FREEDOM *Watch*

July 18, 2004

Engineers sweep Bagram for land mines
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CJTF Thunder takes reigns from CJTF Stonewall
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Canadian Cpl. John Bradley

Training the force

A Mongolian Army member of the Field Artillery Embedded Training Team (left) supervises Afghan National Army artillery trainees from the 1st Brigade, 4th Kandak Field Artillery, while they set up their D-30 122mm Howitzer, at the Darulaman Compound near Kabul, Afghanistan.
The ETT, which has members from Canada and Mongolia, is part of the Field Artillery Mobile Training Team, run by the U.S. Army. Since its inception, the team has trained three field artillery kandaks, or battalions.

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Soldiers from the 367th En. Bn. spend their days ridding Bagram Air Base of landmines so construction can take place. Here, Spc. James Chesebro, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn. uses a ground penetrating radar mine detector to sweep an area of the base.
Cover photo by Pfc. Chris Stump

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By Mark Baker

Pvt. Murphy's Law

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CJTF Thunder assumes authority of RCE

Redleg Soldiers ready to continue 'legacy of excellence'

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

Command Sgt. Maj. Eugene R. Brewer (left), CJTF Thunder Command Sgt. Maj., and Col. Gary H. Cheek, CJTF Thunder commander, uncase the unit colors at a TOA ceremony held on Bagram Air Base June 29.

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Military forces in 12 provinces of Afghanistan's Regional Command East were officially under new leadership when the staff of Combined Joint Task Force Stonewall transferred authority to Combined Joint Task Force Thunder at Bagram Air Base June 29.

The ceremony marked the hand over of control from the 6th Marine Regiment from 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejune, N.C., to the headquarters of Division Artillery from the 25th Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

"Even though operations still continue as this ceremony takes place, it is important for all of us to come together and pay tribute to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines that are on point in the global war on terror," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, Combined Joint Task Force-76 commander.

"They (CJTF Stonewall) did their job without a whole lot of fanfare," said Olson. "But their contributions ensure the security of more than 100,000 Afghan people."

In the three months the Marines of CJTF Stonewall served in Afghanistan, they assisted in capturing 34 anti-Coalition militants and destroyed 51 weapons caches.

But Olson said CJTF Stonewall's most notable accomplishment was the reconstruction they helped to facilitate.

CJTF Stonewall completed 47 reconstruction projects worth $900,000, and facilitated the start of over 185 reconstruction projects worth $6.3 million and 37 United States Agency for International Development projects worth $40 million.

Outgoing CJTF Stonewall commander, Marine Col. David C. Garza, 6th Marine Rgt., said he and his task force had to adapt to their mission. "We learned that security supports reconstruction and reconstruction supports security."

He said the challenge in the CJTF Stonewall area of operations was to always maintain stability – not only for reconstruction but also for the upcoming elections.

> *"The Thunder brigade is ready and we have the fire in our eyes."*
>
> Col. Gary H. Cheek
> CJTF Thunder commander

Olson said stability in CJTF Thunder's area of operations will be paramount within the months leading up to elections.

"To this new unit, Task Force Thunder, you are taking over during historic times," said Olson. "These next couple months are pivotal."

With the change from Stonewall to Thunder comes an increase in size. The task force will grow from two infantry battalions to three and five Provincial Reconstruction Teams to seven.

CJTF Thunder will command Marines from the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Rgt., and Army units from 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, and 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, as well as the PRTs located in Parwan, Bamian, Ghazni, Gardez, Jalalabad, Asadabad and Khowst provinces. The 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, Virginia National Guard, will also join the task force later this year.

"Task Force Thunder will play a pivotal role in the success of the CJTF-76 mission," said Olson.

"As our tour comes to a close, we know the foundation that we have created will continue under Colonel (Gary H.) Cheek and the rest of Thunder," said Garza.

Incoming CJTF Thunder commander, Cheek, said he and his unit are ready for the hefty task before them. "The Thunder brigade is ready and we have the fire in our eyes. I promise we will continue your (CJTF Stonewall) legacy of excellence."

NCOs paramount in keeping troops safe

Enforcing the Standards

By Command Sgt. Maj. Cynthia Pritchett
Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan

AFGHANISTAN — Recent incidents in the Combined Joint Operations Area have revealed a disturbing trend – our service members are being injured and killed by improper weapon handling. Insufficient training, ineffective supervision, negligence, inattentiveness and outright indiscipline are all contributing factors to these occurrences. This must come to an end – now. One injured service member is one too many.

All personnel, regardless of their military specialty, must be proficient with their assigned weapon. Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq clearly demonstrate that any unit might have to engage the enemy. Weapons proficiency is a cumulative and degradable skill that must be instilled in each service member and constantly maintained.

Muzzle control, selector switch operation and fire discipline are critical to weapon safety. They must be incorporated into your daily operations, and you must always enforce the standard. Service members should become so comfortable with their weapon that its safe and proper use is second nature.

The selector switch stays on SAFE and the finger stays off the trigger unless engaging targets or when enemy contact is imminent. A well-trained service member can follow these safety procedures and still rapidly and accurately engage the enemy.

A common mistake troops make when clearing weapons is getting out of sequence. They don't take the magazine out before pulling and releasing the bolt and do not do a good job of looking into the chamber and then firing the weapon. The other problem is when they reload the weapon and put the magazine back in before they charge it and place it on safe, chambering a round without even knowing it.

Whenever you see a safety violation, correct it. A moment's inattention can lead to disaster.

Annual range qualification doesn't necessarily indicate weapons proficiency. Personnel must effectively engage targets, as well as perform other associated tasks including:

- Clearing procedures
- Loading and unloading procedures
- Immediate action
- Remedial action
- Disassembly and reassembly
- Weapons maintenance
- Functions check
- Preventative maintenance checks and services

Can your personnel perform these tasks to time and standard? If they can't, they're not properly prepared.

While the basic operating principles remain the same for many small arms, there can be significant differences that can put the untrained person at risk. Does your M249 Squad Automatic Weapon gunner understand how an open-bolt weapon operates? What about the rest of your soldiers? Personnel unfamiliar with open-bolt weapons have had negligent discharges while attempting to chamber a round.

When cross-training your personnel, make sure they become proficient with all of your unit's weapons. Circumstances might require a rifleman to become a machine gunner in a hurry. Would that rifleman be ready? Would you be ready?

