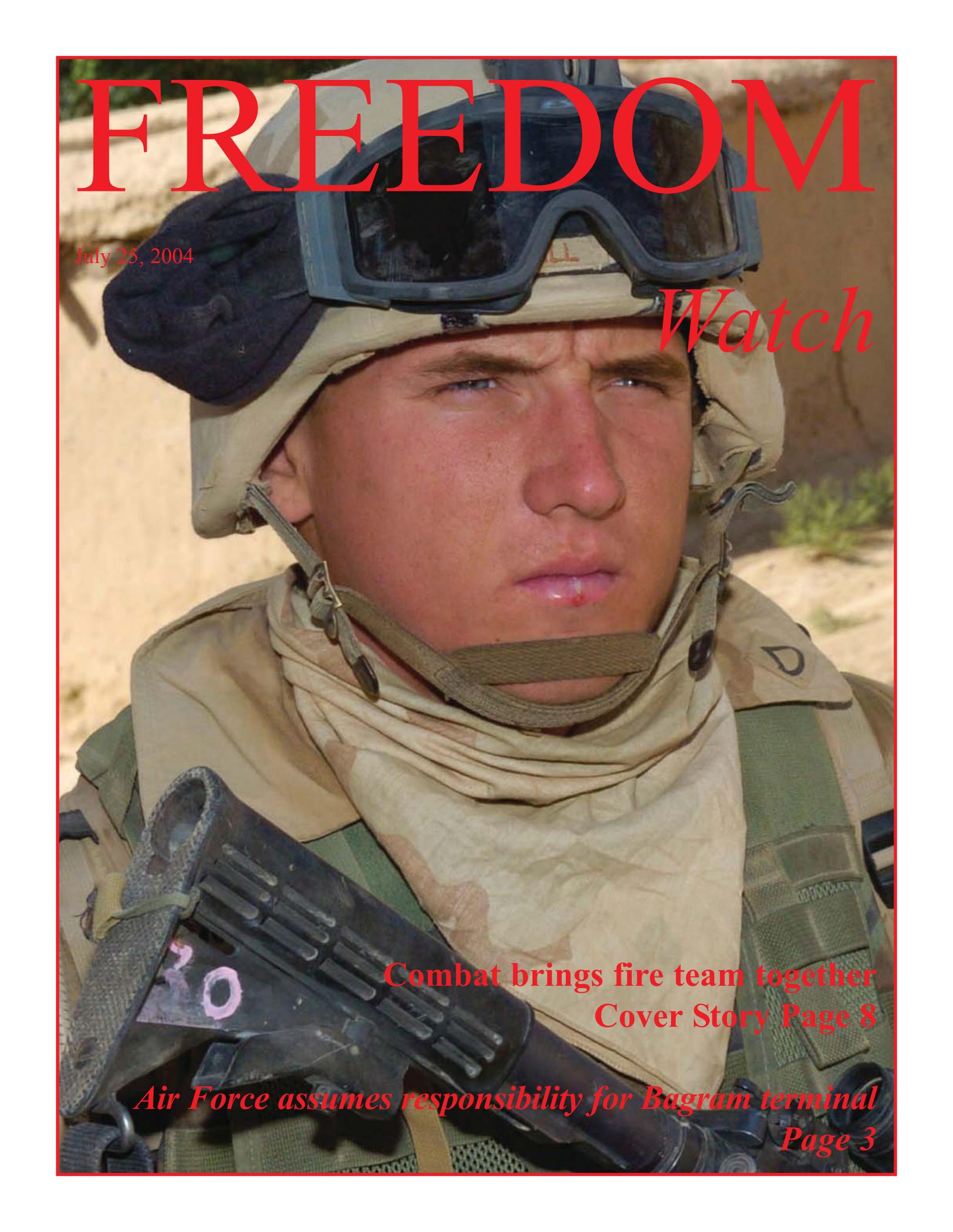


# FREEDOM



July 25, 2004

*Watch*

**Combat brings fire team together**  
**Cover Story Page 8**

***Air Force assumes responsibility for Bagram terminal***  
**Page 3**



Pfc. Cheryl Ransford

## Making children smile

Chief Warrant Officer Layne Pace, TF Pirate, looks through his bag to find more goodies to hand out to children at the Korean Hospital July 9. The Soldiers of TF Pirate visit the Korean and Egyptian hospitals once a week to distribute donations that have been sent to them by family and friends back home.

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Soldiers from team Red-Three-Alpha, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., work together to accomplish their mission of promoting stability in Afghanistan. Here, Pfc. Damien Guill, one of the team members, pulls security for his Red-Alpha-Three teammates.

Cover photo by Sgt. Jeremy A. Clawson

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By Mark Baker

## Pvt. Murphy's Law

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# AF team takes over passenger terminal

Story by

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Travelers passing through the Bagram passenger terminal can now sign up earlier to travel and show up closer to the takeoff time due to new procedures.

The procedures went into effect July 5, when the Air Force assumed responsibility for the terminal and passenger movement, said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Scott Helmer, passenger terminal non-commissioned officer in charge.

“Our goal here is to be customer service-oriented,” said Helmer. “Right now, we’ve reduced the amount of time passengers wait by an average of two hours – since we’re working with the passenger show-time from the plane’s departure instead of its arrival.”

“We want to increase the overall efficiency of operations,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Jim Kott, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group deputy commander for mobility. “We want to ensure we get more people airlifted with the least amount of inconvenience.”

One way to reduce inconvenience is by increasing how early people can sign up for flights to a desired location, said Helmer. Instead of just two days before the desired travel, passengers can now sign up four days in advance. This allows people the opportunity to pre-plan, but deters people from overloading the system and trying to “game” it to get on specific flights.

“People have to remember that they are signing up for a destination, not a particular flight,” said Helmer. “We are not making reservations for flights leaving Bagram – people aren’t guaranteed a spot on any particular flight. People are still only traveling as duty standby or space available standby.”

The process for signing up for a flight hasn’t changed, he said. People show up at the passenger terminal to sign up for a destination to start the process. The only thing they need to bring is their identification card.

“It’s helpful if they also bring a copy of their orders that we can stamp with the date and time they signed up,” he said. “That way, if the computer isn’t working, we have a hard copy of their sign-up.”

Once a passenger signs up, the terminal team inputs the information into a



Pfc. Cheryl Ransford

**Passengers watch movies and relax in the refurbished passenger terminal at Bagram Air Base while waiting for flights to various locations.**

computer database. That ensures the team is able to keep tabs on the number of people wanting to go to a particular destination. It also keeps the information on hand for manifests.

Every 12 hours, the team prints a new list of the people awaiting transportation to a particular destination – removing those who have traveled and adding new travelers.

“About 24 hours before they want to leave, people should stop by the terminal again to see when they can anticipate leaving – they can find out the show times for incoming aircraft and see when they need to be here,” said Helmer.

