTF Wings continues its mission in Afghanistan, Tate said success will come from not only the pilots, but all of the service members supporting their mission.

“There are a lot of challenges for the maintainers with all the dirt that blows into the aircraft, it is very difficult to keep it fully functional and operational,” said Tate.

Command Sgt. Maj. Alfred Alexander, JTF Wings command sergeant major said all Soldiers are aware of the mission and its challenges.

“They know that we cannot let the environment inflict damage on us,” said Alexander. “Already I have seen that the Soldiers have integrated well to the conditions.”

Although it is early in their mission as a joint task force, Davis said he has seen nothing but success.

“I think we all know that we play a vital role to the success of CJTF-76 mission,” he said.



Lance Cpl. John E. Lawson Jr.

Marines from 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, rush to their security positions after inserting from an Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter in the Wusbin Valley May 28. One of the unique aspects of JTF Wings is the combination of different branches of the military working together to provide aviation support.

Money: Investing deployment cash means more later

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instruments or a combination of each, and decides the best time to buy and sell. By pooling resources with other investors in a mutual fund, this can diversify even a small investment over a wide spectrum, which should reduce risk. There are many types of mutual funds with varying degrees of risk. Most mutual funds charge fees and investors are often taxed on profits.

Savings Deposit Program

The military also offers an option to save money to all service members in Afghanistan called the Savings Deposit Program. The program is similar to a savings account, however it is run by the government. Each month a service member has the option of depositing amounts equal to one-month’s take-home pay. The money, up to \$10,000, will then accrue interest at 2.5 percent,

compounded quarterly.

Service members can begin depositing money 30 days in the combat zone and can continue depositing until 90 days after redeployment, at which time the account ceases to accrue interest. Withdrawals must be 90 days after completion of tour or immediately upon separation. Although more than \$10,000 can be deposited in the account, only the first \$10,000 will accrue interest.

Whether it is through the government or a private financial institution there are many options in saving money for short-term goals. Choosing the right options vary by individuals. Weighing goals will help determine what options are right.

(EDITOR’S NOTE: Information for this article was compiled from <http://www.bls.gov/bls/inflation.htm>; <http://beginners.invest.about.com>; Department of Defense pay regulation volume 7A (Active and Reserve Pay), Chapter 51, (Savings Deposit Program.)

American, Korean engineers 'cement' friendship

Story and photos by
Air Force Master Sgt.
Jeff Szczechowski
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Two old friends met on the Bagram Air Base flightline recently, and the result is an expanded strategic airlift ramp that will significantly enhance current operations and serve as a key enabler for a major military airfield construction, refurbishment and replacement project that will begin in the near future.

The 455th Expeditionary Operations Group Civil Engineers Flight and the 100th Korean Engineer Corps, Republic of Korea Army, teamed up to work on a project that increased parking space for wide-body aircraft and provided them with more room to maneuver. The added concrete surface will allow critical aircraft arrivals and departures to continue uninterrupted, while significant airfield construction occurs later this year.

For one month, American Airmen and Republic of Korea soldiers worked shoulder-to-shoulder under the hot sun, pouring, forming and finishing 76,000 square feet of concrete, for what is dubbed the "Echo Octagon." Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jason Kreutzer, 455th CE flight, airfield projects NCO in charge, said that ROK engineers were an invaluable



Korean Pfc. Yi Dong Gon, 100th Korean Eng. Corps, puts the finishing touches on still-wet concrete on the Bagram flightline.



Air Force civil engineers and Korean army engineers poured 76,000 square feet of concrete to expand the Bagram flightline. The added concrete surface will allow critical aircraft arrivals and departures to continue uninterrupted, while significant airfield construction occurs later this summer or early fall.

force multiplier. He said that the smaller group of Americans toiled away right alongside their Korean counterparts, and also offered some technical support.

"(The Koreans) are real hard workers," said Kreutzer. "We only have 12 'dirt boys' in our flight, and sometimes we only have five or six out here because of other projects, so the (Korean Engineer Corps' assistance) was a real key to making this project a success."

Korean Capt. Yoon Hyun Ho, 1st Company, 100th Eng. Corps, commander, said the joint project has given his unit a chance to demonstrate their technical and engineering skills to their American partners, while also giving his troops a chance to learn how to use some of the 455th EOG CE flight's construction equipment.

"We have the people, the skills and the desire," he said, "but sometimes, not all the equipment."

Korean Sgt. Kim Jung Hwan, an interpreter with the 100th Engineer Corps, said it's been a good experience working with his American allies.

"We are enjoying this," he said during a break on the flightline. "Working with the U.S. Air Force is a good time. And, it's good that we have learned about some of their equipment and how to use it."

He added that his troops are pouring "a lot of concrete," often working right through lunch so they can complete the project quickly.

"We are so busy, we have to change our lunch schedule," he said. "When we pour, we can not stop. We have to finish, or the concrete would dry."

Though the Air Force CE flight and the ROK engineers have helped each other in the past, this is the first large-scale Coalition enterprise that the two have accomplished together, said Air Force 1st Lt. Jason Riebel, 455th Civil Engineers Flight commander. He said that it has "been an amazing collaborative effort."

Yoon said that being a part of Operation Enduring Freedom is meaningful to him for several reasons.

"We are a friend of the United States, so we come here to help them," he said. "This effort will help to stop terrorism. Also, because of the situation in our own homeland (where North and South Korea remain divided more than 50 years after the official end of the Korean War), we can relate to the people being separated here, and we want to help keep Afghanistan unified."

Off the ramp, the two units have "struck up a great camaraderie," said Kreutzer.

The 100th Eng. Corps has hosted the Air Force civil engineers for several meals at their Korean dining facility, and the two groups have even squared off for a game of softball at the Korean compound.

The construction work officially concluded with a joint ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Echo Octagon May 27.

Commitment



A Marine must pledge to complete a worthy goal by worthy means which requires identification with that goal and demonstrated actions to support that goal, including, but not limited to: Competence, Teamwork, Selflessness, Concern for People and Spiritual Heritage.