Weapon proficiency is the province of the NCO. We are the primary trainers and guardians of the standard. We must take ownership and make it happen. If we don't, then who will? Our young service members depend on us, for our experience and our expertise. The men and women we train today will become the leadership of tomorrow. We must arm them with the tools, techniques and procedures to prepare them for that task.

You have proven yourselves as the most professional NCO Corps in the world, a force that stands ready to fight and win on the modern battlefield. Now I challenge you to continue that tradition of excellence. Train our personnel well, train them to standard, and keep them safe.

Clearing Procedures - Follow these steps in the absence of posted guidelines

M16A2/M4 Rifle

Step 1. Point in a SAFE DIRECTION! Place selector lever on SAFE. If weapon is not cocked, lever can not be pointed toward SAFE.
Step 2. Remove the magazine by depressing the magazine catch button and pulling the magazine down.
Step 3. To lock bolt open, pull charging handle rearward. Press bottom of bolt catch and allow bolt to move forward until it engages bolt catch. Return charging handle to full forward position. If you haven't before, place selector lever on SAFE.
Step 4. Check receiver and chamber to ensure these areas contain no ammo.
Step 5. With selector lever pointing toward SAFE, allow bolt to go forward by pressing upper portion of bolt catch.

M249 Squad Automatic Weapon

Step 1. Move the safety to the fire position by pushing it to the left until the red ring is visible.
Step 2. With right hand, palm up, pull the cocking handle to the rear, lock the bolt in place.
Step 3. While holding the resistance on the cocking handle, move the safety to the SAFE position by pushing it to the right until the red ring is not visible. (The weapon cannot be placed on safe unless the bolt is locked to the rear.)
Step 4. Return and lock the cocking handle in the forward position.
Step 5. Raise the cover and feed mechanism assembly, and check the feed pawl assembly, feed tray assembly, the chamber and the space between the bolt assembly and chamber for brass, links or ammo. Insert two fingers into the magazine well to extract any ammunition or brass.
Step 6. Close the cover and feed mechanism assembly and move the weapon to the fire position. With right hand, palm up, return the cocking handle to the rear position. Press the trigger and at the same time ease the bolt forward by manually riding the cocking handle forward.

M60 Machine Gun

Step 1. Move safety lever to the fire position.
Step 2. With right hand, palm up, pull the cocking handle in the rear. Move the safety lever to the SAFE position. Return and lock the cocking handle in the forward position.
Step 3. Raise the cover and check the feed pawl assembly, feed tray, lift the feed tray and hanger assembly and inspect the chamber and space between the face of the bolt and the chamber for brass, links or ammo.
Step 4. Close the cover and move the safety lever to the fire position. Pull the cocking handle to the rear position. Pull the trigger and at the same time ease the bolt forward by manually riding the cocking handle forward.
Step 5. Place the safety lever on SAFE and raise the cover. (If not disassembling the gun, keep the cover down.)

M9 Pistol

Step 1. Hold the pistol in the raised position.
Step 2. Depress the magazine release button and remove the magazine.
Step 3. Pull the slide to the rear and lock it in its rearward position up on the slide stop.
Step 4. Point the pistol skyward and look into the chamber to ensure it is clear.
Step 5. Let the slide go forward and pull the trigger to release the spring tension.
Perform this task in a designated area, keeping your finger of the trigger. Always make sure the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction. Be sure to check the chamber after removing the magazine. Never assume a pistol is unloaded until you have checked it, both visually and physically.

Benefit run to assist wounded comrades

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — On the Fourth of July, over 1,200 Coalition troops showed their generosity and support to wounded veterans who fought here and in Iraq by raising money to assist their families while they are hospitalized.

The "Freedom is Never Free" run, a 10k walk/run around Bagram Air Base, was organized by Logistics Task Force 725. Personnel from throughout Combined Joint Task Force-76 donated money and participated in the run, raising over $21,000 to donate to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW will ensure the money gets distributed to two Fisher Houses back in the States – one near Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the other near Bethesda Naval Hospital, both in Maryland, said Capt. Soraya Esmaili, LTF 725 personnel officer. Fisher Houses are located near U.S. military hospitals to enable the families of troops to be near their loved ones while they recover.

The money raised during the run will be used exclusively to support the families of those injured in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom by covering part or all of the cost of their stay at the Fisher House, she said.

Since many of these service members are being treated at Walter Reed and Bethesda, the proceeds will be most beneficial at those locations.

"The money will go a long way to help the families of those injured stay by their loved ones for an extended period of time," said Sgt. 1st Class Jennifer Flores, LTF 725 personnel NCO in charge.

"It's all for a great cause – Soldiers helping Soldiers," she said.

Runners begin the "Freedom is Never Free" run, a 10K run/walk designed to benefit the families of service men and women injured in OEF and OIF.

And the troops who participated in the run also got something back for their efforts.

In addition to the T-shirts, phone cards and flags they received, participants got a feeling of satisfaction and camaraderie in being able to give to the families of their fellow servicemen.

"It feels good to pay back for all the sacrifices those before us have made," said 1st Lt. Wesley Hall, Task Force Victory. "We wouldn't be here today if they hadn't put up the fight before us."

Not only did the participants show they cared about veterans, they showed the military is all one family. And when part of the family needs help, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines will step up to help.

"Some people don't have the means to be near their families – we've got to help these people," said Spc. Alexander Spei, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment.

That's just what the organizers at LTF 725 wanted to do with the event – show support for the families whose troop made a great sacrifice, said Esmaili.

The initial fundraising goal was $10,000. But the generous outpouring of support from the Coalition members assigned here went way beyond expectations.

"We are all honored to be part of such a generous Task Force," said Esmaili. "And we know that in the spirit of independence, the Fourth of July and camaraderie among Soldiers, we have brought a little bit of hope and love to our injured Soldiers at home."

Enduring Voices

What freedom do you appreciate more as result of serving in OEF?

Yuri Andreev
Yuri's Gift Shop
"The freedom of education. The people here can't go to school like we can in other countries."

Marine Capt. Zachary Williams
HMH-769
"I am thankful for the freedom of religion. No one can tell me how to worship."

Canadian Capt. Jean-Jacques Simon
Candian Liaison
"I appreciate the sense of security we have. We feel safe no matter who we are."