Then, all that’s left is showing up for the flight at the right time. However, when passengers arrive, Helmer warns that they need to be ready to travel.

“People need to have their identification card, copies of their orders and all their luggage when we do the roll call,” he said. “They should also have their bags appropriately tagged. That will ensure we can get aircraft out of here at the scheduled times.”

The process isn’t the only thing the team intends to improve. They have already instituted a video schedule, indicating show times, destinations and flights.

“We are trying to put in more comfortable seats, and some other improvements to make this a nicer place to wait for airlift,” said Helmer. This will also include a

new information counter and a more aesthetic waiting area.

These are short-term fixes, said Kott. “We are planning a brand new terminal in the long term, with all the ingredients of a modern passenger terminal.”

In addition to the improvements they’ve made, the team has maintained a lot of the programs that passengers are used to.

For instance, the team is also able to book reservations on the Patriot Express – the commercial rotator flying out of Manas and Qatar. People can sign up for rotator flights anytime within 90 days before they rotate, however, they might want to use caution.

“People should probably start working their flight as soon as they have confirmation of when their replacement is coming in,” said Helmer. “The aircraft flies once a week from Manas and twice a week from Qatar.”

The team also makes arrangements for space available airlift to Germany on C-17s.

However, none of this would happen without close coordination with other services.

“We still work a great deal with the Army’s movement control team,” said Helmer. “We have a great rapport with them and they are still an extremely vital part of this process – we still need their help to keep the passengers and cargo moving.”

# Bronco creates stability around KAF

## *Tactics change on non-linear battlefield*

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — On traditional battlefields, success was gauged by who controlled the most strategic area and inflicted more damage on the enemy troops and their equipment. But the battlefields in Afghanistan have changed how wars are fought and won.

Success for Combined Task Force Bronco's area of operations, Regional Command South, has been achieved through training, adaptation and cooperation, said Maj. Todd Miller, Combined Task Force Bronco operations officer. But the benchmark for his unit's success is measured by the stability and reconstruction services they can provide to the Afghan people.

On the ground for 90-days, CTF Bronco forces are in several different areas conducting a myriad of missions.

"The average CTF Bronco member is a part of a task force mission that creates the conditions necessary for stability in this region," said Miller.

But just as success in Afghanistan differs from other wars, so does the composition of the battlefield. Miller describes the conditions in Operation Enduring Freedom as a non-linear battlefield.

The non-linear battlefield is categorized as having no frontline. It also has a vast number of players involved. In Afghanistan, there are various government officials and religious leaders from the village, district and provincial levels, as well as different military and security forces that all add complexity to the mission, he said.

With the benefit of lessons learned from prior units' rotations, Miller said CTF Bronco prepared for the non-linear battlefield by replicating the cultural conditions of Afghanistan in the training environment before even arriving in country.

"It is so multi-dimensional here, we had to at least give our Soldiers and leaders an idea of what they would experience," he said.

The units have responded very well to the mission — a credit to the training conducted, said Miller.

One of the highlights has been the role



Sgt. Jeremy A. Clawson

**Sgt. 1st Class Gerard Normand scans an Afghan village through his M-4's scope, voicing his observations to his radio telephone operator, Pfc. Matthew Underwood. The 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Reg. scouts provided overwatch for ground troops searching for weapons during Operation Blue Candle.**

the junior leaders have played in CTF Bronco's mission.

"We initially emphasized that battalion commanders must know their areas," said Miller. "Know the governors, the village elder and religious leaders."

This emphasis then filtered down to junior leaders like company commanders and platoon leaders.

"For a battalion commander it might be a district or province level leader, but a platoon leader might be in charge of a block, or section of a village," he said. "They have to communicate the same thing as the senior leaders, which is the role of the Coalition in providing security."

One of these junior leaders, 1st Lt. Jeff Soule, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment said his role often has him communicating with village elders.

"I realize that I'm a representative for the Coalition and our mission," he said. "I also realize the way my platoon conducts themselves will impact how the village feels about the Coalition as a whole."

"It is amazing how well our junior lead-

ers are responding to the overwhelming responsibilities they are faced with," said Miller. "They are truly the ones making the difference here."

CTF Bronco's cooperative approach is a key component as the mission in Afghanistan is shifting, said Miller.

"We are in the phase of the operation now where a stable environment must be maintained to complete the voter registration process and get this country off to a successful election," he said.

In addition to the elections, CTF Bronco troops are also focusing on helping the local government take the lead in reconstruction.

"Every step of the way, we are putting Afghan leaders and Afghan military in the position to make decisions," said Miller.

Afghan National Army elements are providing more security in CTF Bronco operations.

"It is essential that Afghans see their own local and district leaders, as well as the ANA, as the people who control the

# Coalition clinic opens in remote Afghan province

Story and photo by  
**Capt. Juanita Chang**  
 Task Force Thunder  
 Public Affairs Office

**KONAR PROVINCE,** Afghanistan — Coalition forces are spreading more goodwill here with the opening of another medical clinic July 5.

The clinic is being operated on a combined Coalition base and offers routine and emergency care to the Afghan people who are treated by Coalition and Afghan medical personnel. Eventually, each of these Coalition clinics will be completely operated by Afghan citizens.

The clinic sees an average of 30 to 70 local patients on any given day, six days a week. The staff consists of two Navy corpsmen, an Army medical specialist, a U.S. Special Forces medic, as well as an Afghan doctor and dentist. "It is also a great asset because we can see more people in a short amount of time," said U.S. Navy Seaman Quentin T. Buckley, a corpsman from Chicago, Ill.

"I get to really interact with the locals more," said Buckley. "It is a good experience to see how they practice medicine."

Abdulkhaliq Qurshi, a local Afghan doctor, began working with the Americans when the clinic opened. Through a translator he repeatedly stated how proud and happy he was to be working with the Americans. Qurshi is from Bari Kowt and makes the long journey to the clinic early every morning. "(I've wanted) to work with the Americans for a long time," he said. "I am proud to be able to help with treating poor people and to fight disease."

Shirzy Khan, the local dentist, said the Americans are his friends and that he is happy to be working alongside them. Just 22 years old, this is Khan's first job after graduating from Nangahar Medical School in Jalalabad where he studied dentistry for four years.

"I want to work with the Americans as long as possible and I would like to go to Bagram to learn more from



**Afghan families, like the one seen here receiving medicine from Dr. Abdulkhaliq Qurshi (right), come to the clinic for both routine and emergency medical treatment.**

the American dentists there," said Khan.

U.S. Navy Seaman Casey J. Kidd, a corpsman from Salt Lake City, Utah, said he is proud of the new clinic and the improvements in the quality of service they can now provide.

"We now have more equipment so we can do our jobs without having to improvise so much," said Kidd.