Staff Sgt. Jumal Black
125th MI Bn.
"Freedom of choice, because we are able to choose what we say and what we do."

'Operation Blue Candle' aids Mizan

Story and photos by
Sgt. Jeremy A. Clawson
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MIZAN DISTRICT, Afghanistan — During the seven days of Operation Blue Candle, Cacti Soldiers conducted combat and presence patrols, air assault operations, and cordon and search operations in the Mizan District of Afghanistan. The Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, provided humanitarian aid to citizens of numerous communities within the operational area.

Thanks to the "Cacti Battalion" – as 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt. is known – Mizan again has a doctor, a school and a light at the end of the tunnel.

Task Force Cacti and its subordinate elements accomplished two things.

"We pushed the enemy out and reinforced the local government," said Capt. Peter Farrell, Company A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., commander.

The Mizan District, Cacti's area of operations, is a mountainous region in south central Afghanistan. Recent intelligence indicated that anti-Coalition militants, including Taliban, al-Qaeda and resistance fighters, had been harassing the populace there.

"The primary mission at battalion level was to disrupt ACM forces," said Farrell. "Alpha Company's role was the air assault arm, to cordon and search wherever we had intelligence that there were ACM forces operating."

According to Farrell, Mizan and the surrounding villages have been a safe haven for Taliban and enemy resistance, but the efforts of the nearly 400 Cacti Soldiers have diminished their capabilities.

"Mizan is a remote district. It's kind of in the middle of nowhere. It's been a sanctuary. By denying that to the anti-Coalition (militants), it causes them to fracture into splinter cells. It doesn't give them the support they need to operate."

Blue Candle had virtually no direct engagement with the ACM yet it did stymie their movement.

"We stopped 14 days of violence, of fighting. There has been no fighting in that region since Blue Candle," said Farrell. "The doctor moved back, so now they have some limited form of health care. The school reopened in that district. People obviously felt safe and happy while we were there but I think it will have a lasting effect as we continue to return in Mizan."

In relation to the larger national efforts, Operation Blue Candle gives the local governments a chance to fill more of a role as the infrastructure improves.

"If you look at the next scale up that's one more piece that's starting to fit into reconstruction – getting a government going. We push those guys (Taliban) farther out," said Farrell. "(The Taliban) influence is limited and the government's influence grows."

Soldiers of the "Cacti" battalion prepare to board UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters before an air assault operation. The battalion is charged with restoring stability in the Mizan District in central Afghanistan.

Additionally, the Cacti and their supporting units were able to capture numerous weapons during Operation Blue Candle.

"If you look at it in terms of enemy equipment, we captured a lot," said Farrell. "We got about 60 blasting caps, which in terms of numbers, that's approximately 60 IED's; 10 assorted rifles; two RPG's with numerous rounds. We captured quite a bit of low grade C-4, blasting wire, improvised timers – we got about three of those – and thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition."

Task Force Cacti maintained a high operational tempo during Operation Blue Candle with back-to-back missions. Most of the enemy munitions confiscated were found within the walls of each village.

In addition to capturing munitions, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., also searched for other key ACM elements such as personnel, safe houses and equipment. The company even captured a Taliban doctor.

"This type of operation makes it untenable for the people to harbor and assist the Taliban in their area," said Farrell.

Operation Blue Candle proved to be a fruitful mission, but not just for the Soldiers. It helped to reinforce the provincial governor's role and accomplish his objectives for Mizan District, and its success will likely spread throughout the surrounding districts to have a positive impact on the rest of the country.

Soldiers with the 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., cordon off an area in the Mizan District during a patrol. The battalion conducted combat operations and presence patrols, adding to the stability of the remote region.

ANA kandaks bring stability to Paktika Province

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Kelly McCargo
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Forward deployed, the Afghan National Army's 3rd Kandak (Battalion), 1st Brigade is strategically located mere miles from Pakistan in a valley commanding a broad view of the surrounding area.

Anti-Coalition militants have been using the area for several years to enter Afghanistan to cause mayhem.

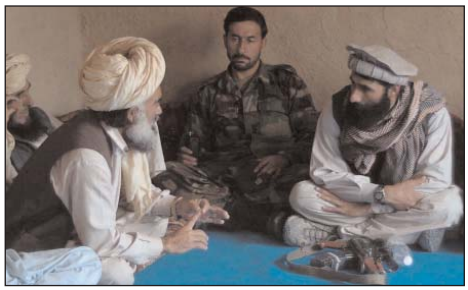
This time the ANA is waiting for them.

"(The ACM) used to come to the local village (Lwara) from across the border to steal petroleum from the people," said ANA Capt. Mohammad Harif, 2nd Company commander.

In the past, once ANA patrols left the region, the ACMs would retaliate brutally against villagers who cooperated with any Coalition forces. They would destroy homes and kill villagers, said Harif. This left the nearby villagers reluctant to put faith in the ANA and embedded Coalition trainers.

"But now the ANA is here to stay, and (the ACMs) have stopped coming," said Harif. "(Some) insurgents are still remaining, hoping we will leave."

With temperatures that reach up to 120 degrees, the valley is full of dry riverbeds that measure 200 meters across in some areas.



Capt. Mohammad Harif (center) listens to a Lwara village elder (left) during a Jirga, or town council meeting, to gain an understanding of the town's concerns.

In cooperation with the Paktika governor, Mohammad Gulbadin Mongol's militia forces, the Coalition has since provided six water wells, with an additional six scheduled to be built within the year. The Coalition is also financing the construction of a school for the estimated 300 children in the region.

This is just one of the many places where the Afghan peoples' army is making a stand against the enemies of Afghanistan and this is why the ANA soldiers decided to serve in the ANA, said Harif.

"My father told me, even before the Taliban came, there were always bad people who never wanted schools in the community and who destroyed hospitals and roads," said ANA Sgt. 1st Class Mirwis Solehi, Weapons Company first sergeant. "Bad people doing bad things."

Like so many other young Afghans, the 23-year-old's entire life was engulfed with brutal fighting from the resistance against Russian occupation to skirmishes between provincial warlords.

And like so many other young Afghans, the ANA soldiers are striving for a peaceful, unified country.

"The enemies of Afghanistan want us to be uneducated, so we can only cultivate the poppy fields or join the al-Qaeda army," said Solehi. "I joined the ANA because it was my father's wish that I serve the Afghan people in the ANA.