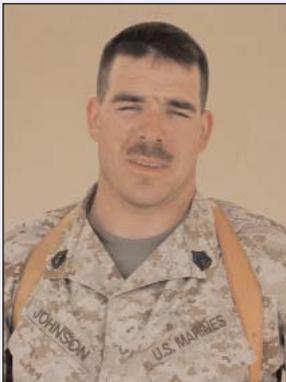
The staff agrees that the majority of their patients

need rudimentary medical care for simple cases of worms, diarrhea, fungus and stomach aches. But they also see their share of victims of land mines and gunshot wounds from the local factional fighting.

While continuing to work on improving the quality of life for the Afghan people, the Coalition is enjoying the cooperative efforts and relationships they form with the local residents.

## Enduring Voices

*What is your favorite part of your job?*



**Marine Gunnery Sgt. David Johnson**  
 6th Marine Rgt.  
*"Being able to work in other countries."*



**Jackie Oimette**  
 Air Traffic Controller  
*"I enjoy the constant change of never doing the same thing."*



**Air Force Airman 1st Class Nicholas Farar**  
 455th Expeditionary Security Forces  
*"Being able to do my part to help protect the country."*



**Spc. Charles Sabodski**  
 1st Bn., 211th Avn. Rgt.  
*"Getting to see different countries around the world."*

# Kabul education center helps deployed troops

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Robert R. Ramon  
CJTF Phoenix  
Public Affairs Office

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — Last month Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix's headquarters, Camp Phoenix, became home to a new education center that will allow Soldiers fighting the Global War on Terrorism the opportunity to further their education while serving in a combat zone.

On hand for the opening ceremonies were John W. Bush, director of the Army Continuing Education System's Installation Management Agency Europe; Robert Thiesse, the Education Services specialist in charge of the new center; and Col. Robbie Asher, CJTF Phoenix deputy commander.

"Education is important for our Soldiers. It's the future," said Asher. "Hopefully, once the Soldiers begin to complete their courses we'll be able to set them up for success in the future."

Bush met with Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Mancino, CJTF Phoenix commander, in

February to discuss the possibility of creating the education center and was impressed when Mancino promised to do everything in his power to see that the center became a reality.

"He told me in February he'd see this thing through and he made good on his promise," said Bush.

The education center provides a great opportunity for Soldiers to make the best of their limited free time while stationed in Afghanistan.

"While Soldiers are stationed here they can't go out to a movie, go bowling or anything like that, so instead of just sitting in their tents or playing in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center, it's a great opportunity for them to invest some time and effort in their education," said Thiesse.

It was important to the education center staff to begin classes as soon as possible, since a college education is very important to the Soldiers stationed here. Eager to begin learning, several U.S. Soldiers stationed in or near the Afghanistan capital city of Kabul began taking college courses at the education center a couple of weeks before the grand opening.

"Attending college is important so that individuals can become better and more effective in their family life, career and when communicating with others," said Thiesse. "Having a better education will improve all those facets of your life as well as open up more opportunities for you career-wise."

Currently, the only two courses being offered are law enforcement and management. About 40 students are currently enrolled and the construction of the facilities is still in progress. However, the center is expected to be at full capacity within a few weeks.

"The grand opening is only one point on the continuum because, although we've done a

lot, we still have a lot more to do," said Thiesse. "There's more furniture to get and there's alterations to the center that will be done so we can use the space more efficiently. Also, we've barely scratched the surface when it comes to trying to do things for Soldiers within the surrounding areas. (For example) we will have counselor's aides at the various compounds in the area."

In the near future, several more courses will be offered as well as standardized tests that will assist Soldiers in furthering their educations. Courses will be offered through the University of Maryland, University of Oklahoma, Central Texas College, University of Phoenix and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

"During each eight-week term we'll probably be offering two law enforcement classes and probably four to six undergraduate academic classes," said Thiesse. "Our total enrollment per term will be well over 100 to 120 Soldiers and maybe even more. We'll have a full-on CLEP (College Level Examination Program) and DSST (Dante Subject Standardized Test) testing program that will allow Soldiers to earn college credits through the use of an exam in lieu of taking the actual course."

The education center will also offer courses to make the Soldiers' experiences in Afghanistan more meaningful.

"We will offer some cultural classes as well," said Thiesse. "There's such a need to help Soldiers understand the language and the culture of the places where they're serving in order to avoid any misunderstandings when they're out doing their jobs. I'm hoping to develop a program that the Soldiers will find interesting. This will make them hopefully see things from the other side so they will understand why people here do things the way they do, what their priorities are and what their hopes and dreams are for the future."

The education center also houses a newly created computer lab in addition to the computer lab already available to Soldiers at the MWR center.

"Most Soldiers say the computer lab is the best thing about the education center," said Thiesse.

"The computer lab is available for online classes that aren't offered here, or for research purposes. The Army makes it so easy for people to go to school, so they should definitely take advantage of the education center."



**Air Force Maj. Roy S. Haley, a Kabul Army Education Center instructor, lectures his students during a law enforcement class held at the new education center at Camp Phoenix.**

# Contractors keep Bagram air traffic flowing

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Keeping air traffic running smoothly in some of Southwest Asia's busiest airspace supporting Operation Enduring Freedom is a tricky task at best, as air traffic and radar controllers have to constantly choreograph a delicate dance between tactical aircraft, cargo aircraft and helicopters.

Doing it in a combat zone just makes the job a touch more interesting.

Accomplishing this task is the mission of the Air Force Contract Augmentation Program air traffic management element — a dedicated team of civilian contractors who manage all air traffic at Bagram Air Base, according to Glenn Allison, AFCAP site manager. "AFCAP is responsible for keeping the air field safe and secure — this element keeps control of the airspace and runways."



**Henry King, AFCAP air traffic controller, gives clearance to an aircraft preparing to land.**



**Jay Riegler and Chris Porter (right), AFCAP radar approach controllers, direct airspace traffic around Bagram.**

The contractors here are part of an Air Force initiative to establish a civilian-operated and run air traffic control facility in a combat zone. "This is the first time the Air Force brought civilians into a war zone where they have taken on mission-critical functions," said Allison. "We've been established for a little less than a year here. Our contribution frees up military air traffic controllers, who are needed for other requirements."

Besides Bagram, the team also is responsible for "talking" aircraft into and out of Kabul International Airport. Between the two facilities, the controllers are responsible for nearly 10,000 operations — both takeoffs and landings — each month. "Based on the number of takeoffs and landings, we are about as busy as many stateside commercial airports of

much larger size," said Allison. "However, based on the complexity of our operations here, it's hard to compare our operation to an operation in the States — there's just nothing similar stateside to compare to Bagram."

That complexity comes from the variety of aircraft and vehicles that use the airfield. "When you combine fixed wing aircraft, fighters, helicopters and an assortment of (ground) vehicles and equipment, it all adds to a high level of complexity," said Allison. "Then, include a number of large cargo aircraft from different countries, all with different landing requirements in a combat zone, with the ongoing runway repairs, and you have the most challenging experience of a lifetime."

As part of the contract, the team installs, operates and maintains all the tactical equipment used in the air traffic control tower and radar approach control facility. Each section has different responsibilities on the airfield.

The Radar Approach Control section provides a safe environment for arriving and departing aircraft into Bagram and Kabul,

said Steve McCall, RAPCON chief controller. Although one RAPCON controlling two areas isn't unusual, picking up the airspace for Kabul in a combat zone is. "They use the same airspace, so it just made sense for us to control for them as well."

The section uses tactical air traffic control equipment to ensure the safe passage of aircraft through the area or onto either of the two airfields.

"We're responsible for everything within 50 nautical miles up to a certain height," said McCall. "We give pilots the vectors, airport information and tell them which order they need to use to approach Bagram and Kabul."

Vectors are the directions the controllers give the pilot to find the airport, while airport information is what the pilot needs to know to land, to include wind speed and runway number.

Once the aircraft are within a certain distance, the RAPCON hands the aircraft over to the air traffic control tower, which is responsible for sequencing the takeoffs and landings, as well as

*See Contractors, Page 14*

# Fire team comes together in combat

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

MIZAN DISTRICT, Afghanistan — A team without discipline loses. A team without mutual respect among its members falters. When a team cannot trust its leader, morale and performance die.

When it comes to fire team Red-Three-Alpha, the discipline, respect and trust by Spc. Matt Whalen, Pfc. Jason Turnbull and Pfc. Damien Guill, in their leader, Cpl. James Dean, is implicit.

Each member of Red-Three-Alpha, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, spoke of being “tight” with their fellow team members.

This comes from their experience together, said Whalen. “We’re all veterans of the platoon. We’ve been together two years,” he said, concluding that without that mutual respect and trust, “no one’s gonna have your six.”

“We’re real tight, we have to be,” said Dean. At any moment this type of operation — a cordon and search — could turn into a fire fight. Because of this, a leader must know his men.

Demonstrating the closeness of his team during Operation Blue Candle, Dean moved his men from house to house through secluded mountain villages to

root out anti-Coalition militants. The two-week operation increased stability in the Mizan District while bringing humanitarian aid to villagers in the area.

During the operation they moved decisively from narrow openings to open areas, around corners and through small alleyways. Dean, taking orders from squad, platoon and company leaders, directed his men with shouts, whispers, hand signals and sometimes no more than a nod or look.

Missions like these are fluid, with the immediate chain of command not always there to direct individual team movements.

“(Dean’s) squad leader was outside with outer security so his team needed guidance from the platoon sergeant or me,” said 1st Lt. Ryan Reichert, 1st Platoon leader. “He’s able to transition roles, so he is functioning almost as a squad leader and he’ll be ready to step into that next position.”

Dean exhibits seriousness and competence, said Reichert. “He’s a mature guy, 27 years old, so he’s older than most team leaders,” said Reichert, adding that, “he’s got a grin on his face now and then, but he’s a pretty serious guy.”

The level of respect in his team boils down to one sentiment, said Guill — the caliber of people on your team.

“When you rehearse, it becomes easier when the time comes,” said Guill. “We



**Cpl. James Dean (left), Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., uses hand and arm signals to direct team member Pfc. Jason Turnbull, during a patrol in the Mizan District.**

know what each other’s gonna do and (Corporal Dean) knows how we’re going to think in a particular situation.”

Whalen said he agrees and puts that trust in Dean for guidance.

“The team leader is like the grease on the bearings ... he makes sure we’re doing what we’re supposed to be doing,” said Whalen.

“Our squad leader gives direction, but (Corporal Dean) makes sure everything’s done the way it should be,” said Turnbull.

Both Turnbull and Whalen are married, and are connected on the home front, which adds another dimension to their work. “We have kids and our wives talk with each other,” said Turnbull, whose wife had their first child just before he deployed. “We know that we need to look out for each other, our survivability depends on it.”

The team knows these details about each other and it helps tighten the team. “We train together as much as possible,” said Dean. “Even back in the rear (at Kandahar Airfield) when one guy wants to do something, we all do it.” Emphasizing his point, Dean raised his eyebrows matter-of-factly and added, “That’s why we’re tight!”

The team has been in Afghanistan less than two months, and for these young Soldiers this is their first time in combat. By creating a climate of discipline, mutual respect and trust, Red-Three-Alpha has become a “tight” fire team.



**1st Lt. Ryan Reichert (right), Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., 1st Platoon leader, conducts a map route reconnaissance with Red-Three-Alpha team leader Cpl. James Dean. Dean is responsible for ensuring the safety and success of his team.**

# MATs to assess Afghan police force

Story and photos by  
SpC. Claudia K. Bullard  
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KABUL, Afghanistan — A new law enforcement program is teaming up six U.S. Army Soldiers and three Afghan National Police colonels to provide “reach and influence” and much needed support to police departments in 11 Afghan provinces.

The program is designed to fill the gap between the skills taught in basic training and actual duties performed by Afghan police officers in the field, said Col. Jon Lopey, Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan civil affairs law enforcement cell officer-in-charge.

The group will be divided into three Mobile Assistance Teams, which will conduct needs assessments of departments in the south and east and mentor officers in all aspects of police work from administration to patrols. Information gathered by the teams will enable CFC-A to provide funding based on individual department needs.

Staff Sgts. Timothy Scrivner, Donavon Bell and Scott Miller; 1st Lts. Timothy Gibson and Rodney Floyd; and Capt. Gregory McGowan, all members of 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry, 45th Infantry Brigade, Oklahoma Army National Guard, are currently located at Camp Phoenix and were specifically chosen for their backgrounds in civilian law enforcement.

Afghan National Police Col. Mohammed Sadiq, Lt. Col. Fatih Muhammed Takar and

Col. Muhammed Akbar Amadzai recently completed the classroom portion of the training and were awarded certificates during a graduation ceremony at Jack’s House at the CFC-A compound. The men also received congratulatory handshakes and diplomas from Lopey and British Maj. Gen. John Cooper, CFC-A deputy commanding general.

“I can assure you that we will carry out our duties to the best of our ability,” said Sadiq.

Their training, developed and conducted by CFC-A, included familiarization in administrative procedures, logistics, organizational structure, facility issues, patrol procedures and force protection procedures.

Trainers came from the U.S. Embassy, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and the International Narcotics Law Enforcement element. Minister Jalali and Gen. Sadat, both of the Afghan Ministry of the Interior, also gave the program generous support.

The MATs were developed specifically as a practical answer to the problem of continuing police training in the field. The team members will be filling the roles of mentors and evaluators, in turn creating cadre among the Afghan police so training can eventually be placed solely in their hands.