The Afghan people are focused on unifying Afghanistan and the ANA is here to bring stability to the country, and gain the trust of the Afghan people so the enemy can never build in our country again."

Breathlessly optimistic about progress in Afghanistan, ANA Sgt. Abdul Monif, Weapons Company squad leader, quickly adds to his friend and superior's comments.

"Every day the ANA is getting more soldiers, and we will go to the borders so no bad guys will come to our country," said Monif.

"The Afghan people have a very good destiny, and I am proud of all of the reconstruction I see in Afghanistan. (God willing) one day I hope my children will benefit and be able to become a pilot or pharmacist."

Acquisition workshops focus on ANA supply systems

Story by Air Force
Lt. Col. Jimmy Bailey
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Afghan Ministry of Defense appointed 11 acquisition professionals last month as part of the MoD's new Acquisition Agency and Acquisition and Technology Directorate. Level 3 division directors were also appointed across the board by the MoD.

These new appointees are responsible for developing the MoD's policies and the systems for acquisition functions to support the Afghan National Army's requirements.

They will take identified and approved requirements for beans, bullets and boots and use these processes to deliver them on time and within budget.

Coalition members from the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan will be working side-by-side with Afghans in the AA to build a successful logistics system.

"This is a monumental step toward the Afghan National Army becoming a self-sufficient organization," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jimmy Bailey, acquisition trainer and mentor for Afghan Brig. Gen. Abdul Wakil, director of the AA.

Continuing this momentum, Bailey, Air Force Lt. Col. James Fulton, acquisition trainer and mentor for Col. Rajab Ali, director of the ATD, and Steve Brooks, MPRI acquisition mentor and systems developer, facilitated the first workshop and training session for the new accessions.

"The workshop was a great starting point for showing and sharing the best of what the U.S. Department of Defense's Acquisition Corps has to offer," said Bailey.

"Our first expanded working group session focused on the fundamentals of force management, organizational alignment, elements of acquisition and strategies for development," said Brooks.

"We felt it was extremely important that they understand the role they play within the ANA structure, along with the roles and responsibilities of the MoD's Acquisition and Technology Directorate and the Acquisition Agency," he said. "This includes how the organizations interact with the rest of the MoD and General Staff, and also with other ministries within the Afghan government."

Wakil and Ali provide the leadership and direct the mission of the Afghan acquisition and sustainment process.

"Their participation in this and future sessions is critical, because we can't transfer our system here," said Fulton. "Our rules and regulations such as the FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulation) are

See ***Acquisition,*** *Page 10*

Engineers clear path for construction

Sgt. Stephanie Hall

Two armored bucket loaders work together to level a de-mined area for future operations.

Pfc. Chris Stump

Spc. James Chesebro, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., marks a possible mine with poker chips so another Soldier can come in and physically feel for the mine with a probe. The battalion is a U.S. Army Reserve unit headquartered in St. Cloud, Minn. Their primary mission here is mine clearance to make way for new construction and improvements.

Story by Pfc. Chris Stump
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — With as many as seven million land mines unaccounted for in Afghanistan, being a combat engineer here is not an easy task. Especially since Bagram Air Base is located in the most heavily mined area of the country.

The Soldiers of the 367th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve, headquartered in St. Cloud, Minn., are playing a vital part in improving Bagram by removing the mines that lay around most of the base, said Maj. Rick Lau, 367th Eng. Bn. operations officer.

Bagram's history as an airfield made it a target in the years of war before the Coalition came in, he said. As it was a target, it was defended with thousands of mines emplaced around it.

The Soviets originally laid the mines during their occupation in the late 1970s and 1980s. The volume of mines around the airfield during the reign of the Taliban remained the same, but some of the locations changed to suit their defensive needs, said Lau.

The Taliban's reconfiguring of the minefields creates an added challenge to the task of demining, he said. When engineers go in to clear a doctrinally-laid Soviet minefield, they know the field was set up in rows with a certain amount of mines.

However, when the Taliban moved mines, they did so with no apparent doctrine, leaving small numbers of mines where no mine field existed previously and leaving gaps in the old Soviet fields, he said.

Now that the Taliban is gone and the Coalition is here expanding and making improvements, the mines – no matter how they got to where they are – need to be removed.

The first step in initiating any new construction on Bagram is the clearance of mines and other unexploded ordnance.

All projects, from improving taxiways to building new structures, must be built on cleared terrain, said Lau. Clearing mines is a job the 367th Eng. Bn. trained extensively for before deploying here.

After being notified of their deployment, the 367th Eng. Bn., started pre-deployment training at Fort McCoy, Wis., he said. The Soldiers received extra training on mine clearing and mine clearing equipment, as well as the necessary briefings and issue items.

When the unit arrived here, the Soldiers got the chance to put their training into action. Bagram Air Base's varying terrain requires them to use all the different techniques and equipment available to them.

There are various ways to clear terrain.

The first, and most preferred, method is using machinery.

The engineers have a variety of machines available to help them, said Lau. Machines like the Aardvark Flail, Hydrema Flail and armored bulldozers clear areas much faster than by hand.

"It's preferred to use heavy equipment when possible, but it's not always possible," he said

The Hydrema and Aardvark Flails are pieces of equipment that spin large chains that tear into the ground and destroy or detonate any mines present, he said. Both machines are heavily armored to protect the operator from any kind of mine he comes across,

Pfc. Chris Stump

Sgt. Jim Ciskovsky, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., probes for a suspected mine in one of the many mined areas that surround Bagram Air Base.

Pfc. Chris Stump

Sgt. Scott Kincaid, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., checks for mines with a ground penetrating radar mine detector.

whether it is anti-tank or anti-personnel.

Clearing mines with machinery is the preferred method, said Lau. But sometimes the large pieces of machinery aren't able to clear areas that have many ditches or abandoned equipment in them. In this case, Soldiers must do it by hand, literally.

Sgt. Jim Ciskovsky, Company A, 367th Eng. Bn. combat engineer, is one of the Soldiers charged with clearing mines at Bagram. He and the other Soldiers in his unit spend their days using detectors and probes to search for possible mines in areas that are too small or have too many ditches for the machines to work in.

"We use the handheld mine detector, which uses GPR (ground penetrating radar) to initially search for mines," he said. "If the unit detects something, we then start probing manually."