“Police basic training is only a small element of the process,” said Lopey, himself a 27-year veteran of the California Highway Patrol who witnessed the effectiveness of a similar program in Bosnia. “What happens in the field is very impor-



**Staff Sgts. Scott Miller (left) and Timothy Scrivner, 1st Bn., 279th Inf. Rgt., Oklahoma Army National Guard, listen to a graduation speech for three Afghan police colonels they will accompany on a mission in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan.**

tant. Right now, the U.N. has only a handful of people to act as advisors. We fill in the gap until the international community can do so.”

The MAT will primarily focus on assessing critical needs to include transportation, communications, weapons, training and facility issues. Once the critical shortfalls are identified, several means of funding – such as the Commander’s Emergency Response Program and the Office of Secretary of Defense – will be made available to fill those needs.

But shortfalls are not the only observations the team will make.

“They will also observe morale, pay and corruption,” said Lopey, who acknowledged the gravity of the mission by telling the graduating teams, “Tough job, tough area. I wish we had six times the number of teams.”

Cooper agreed with Lopey’s sentiments, and brought home the significance of the mission by saying, “I do not underestimate the scale of the job you undertake.”

Acknowledging their commitment to eliminating lawlessness, insurgency and drug problems, Cooper wished them the best of luck as he tasked them to “develop the police force, work with Coalition and (International Security Assistance Force) and the growing Afghan National Army.”



**(From left) Afghan Police officers Col. Mohammed Sadiq, Col. Fatih Muhammed Takar and Lt. Col. Muhammed Akbar Ahmadzai converse after graduating from a week-long training program that has prepared them to assess police departments in 11 provinces in the south and east.**

# Attack reinforces importance of training

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

MIZAN DISTRICT, Afghanistan — The blast sounded hollow, unreal, as it echoed off the banks of the dry river bed. A fragmentation hand grenade that had been lodged under a rock was jostled loose. The spoon popped off, and after a short delay — whoosh-boom! A small plume of dust and debris erupted between vehicles in a mounted patrol.

During moments like these, Soldiers have to rely on their training up until this point — all the battle drills and standard operating procedures ingrained in their minds.

“Everyone was like, ‘Go! Go! Go!’” said the Soldier closest to the blast, Spc. Anthony Valerio, a 29-year-old native of San Jose, Calif. Valerio, serving with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, was on patrol near Mizan District, central Afghanistan.

In the case of Valerio and his leaders, they responded exactly as they should.

“(The blast) was like our training, then it sets in ... this isn’t training,” said Valerio. “But, I guess that’s the good thing. We all reacted the way we should.”

He was riding in the right rear seat of an up-armored High Mobility

Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle when the device detonated. “It was on the right side,” he said raising his right arm, “I went like this,” as though he was shielding himself from a blast, elbow up high, his shoulder next to his ear.

Without mincing words, Valerio said he knew when things had gone wrong. “Right after it happened, it seemed like it wasn’t real.”

The repetition of training made the reaction to this engagement autonomous. Their actions were second nature. “We sped up, went up a good distance, secured the area and called it in,” he said. “Then we worked our way



**Spc. Anthony Valerio, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt. rests during a break on patrol. The 29-year-old infantryman’s company was operating in the Mizan District when his convoy was hit by a grenade.**

down and started questioning people to find out if anyone saw something,” said Valerio.

The Soldiers of Company A were operating in the

Mizan District to provide security and stability in the region. They were participating in Operation Blue Candle, which

is part of a larger stabilization effort in which Coalition members are engaged throughout Afghanistan.

Escaping the incident with no serious injuries to report, the Soldiers narrowly missed an attempt at halting this stability by the same militants they are combating.

Operation Blue Candle was Valerio’s first turn at combat.

Valerio said that so far his time in the service has taught him many truths. The day after he survived the grenade attack he shared this morsel with fellow infantrymen and they agreed. “No one really knows how hard our job is except for us. Only after you been through what we’ve been through, will anyone really understand a Soldier’s life.”

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***“Only after you have been through what we have been through, will anyone really understand a Soldier’s life.”***

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**Spc. Anthony Valerio  
Co. A, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt.**

## Bronco: CTF representing Coalition to local nationals

*continued from Page 4*

country,” he said. When this happens at the local level, it demonstrates the credibility of the national government in Kabul.

Aside from the adaptation CTF Bronco has made in Regional Command South, the task force has also seen success in the tactical arena.

“Right now we are entering valleys where Coalition Soldiers have never been

before,” said Miller. “By reaching places like Kacheren and Argandab Valleys we are exposing more of the country to the Coalition presence. We have divided the battlefield to the strengths of our units.”

Units like the cavalry are being placed close to the border to take advantage of their helicopters and high mobility to efficiently respond in a vast region, said Miller.

CTF Bronco has also combined artillery Soldiers with

MPs to patrol the Kandahar region.

“They are equipped and suited for missions associated with close, residential areas,” said Miller.

Finally, they have incorporated a French Task Group to vital areas. “They are the best of the best from the French armed services,” said Miller.

“They focus on the border, specifically the infiltration route in and out of the Kandahar region.”

With elections and multiple reconstruction projects still on the horizon, the mission for CTF Bronco is ongoing.

“We feel like we have a solid foundation in place to remain successful for our entire rotation,” said Miller.

Using their foundation, CTF Bronco hopes to convert the battlefield of Afghanistan into fertile ground for the Afghan government to thrive in the future.

# Field artillery diversifies its mission

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

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Composed mainly of field artillery elements, Combined Task Force Steel is responsible for providing indirect fires to other units throughout their area of operations. But, as with most other units deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, their mission is multifaceted.

Since deploying to Afghanistan, artillery Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, are living up to their motto, “Never Broken,” tackling every challenge that comes their way. These Soldiers, stepping outside the realm of field artillery, have mastered and are executing many of the same tasks infantrymen and military policemen traditionally perform.

Village assessments, which are conducted during presence patrols, are one the biggest ways CTF Steel is contributing to the security and stability of southern Afghanistan.

On every presence patrol they stop in different villages to conduct assessments. During each village assessment, a few tasks must be accomplished, said Staff Sgt. Marcus Taum, CTF Steel intelligence NCO in charge.

First, the patrols are gathering the needs of each village, he said. “Not every village needs the same things. One village might need a well, while another might need school supplies.”

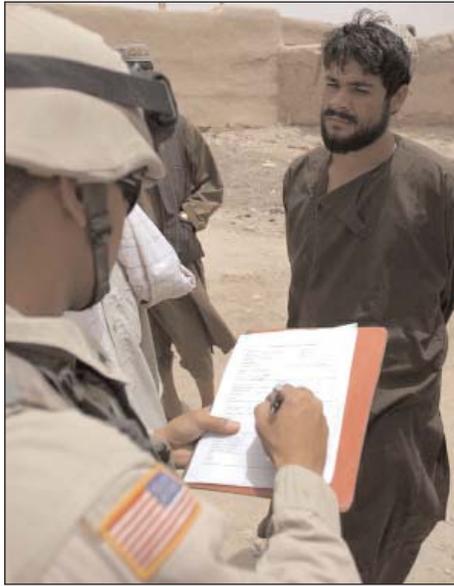
Second, the Soldiers are always noting the dispositions of the people in each village, said Taum. “There have been times when they have thrown rocks at us. This is a situation we must be aware of so can find out why they disapprove of the Coalition.”

Finally, village assessments are helping to open the lines of communication between the villagers and the Coalition.

“The more they see and talk to us, the more they feel secure,” he said.

Taum said in the few months he has patrolled with CTF Steel he has seen a definite improvement.

Though this improved relationship helps with the overall mission of providing stability in Afghanistan, there are other measures the task force must implement to ensure security. They embark on multiple presence patrols daily, each focusing on different outcomes.



**Sgt. Lloyd Lau, CTF Steel, takes information from an Afghan during a village assessment in Mir Kheski, just north of Kandahar city.**

“Our goal is to constantly show a Coalition presence,” said Taum. “We have found that the more the locals see us, the more they will trust us.”

In displaying this presence, the Soldiers on patrol face a variety of challenges. One of these challenges is providing a military presence within urban areas. Here, CTF Steel uses the added reinforcement of a platoon of military police that have been added to the task force. However, the

artillery Soldiers are still expected to accomplish the same mission.

“The MPs just add another capability to make our mission successful,” said Maj. David Flynn, CTF Steel operations officer. The task of conducting patrols isn’t just an infantry or military police task in Afghanistan, he said.

“Many of the tasks required to successfully patrol can be achieved by any Coalition member that has been properly prepared,” said 1st Lt. Reggie Remley, Headquarters and Headquarters Service Battery executive officer.

Often the senior person on the patrols, Remley said he recognizes the need for Soldiers to fall back on their people skills to be successful in their mission. However, they must always be prepared for enemy contact.

To better prepare for patrolling, CTF Steel implemented training with an increased emphasis on reflexive fire and convoy live fire techniques, as well as small arms marksmanship, said Flynn. By enhancing these skills, the Soldiers have prepared themselves for any scenario they may encounter. This allows them to better focus on their tasks at hand.

Flynn said Soldiers within CTF Steel find their new mission fulfilling. “I see that many of these Soldiers are proud to be here, making a difference every day. We are all proud that CTF Steele is enabling the country of Afghanistan to never (again) be a country that harbors terrorists.”



**First Lt. Reggie Remley, CTF Steel, meets with residents of Mir Kheski during a village assessment.**

# Wardak commander joins DDR program

## *Mujahedeen trade weapons for tools, education*

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

WARDAK, Afghanistan — Twenty-five years ago, as Soviet forces occupied the Afghan countryside, the Afghan people organized eligible fighters into a renowned resistance force, or mujahedeen, to repel the invaders.

A decade later, after a costly and bloody war, the Soviet invaders, physically and morally defeated, left Afghanistan. The time for the mujahedeen to take on an equally daunting challenge – reconstruction – would soon be at hand.

The mujahedeen commander here, Mohammad Moussah Khan, took a big step in the reconstruction process by declaring that now was the time for his militia to exchange their devices of destruction for the tools of construction.

In support of the Japanese-led Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program in Afghanistan, Moussah's unit collectively handed in more than 100 assault rifles, a truck-mounted multiple rocket launcher, four double-barreled anti-aircraft cannons, two howitzers, a dozen mortars and six surface-to-air missiles May 5.

Moussah, a father of six, said DDR was the next step for the Afghan people in rebuilding their country.

"This is a good opportunity for a free and peaceful Afghanistan, where everyone can live with no fighting," said Moussah. "DDR is very useful, but all over Afghanistan and not just in one place. I have announced to the many commanders that I know to hand over their weapons to the (national) government," he said. In exchange for the units disarming themselves, they have the option to receive all-expense paid training in a par-

ticular trade or field, which will help them rebuild their country.

The next phase of the DDR process was to discuss the community's reconstruction efforts among more than 70 village elders in a Wardak shura, or community meeting, July 5. The village elders represent more than 135,000 Wardak province residents.

"(The shura) was successful ... they gave us a total of eight projects they would like done. We told them we would look at doing two of them, and give them feedback in two weeks," said Marine Lt. Col. Paul Gruzlewski, Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan DDR officer. "(Primarily) they are looking for better irrigation systems for two valleys (Nerkh and Jalrez). The lower valley areas get dried out during the summer and the upper valleys get flooded out during the spring."

The Afghans know improvements like this will help them

progress as a nation.

"We are trying to make our country better for the future of Afghanistan," said Tour Gul Hootak, Wardak community leader. "Development is going good. After 25 years of fighting, progress so far is very positive."

One proposed project dealt with educating more community children.

The majority of the Wardak children have been regularly attending the boys' school since it was opened, and many community leaders agreed that a girls' school should also be built, said Hootak.

Some of the other projects proposed by the Wardak elders as part of DDR included rebuilding damaged hospitals and constructing medical clinics, as well as additional girls' and boys' schools, said Gruzlewski.

Members of the community who were not mujahedeen were well aware of the benefits of the DDR program.

"It is very good (the mujahedeen) have turned in their weapons ... less people will get hurt," said Wardak citizen Wahid Doullah.

The DDR process was designed to place Afghan security in the hands of the national government.

"I view DDR as a difficult necessity to help rebuild a more united Afghanistan," said Gruzlewski. "The international community is asking much of the Afghan people, but they are a strong but weary people. A change is a change, and it is harder the older and longer you have been used to living a particular way."

Opened and closed with a prayer, it soon became evident during the shura that the fight is still in Moussah and the elders, but this time their weapons are discussions and their aim is peace.



Marine Lt. Col. Paul Gruzlewski and Mohammad Moussah Khan (center) discuss project proposals with Wardak elders during the Wardak shura June 5.

# Proper hygiene enhances mission capability

## Safeguarding the Coalition

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

AFGHANISTAN — With all the dangers service members and civilians face in Afghanistan, the dangers from illnesses and disease just may be the most preventable.

Hygiene is critically important to the maintenance of everyone's health, both at the individual and unit level, said Staff Sgt. Randall Ermer, Task Force 325 Combat Support Hospital, emergency medicine, triage and treatment non-commissioned officer in charge.

"Our mission is to preserve the fighting strength and the best way to do that is for service members to observe good hygiene habits," he said.

There are many reasons to maintain good hygiene, said Ermer. "The most important being health — not only your own, but also the health of those around you. If you get sick you could pass it to those around you, further lowering the mission capability of the unit."