The handheld units work by sending electromagnetic pulses into the ground to "see" where objects lay, said Ciskovsky. It basically works the same as regular radar, only below ground.

Once the detector gets feedback that there is a foreign object, the spot is marked and another Soldier comes in to do a manual search, he said.

This search is done with a mine probe the Soldiers hold delicately and slide into the dirt to physically feel for a mine. When searching for a mine with the probe, the engineers work methodically to ensure their safety, he said. They also wear Kevlar helmets with face shields, body armor and protective blast boots to ensure that if a mine does detonate, they are protected.

The Soldiers don't actually remove the mines from the ground, though, said Lau. When there are multiple mines in an area, they are destroyed using explosives. But when the situation necessitates, the engineers can use a .50 caliber sniper rifle to detonate the mines.

As efficient as the detectors are for the process of locating buried mines, a dog can be just as good or better, said Lau. The dogs are used much in the same way detectors are – the dogs locate a mine and the engineers uncover it.

The canines' acute sense of smell allows them to cover areas faster and with just as much accuracy as a mine detector unit.

"A dog can come in and clear an area in three minutes that it would take us a day to clear," said Spc. Caleb Klebig, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn. The dogs' efficiency in locating mines without false alarms is a tremendous asset to the demining team. The dogs only smell for explosives, where the detector will pick up anything in the ground, such as roots, cans and bottles.

As with any mine clearing technique, the dogs also have limitations. The canines are obviously more sensitive to the heat than equipment and usually only work in the mornings before it gets hot, said Staff Sgt. Parker Gibson, 67th Mine Dog Detachment, engineer-dog handler.

The other limiting factor in the use of dogs is the wind, he said. Although the dogs have a keen sense of smell, they can't smell mines if the wind carries the scent away.

Whether they are running machines to destroy mines, running dogs through the site, or using detectors and probing by hand, the combat engineers of 367th Eng. Bn. are providing a much needed service to the Coalition at Bagram Air Base, said Lau. Their efforts make new construction and expansion of assets like runways, taxiways and roads possible.

Sgt. Stephanie Hall

An Aardvark pummels the ground of a known minefield with flailing chains using tons of force in order to detonate mines.

Coalition helps strengthen livestock in Bamian

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

BAMIAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Rebuilding Afghanistan is about more than helping establish a democratic government. It also means helping the people stand on their own again. Since many Afghans herd livestock for their livelihood, part of that reconstruction includes replacing the livestock that was lost during the Taliban regime.

For the last month, Mohamed Karim Abdul, an experienced animal caregiver, has been caring for the small herd of cows that are part of the project to introduce a larger, healthier breed of bovine and ovine to the valley, said New Zealand Navy Lt. Cmdr. Tania Koberstein, Bamian Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"The project was started by the Rural Development Center of Afghanistan and funded by the New Zealand military. The Bamian PRT is now the project manager since we are close to the stables and we can make regular checks to see how things are going," she said.

The animals already occupying the valley in Bamian Province have been gradually getting smaller because they have been crossbred so many times and the bloodline is too close, said Koberstein.

"In order to introduce different bloodlines and breeds to the valley, we must first have a healthy stock of animals that are able to be bred with the current stock," she said.

Maj. David Ferris (left), TF Victory surgeon cell, treats a cow during a CMA in Bamian Province. In addition to crossbreeding, CMAs are another way the PRT is helping improve the livestock.

A breeder in Parwan Province brought in Brown Swiss and Fresian cows, said Koberstein. These breeds are larger and stronger than the current breeds in the valley.

"We had 10 cows, four calves and one bull brought in. Since their arrival in Bamian one month ago, three calves have been born and one cow is still pregnant," she said.

The cows are also serving as an educational tool for the local farmers, said Koberstein.

She said the PRT is educating the local herdsmen of the advantages of supplementing their animals' diet with barley, wheat and minerals, as well as adding salt blocks.

While the farmers are learning how to better care for livestock and improving the diet of their own animals, the cows at the stables will be growing stronger and getting ready for sale, she said.

After the cows have been bred and there are enough cows to crossbreed with the current stock of cows in Bamian, the cows will be sold, at a subsidized price, to the impoverished families in the valley, said Koberstein.

Along with helping the less fortunate have a way of purchasing cows, they will also have the opportunity to buy sheep in the near future, she said.

"Right now, we are in the process of building the stables for the sheep, which should be done in about a week," she said. "Once the stables are completed, 300 sheep will be brought in from Ghor Province."

The sheep crossbreeding program will mirror the one in place with the cows, said Koberstein.

"As with the cows, the bloodline has grown too close among the animals, and they are getting smaller and smaller. With the different breeds and bloodlines introduced, the animals should start to grow stronger and larger," she said.

Many herdsmen lost their livestock during the reign of terror the Taliban enforced.

But with the help of this project, many of the families whose herds have dwindled should be able to get back to the level of prosperity they once had.

Acquisition: MoD develops procurement processes

continued from Page 7

inches thick and wouldn't work in Afghanistan. Our starting point is the knowledge General Wakil and Colonel Ali bring on how to do acquisition within their system based on their years of experience."

"Over the next several months, we will work with them to build a structure they can use as a foundation for future growth," he said.

In the past, an extensive approval process hindered purchases for the ANA. Recognizing this, the MoD is looking for a more efficient system.

"Their acquisition processes were limited to contracting and included an approval process up to the president without delegation," said Bailey. "A fuel purchase might require 100 signatures. They have to help us develop a new system with the checks and balances required to protect their limited resources – based on their laws."

To help develop this system, the Acquisition Mentoring team will conduct two workshops per week, plus two executive leadership sessions, through the end of September.

The sessions will focus on detailed planning and policy, development for procurement, analysis techniques, and program management.

Once a basic background is developed, the AA will build transition plans for contracting technical analysis and regional contracting activities. These plans will result in independent operations.

Next year, the AA will concentrate on contract administration, pricing, quality control, catalog activity and program management.

Contracting officers will take their place within the regional commands as combat service support functions stand-up.

With the exception of codified Afghan acquisition regulations, the MoD acquisition processes should be fully operational by 2006.

The Acquisition Mentoring Team, along with its ANA and MoD partners, has laid the foundation for an effective Afghan acquisition system.

Wakil summed up the progress thus far. "We're thankful for the cooperation of our Coalition training team," he said. "The partnership we've forged with the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan is paving the road for an independent Afghan defensive force in the near future. This is a bright star on the new horizon for our country."

'Old School' actor visits FOB Salerno

Vaughn takes time to interact with combat Soldiers

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Movies like "Made," "Old School," "Starsky and Hutch," and "Dodgeball" have made Vince Vaughn popular in recent years. But popularity hasn't kept the Hollywood star out of touch with reality.

Vaughn took an opportunity July 3 to visit with troops here, hoping to catch a glimpse into the life of the combat Soldier.

Top: Vince Vaughn pins sergeant stripes on Sgt. Joel Tilley, Det. D., 1st Bn., 501st Para. Inf. Rgt., during his visit to FOB Salerno July 3.

Bottom: Vaughn poses with Staff Sgt. Dagan Eichholz, 325th Field Hospital, during his visit to FOB Salerno July 3. Vaughn showed his appreciation for the job Soldiers are doing here by meeting with Soldiers and accompanying them on the demolition of a cache.

With only a few hours to spend interacting with the troops, Vaughn made the most of his visit by first participating in a long-standing Army tradition.

Vaughn pinned sergeant stripes on Sgt. Joel Tilley, Detachment D, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, anti-armor platoon gunner, during his promotion ceremony.

"I liked his movies, and since he was going to be here I thought it would be kind of cool if he would pin me," said Tilley. "It makes me proud that he appreciated us enough to come over and show his (gratitude)."

After the promotion and a brief photo opportunity with the platoon, Vaughn traveled just off base to view the destruction of a small weapons cache.

"Seeing those weapons kind of put things in perspective for me," said Vaughn. "It gave me a brief look at a portion of the mission over here."

After coming back to base, he took the remainder of his time to sign autographs and pose for photos.

Greeting each Soldier with catch phrases from his movies, Vaughn didn't let any person leave without a handshake and words of encouragement for the job he or she is doing.

Vince Vaughn delivers an autographed DVD of "Old School" to Spc. Royal Wilcox, 125th Sig. Bn., during his visit to FOB Salerno July 3. While at FOB Salerno, he greeted Soldiers with lines from his movies and words of encouragement.

"I wanted to come out here to tell them all that I support what they are doing and I hope they come back safe," he said.

Vaughn isn't a complete stranger to the military. A combination of family members serving in the military and a recent visit to war memorials in Washington D.C. inspired him to visit the troops and help boost the morale of the people who defend his freedom.

Tracy Thede, United Service Organizations entertainment tour producer, said visits from actors like Vaughn aren't uncommon but she is thankful for everyone who comes.

"It does so much for the Soldier's morale when actors like Vaughn go out of their way to show support," she said.

Vaughn also visited Bagram Air Base, Forward Operating Base Deh Rawood and Kandahar Airfield, before going to visit service members participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"It was just so important to me to show these men and women that they are in my heart and mind," said Vaughn. "I think this is just a small way to thank them for their courage and commitment to our country."

Haitian 'warrior' looks to make a difference

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — When more than 20,000 U.S. service members deployed to Haiti in 1994 as part of Operation Uphold Democracy, Jephthe Fervilus was just 12 years old.

He watched as a Coalition task force expelled oppressors from his homeland, protecting the innocent lives of his fellow Haitians.

"(The U.S. forces) were taking care of the bad guys – people who were killing others for no reason," said Fervilus, whose name translated from Haitian-Creole means "warrior."

Now, Fervilus is living up to his name. A supply specialist in the 551st Military Police Company, Fervilus pleaded with his chain of command to allow him to deploy to Afghanistan with the unit.

In the last four years, the company deployed to Kosovo, Djibuti, Africa and Iraq, followed by their current deployment here. These deployments set this company of combat military police apart from other units. This status has made this element of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) a sought after assignment – and Fervilus wasn't the only Soldier looking to deploy with the reputable unit.

Another volunteer for this deployment was Fervilus's key to getting to Afghanistan.

"After I volunteered to deploy as the first sergeant of the 551st, Fervilus begged me for six months to bring him with me," said 1st Sgt. Max Brown, 551st MP Co. first sergeant. "I finally gave in and called his first sergeant, who said, 'If he wants to go that bad, let him go (with you).' "

Fervilus's reasons for wanting to deploy don't necessarily match those of his comrades, however.

"I wasn't that close to all the action," he said of Operation Uphold Democracy, "but I saw how the U.S. took care of Haiti."

Not long after Operation Uphold Democracy, Fervilus moved to the United States – Brooklyn, N.Y., to be specific – his family looking for a better life.

"In Haiti, we were struggling. We would go for days without food." Comparing life in his homeland to the lives of many Afghans, he said, "We would walk barefoot over hot land."

Fervilus explained how different life was in the United States, and how happy it made him to have so many opportunities open to him.

Although his love for the United States is what drove him to join the Army, his motivation to serve in combat came on a day no American will forget.

Just after signing a contract to join the Army, Fervilus witnessed the devastating collapse of the Twin Towers.

"I wanted to do something for the country," he said. "That was the worst thing I've ever seen."

Now, nearly three years later, Fervilus is doing exactly what he wanted – proudly serving the United States. An honor he holds so dear, he couldn't even find the words to describe how he feels about being a Soldier in the United States Army.

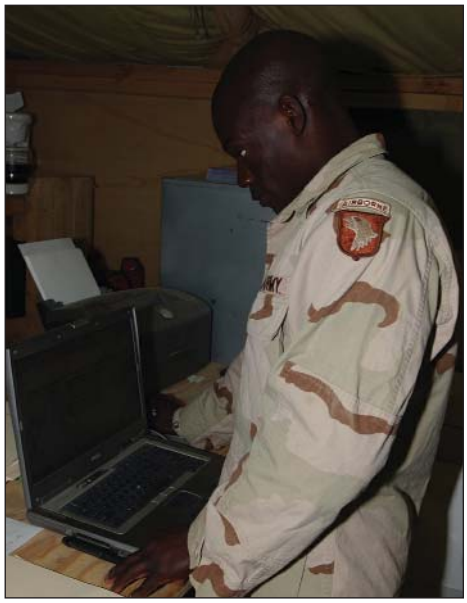
"I am doing something meaningful, protecting the country – protecting our country."