In this environment, hygiene is more important than normal, he said. "There are many microbes, bacteria and viruses that we don't encounter in the States that we need to be aware of."

The body is used to the microbes and bacterias in the States, he said. "Throughout your life you build immunity to the bacteria in the air. Here, however, there are bacteria and microbes that our bodies have never encountered. The body doesn't have a ready defense already built up so it is more susceptible to the illnesses that could occur as a result of exposure."

The "chain of infection" can be broken by simple hand washing, said Ermer.

"We see a lot of skin problems at sick call," he said.

Even tiny nicks and cuts are susceptible to infections, said Ermer. "Bacteria just need a way to get in. Say you have a cut on your finger and you touch something that has some form of bacteria on it, you could possibly be introducing foreign bodies to your system and potentially get sick."

The best way to prevent illness and not invite bacteria and colds is to maintain good hygiene and cover all cuts and scrapes, he said.

Although people know the dangers of not maintaining good hygiene, the hospital still has patients who have contracted a virus or bacteria because they weren't practicing proper hygiene habits.

"Since I arrived here I have seen such

diseases as infantigo, a skin disease caused by bacteria, and scabies, a parasite that lives under the skin," he said. "It's much easier to maintain hygiene than it is to miss a few days of work because you didn't wash your hands."

But good hygiene goes beyond hand washing, said Ermer.

Other ways bacteria can get into your body is through the mouth, he said.

"Hygiene also includes brushing your teeth regularly," he said. "Every time you eat, food gets between your teeth and if it's not brushed out it can cause diseases in your mouth."

Think gingivitis isn't that bad? he asked. "Think again. Some diseases that start in the mouth can affect the nervous system and blood stream if left untreated."

The clothes you put on also have a lot to do with personal hygiene, he said.

"Even though most, if not all, people wearing DCUs (desert camouflage uniforms) wear them for more than one day, you should still change your T-shirt, socks and underwear (daily)," he said. "Whether you are sitting in an office or working in the sun, the body sweats throughout the day. If you wear the same clothes day after day, the dirt gets trapped in the material and will begin to irritate the skin, causing various types of rashes and chafing."

Although there are many people who work on the bases and have the luxury of daily showers, there are many more who spend the majority of their time sleeping under the stars at forward operating bases so remote there is no such thing as a daily, hot shower, said Ermer.

"For them, hygiene is even more important. Regardless of how you get clean, make sure you wash your body with something every day," he said. "Whether you are using a field shower, baby wipes or bottles of water, make sure you get the dirt off because you never know what might be in it."

Bacteria can grow in the smallest of places, said Ermer. So making sure all nicks and cuts stay clean and covered lowers the risk of infection.

"Bacteria just need a way in," he said. "Don't be an inviting host to something that could have the possibility of hurting you."

It's better to be preventive and be clean, than to be dirty and sick, said Ermer. "If one person is sick, it lowers the mission capability of the whole unit. Take care of your body and your body will take care of you."



Sgt. Amy Wallace, HHC CJTF-76, brushes her teeth while conducting personal hygiene. Regular brushing prevents oral diseases, such as gingivitis and tooth decay.

# Afghan-American contributes to OEF in homeland

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

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE  
ASADABAD, Afghanistan** — Less than a year ago, 28-year-old Wajma had a thriving fashion design business in California.

The Afghan-American was willing to give that up, however, when she realized she could help her new country and her struggling homeland at the same time.

Wajma is working as an interpreter for Coalition forces operating here. Every day she has the opportunity to interact with the Afghan people and give them a glimpse of the freedoms a democratic society can provide.

A native of Kabul, Wajma left Afghanistan when she was just 6 years old. “My father was a general in the (old) Afghan army,” she said. “When the Soviets came, we had only a day to leave.”

Her mother packed up all the children, six total, and moved them to India in less than 24 hours. Unfortunately, they had to leave her father behind. Now, 22 years later, Wajma still doesn’t know his exact fate.

This isn’t something she dwells on, however. Instead, she looks proudly at the strength and courage her mother had and the willpower it took to successfully raise

all of her children on her own.

“When I was 13, we left India and moved to the United States,” said Wajma. “Since then, all of my siblings have gotten masters or (doctorates) and have good jobs.”

Wajma’s own dream was to be a fashion designer. After completing school, it wasn’t long before she started her own clothing line. But she decided to put her career on hold temporarily to return to



**Wajma (left) discusses women’s issues with Shoila at the headquarters for the women’s shura in Asadabad.**

Afghanistan and do her part in the Global War on Terrorism.

“I found out about this job through the Afghan Chamber of Commerce, and decided I would come here,” she said. “It’s different being here and seeing with my

own eyes, rather than hearing what’s going on.”

Wajma has had a very deep influence on the population of women here. She interacts with many of the women on a regular basis and listens to their goals. She also provides a vital link between them and the Coalition, which is helping them to improve their way of life.

One of the biggest links she provides is between the women’s shura, a group of prominent women in Asadabad who communicate with the provincial government about women’s issues. They also communicate with a group of female Soldiers from Combined Joint Task Force-76. The Soldiers are looking for specific improvements the Coalition can help the women make within their own communities. Some of the concepts they are looking at are job training for the women, a women’s center and additional girls’ schools. This is an area where Wajma is more than happy to lend a hand.

“Working here has given me an opportunity to do something in return for the United States,” said Wajma. “It’s also given me a chance to help Afghanistan through the Coalition and its programs.

“I’m not sure I’ve made a complete difference in their lives,” said Wajma, “but I know I’ve given them hope, and that’s the most I can ask right now.”

## Contractors: Civilians help military aircraft keep moving

*continued from Page 7*

movement on the airfield. “We are responsible for all aircraft within 5 statute miles (about four and a half nautical miles) at Bagram which are at or below 7,500 feet,” said Carol Wejnert, tower chief controller.

All this movement requires constant communication between the RAPCON and the tower. “Communication is vital between us,” said McCall. “It is the crux of everything we do. That way, we can run our traffic and they can run theirs and we know the operation will run smoothly.”

“No one does air traffic control alone,” agrees Wejnert. “The tower supports the RAPCON and the RAPCON supports the tower – we have very complementary operations.

The complexity of the movements around and through the airspace is what makes the job interesting. “Every day, operations are significantly different – we face a different set of challenges and different situations,” said McCall. “The day never seems to work out the same. When you combine two different worlds – in this case, combat operations and resupply missions, you create some interesting challenges.”

“At stateside operations, you can often guess what’s going to happen,” said Mo Stewart, another controller. “Here, since every day is different, it keeps you on your toes.”

“Our objective is to run an outstanding air traffic control facility and serve our customers,” said Jon Marsh, air traffic management site lead.