Fervilus is in the process of becoming a naturalized citizen. In the meantime, he said he doesn't feel like any less of an American.

"I feel a sense of loyalty to the United States," he said. "Especially for how they helped Haiti."

Keeping this in mind, Fervilus is doing his best to repay what he feels he owes to the United States by serving in Afghanistan.

"I feel bad for the way the people here are having to live," said Fervilus. He explained that he hopes to make the same difference here that Soldiers made in Haiti. He hopes to help the children of Afghanistan to a better future.



Spc. Jephthe Fervilus, 551st MP Co., prepares supply paperwork for his records. Fervilus volunteered to deploy with the unit hoping to do his part to help improve Afghanistan.

"I hope the children learn to be good people," he said. "I hope they share and grow up to have a job, a family."

While Fervilus hopes to inspire the Afghans, Brown offered testimony that he has already influenced his fellow Soldiers.

"All of his peers look up to him," said Brown. "He gives 110 percent every day and sets a great example for everyone else."

As a supply specialist, Fervilus is responsible for all the equipment assigned to his unit, as well as ordering and receiving new equipment – by no means an easy task, especially in a combat zone, said Brown. But that has never stopped him.

"I know my job is very important," said Fervilus. "Without (supply) the unit can't accomplish our mission."

With that mentality, Fervilus is left to work some long hours, often performing pain-staking tasks, but never losing his positive outlook.

"No matter how tough things might get, he's always glad to be here," said Brown. "That's something that spreads throughout the entire company.

"I think he's a hero. He's giving back to those who helped him. It changed his life, and now he wants to change the lives of others – how do you say no to that?" he asked rhetorically. "As a first sergeant in the United States Army, you don't."

Fervilus issues equipment to Sgt. Josh McDade, a medic with 551st MP Co. Fervilus is responsible for all the company's supplies.

Optical health improves mission capability

Safeguarding the Coalition

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

AFGHANISTAN — Staying safe and healthy not only includes situational awareness and good eating habits, but also protecting yourself from the elements of nature.

With the harsh conditions in Afghanistan keeping the dust in a constant state of motion, eye protection has become a vital part of life here.

Eye protection is a very important part of making sure service members are mission capable, said Maj. Virginia DeSwarte, Task Force 325 Combat Support Hospital, preventive medicine officer in charge. If service members can't see properly, they are unable to provide necessary assistance to their unit during missions.

"There are many things that can influence the health of your eyes," she said.

Some of those things include the dust, wind and sun light, she said.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology's Web site recommends wearing sunglasses with ultraviolet protection for protecting your eyes.

Sunglasses help the eyes by filtering out bright light and ultraviolet rays from the sun. By filtering out the UV rays, sunglasses help prevent the onset of cataracts, macular degeneration and skin cancer around the eyelids.

"It's recommended to wear sunglasses that filter out 99-100 percent of UV rays and reduce glare," said DeSwarte.

Along with wearing sunglasses, a large brim hat should also be worn, she added. "Even if it's cloudy or overcast outside, the sun's rays can pass through the haze or thin clouds."

The AAO recommends that people who wear contacts with UV protection should still wear sunglasses when spending time in the sun.

However, it is against Army Regulation 40-5 to wear contacts while in a combat zone, during a field exercise or in the gas chamber due to the increased risk of infection in the eye, said DeSwarte.

"Wearing contacts in a combat zone adds many risks that aren't there when wearing glasses," she said. "One of the main risks with using contacts is the risk of infection due to dirt on the contacts.

In Afghanistan, the wind is almost constantly blowing so even if you just washed your hands you could have dirt on them.

"If you are wearing contacts you could be putting them in with dirty hands without knowing it," said DeSwarte.

Another thing to be observant of is the wind and dust. According to the AAO, UV exposure, wind and dust can cause pterygia, benign growths on the eye's surface.

Pfc. Paul Gilbert, JTF Wings Aid Station, flushes dirt out of Spc. Clive Griffiths' left eye, July 5. Wearing proper eye protection can prevent small particles of dirt from entering the eye and causing damage.

The more exposure, the greater the chance for developing these eye conditions.

Wearing sunglasses or goggles that wrap all the way around the eyes and trying to keep the wind to your back as much as possible will lessen the chance of eye injuries caused by outdoor elements, said DeSwarte.

Sunglasses and goggles provide a barrier for the eyes against dust and particles in the air.

The AAO also warns that in addition to protection during long periods of exposure to the sun, protection is equally important during short outings as well.

The AAO Web site reported that "excessive exposure to ultraviolet light reflected off sand, snow or pavement can damage the cornea, the eye's surface. Corneal ultraviolet injuries are painful, but will heal."

Another ailment that could affect one's vision is conjunctivitis, or pink eye, said DeSwarte.

"One of the biggest complaints people have come to sick call with is that it feels like there is something in their eyes," she said. "What they are probably experiencing are the initial symptoms of conjunctivitis."

While conjunctivitis is highly contagious, it is also preventable, she said.

"Conjunctivitis can be triggered by a virus, bacteria, allergic reaction or foreign object in the eye," according to the AAO.

To keep from getting conjunctivitis it is best to not share towels, washcloths or pillowcases. Also, wash hands frequently and avoid rubbing your eyes with dirty hands, said DeSwarte.

Although most concerns about the optical health are outside, there are some indoor dangers as well.

Throughout the world, millions of people sit in front of a computer screen for several consecutive hours each day.

While the radiation and UV rays given off by computer screens are too low to cause harm to the eyes, looking at a computer screen for long periods of time can cause eye strain, which over time can weaken the eye muscles and diminish vision.

"There are ways to reduce the amount of strain on the eyes," according to the AAO.

Adjusting the lighting and your chair can help, as well as making sure the screen is 20 to 25 inches from your eyes – just slightly below eye level.

Taking care of your eyes is important no matter where you are, said DeSwarte.

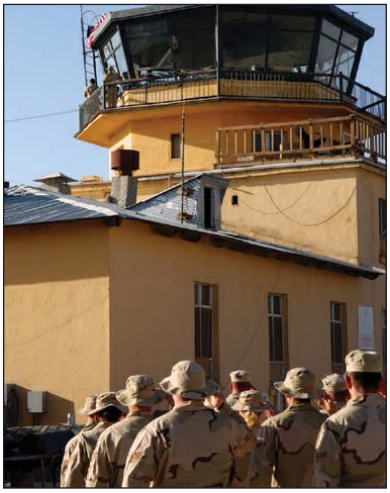
"It's been said that the eyes are the windows to the soul, but they are also your windows to the world," she said. "If you don't take care of your eyes now, you won't have the opportunity to view the rest of your life."