“Since every aircraft, nation and military service has its own flight characteristics, we have to know what to expect from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine aircraft flying in, as well as those aircraft from Coalition partners.”

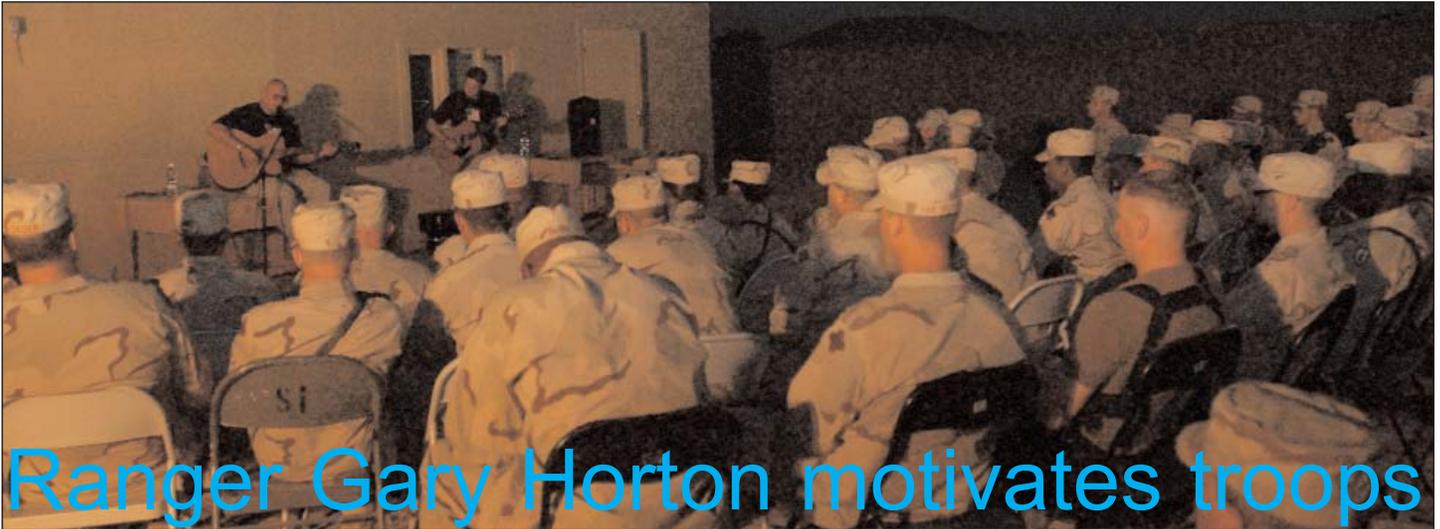
Most of the members of the team here, although they now wear civilian clothes, have extensive military experience. “About 98 percent of the people who work for AFCAP are former military,” said Allison. “That gives them a lot of experience with how the military operates.”

For instance, half of the tower controllers are retired military – the others all have between five and 15 years of experience. “Our operations at Bagram go extremely smoothly and safely because

we have such experienced controllers,” said Wejnert. “We are effective because every controller knows all applicable aircraft characteristics. They know each plane’s approach and landing speed, as well as how tightly each aircraft can turn.”

The contract air traffic control program at Bagram is successful for a number of reasons, said Allison. “Most importantly, the people who come here want to be here – all of them volunteered. Secondly, they know their jobs well.”

Marsh agrees. “Our folks are dedicated to doing the job right. That comes with a lot of experience – you can’t get the experience we have without a great deal of dedication to getting the job done right.”



## Ranger Gary Horton motivates troops

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

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — “Life isn’t what happens to you, but what you make of it.”

The speaker of these words is Ranger Gary Horton, a motivational speaker who travels the world lifting the spirits of teens and deployed service members.

He is addressing a group of service members deployed here in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and he knows how to break it down.

“Joining the military and serving your country in this way is a noble thing to do,” he told the audience.

Horton went on to explain the meaning of each letter in the word “America.”

He started with attitude and motivation, and continued with respect, integrity, courage and aspiration.

Before he finished he said, “You might be wondering why I left the ‘E’ out. I did that because united we stand, divided we fall. Without the ‘E’ we are nothing. The ‘E’ is enthusiasm.”

Horton said he doesn’t believe patriotism is something you stand up for, “it is something you stay up for – for life.”

Horton came to motivate Operation Enduring Freedom forces at the request of one

service member he knows from his past. Capt. Aram Donigian, Task Force 1st Bn., 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, was the Oregon state president for Future Farmers of America in 1994, when he first had the opportunity to hear Horton speak. Looking to motivate troops participating in OEF, Donigian requested a visit from him, knowing it would “impact lives and help those fighting for our nation’s freedom stay the course and complete the mission.”

Horton had no problem fulfilling this request. “I told my daughter, ‘I have to go, they’re over there dying for us,’” he said.

But that wasn’t the first time he broke tough news to his family. During the Vietnam War, Horton lost a good friend and was struggling to make sense of it all. So he decided to get a more personal look at the battlefield.

“I talked with my wife and joined the Army in 1972, through the Ranger Option program, because I couldn’t just sit back and watch the Vietnam War without doing what I could to help,” he said.

Freedom isn’t a spectator sport, he said. “You can’t talk about war, and never been on the battlefield. It is the right, privilege and duty of every American to fight for their country.”

In 1978, one year after

Horton left the Army, he was approached by recruiters who asked for his help, he said.

“It was hard to get young people to join the military because of the Vietnam War,” said Horton. “They came to me because I had a history of working with youth before I joined the Rangers.”

Horton directed a seven-state rehabilitation program and co-directed a high school assembly program throughout the ‘60s. Over time his work with troubled youth led him to work with juveniles within the Florida state prison system.

Using this experience and his service with the Rangers, Horton began visiting schools with Army recruiters.

Since then he has spoken at over 7,500 schools in 44 states.

And coming to Afghanistan to speak with service members face-to-face was a necessary stop on his long, continuous journey.

The final thought Horton conveyed to the deployed service members during his visit here was this, “over the years many men and women have given up their tomorrows so we can have our todays. It is an honor to be here with the men and women serving our great nation. I believe in our system of government. I feel that my country is worth fighting for and, if need be, dying for. America is about freedom and that is why we are here. I don’t know of



(Top) Ranger Gary Horton and Pete Stadler sing and play the guitar for Soldiers of LTF 725 June 30.

(Above) Horton recites “The American Fighting Man,” a poem written by a Florida high school JROTC student about what it means to be a Soldier.

another nation that spends this much in money and blood to liberate the people of other nations.”

While in Afghanistan, Horton traveled around the country talking to as many service members as he could in Bagram, Kabul and Kandahar, as well as Forward Operating Base Salerno and Karshi-Kahanabad, Uzbekistan.

# **Safety First: Mine Awareness**



**MINES**

**Stay out of areas that have been identified and marked as minefields.**