OEF troops celebrate Fourth of July

Deployed troops across Afghanistan took part in many festivities celebrating America's Independence July 4. While some units celebrated with cook-outs and friendly competition, others participated in holiday runs. There were no fireworks, but the day served as a reminder of the importance of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Sgt. Jeremy A. Clawson

Pfc. Chris Stump



Air Force Master Sgt. Andrew Gates

Clockwise from left: Airmen salute the American flag during a retreat ceremony at Bagram Air Base July 4. A participant in the "Freedom is Never Free" run at Bagram Air Base receives a flag after completing the 10k run/walk. Service members assigned to Kandahar Airfield begin the Independence Day 10K fun run.

LMR maintenance keeps people connected

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

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Keeping in constant communication is necessary to accurately conduct operations in a war zone.

And, as highlighted in a long-running cell phone commercial, making sure the signal is constant and clear is equally important.

That's where the communications Airmen in the land mobile radio, or LMR, section come in.

"We maintain and track all the hand-held radios, base stations and associated equipment," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Dan Gomez, 455th Expeditionary Communications Squadron LMR maintenance. "We ensure people can stay connected."

This is vital to many aspects of life at Bagram, explained Gomez. "For example, maintainers need to be able to get information on weather warnings, or to get tools and equipment brought out to an aircraft they are repairing. A telephone team working on wiring has to make sure the signal gets from one end to the other."

"It's impractical for everyone to stay next to a telephone," said Air Force Airman 1st Class Steven Wilkerson, 455th Expeditionary Communications Squadron LRM maintenance. "Using radios gives people mobility – it makes a lot of sense."

Although the network is somewhat small – the team supports 300 radios and 12 base stations – it touches many people at Bagram.

"This is the first time I have actually worked on LMRs, but I like it," said Wilkerson. "You get to meet a lot of different people on the base and help them out."

The biggest interaction with others is programming the equipment – making sure each radio is able to contact the appropriate networks.

This is important at Bagram, where Coalition partners and other services have radio networks set up as well. "We interact with the Army and other Coalition forces regularly," said Gomez. "We also set up some radios to communicate on their nets if we need to."

Setting up new radios is fairly simple, as the Airmen do much of the programming by computer, he said.

They also repair all radio equipment – and often find they have other, non-radio, pieces of equipment to repair as well. "If it uses electricity and communicates, people tend to bring it to us – especially if they don't know who can fix it. For example, yesterday, someone was asking if we could look at a security camera – and most likely, we'll be able to get it working."

In the deployed environment, the two Airmen find they are doing a lot more hands-on work than they did at their home base in Tyndall, Fla.

"At home, we get a job and we usually pass it on to contractors. Here, if we need to set up an antenna, we can do it ourselves. We've troubleshot problems with radios, we've run cable, and done everything we need to do to keep people communicating," he said.

This makes the job worthwhile to the two Airmen working in the section. "I like the responsibility of getting the chance to do the job and do it right," said Gomez.

"This job gives me a great opportunity to learn something new every day," agreed Wilkerson. "I am getting experiences I can't get anywhere else, and I can use them throughout my career."

‘USA Express’ pulls into Salerno

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

The vocalists of “USA Express,” sing for the service members at FOB Salerno during a show July 2.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Located just a few miles from the border of Pakistan, Coalition members here are almost continuously engaged in the efforts of Operation Enduring Freedom. But on the evening of July 2, the Army’s musical group “USA Express” provided a break for a few hours.

As the performers belted out different tunes from a variety of genres on the basketball court central to the camp, base residents gathered around to hear the performance aimed at providing a change of atmosphere and a big boost to morale.

Staff Sgt. Ray St. Louis, Battery B, 377th Field Artillery Regiment, section chief, said the show was an unexpected surprise for him.

“It is a nice break from the norm,” he said. “We’ve been out here a long time, something small like this does a lot for morale.

“I see a lot of smiles on the faces of the Soldiers, which makes me feel good as a leader,” he said.

Spc. Rechell Sears (left) and Spc. Terrance Rhodes, “USA Express,” perform for service members at FOB Salerno July 2.

Positive responses like the ones of St. Louis are common, said Spc. John Barrow, “USA Express” drummer, but they never get old.

“It is why we come out to places like this,” he said. “Our primary mission is to improve the morale of the service members.”

Part of the Army Entertainment Division, “USA Express” is a group of Soldiers selected as the “best of the best (entertainers) from throughout the Army,” said Sgt. Joe Lier, guitar player and band organizer.

Consisting of drums, bass, guitar and keyboard, along with three vocalists, the group travels specifically to locations like FOB Salerno because many other military entertainment groups can’t perform in the more remote locations due to their size and equipment load, said Lier.

“The purpose of USA Express is to bring music to the places that normally don’t get it,” said Barrow. “We are kind of like a music SWAT team.”

Using the music to boost morale, said Barrow, “USA Express,” plays as wide a variety as possible.

“We realize the Army is pretty diverse, and we have to adapt to each person,” he said. “Our play list is designed so that each person in the crowd will like three to four songs in our set.”

Spc. Andrew Erwin, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, Forward Support Company, truck driver, said the entire show was entertaining for him.

Spc. Darryl Summers, 528th Eng. Bn., Louisiana National Guard, dances along to the music of “USA Express” during a show July 2 at FOB Salerno.

“They mix it up well, and mostly play things we all enjoy hearing,” he said.

Afghanistan is the second-to-last stop on a six-month tour for “USA Express” that has taken them around the world. The band traveled to Korea, Alaska, Cuba, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Pakistan – even spending six weeks in Iraq entertaining troops there.

“We know that Soldiers are more effective in combat when they have higher morale,” said Staff Sgt. Jennifer McMahon, “USA Express” vocalist.

Barrow said he hopes the band’s performances in some way are helping to win the war on terror.

Safety First: Weapons

Use proper loading and unloading procedures to prevent negligent discharges. Leader supervision is the key to weapon safety.