

Bagram communicates through classics

Story and photo by Spc. Kelly Hunt
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Troops from dozens of countries who may not be able to communicate through words understood one another perfectly as they shared a common joy Sunday, gathered together to enjoy the harmony of classical music.

The creators of the coalition classical music concert intended the gathering to be a time when troops and civilians serving here at Bagram Air Base could take a moment and escape into the soothing sounds of the orchestra's melody.

"You transported us into another world," said Dr. John D. Finney, Jr., political advisor to the Commander of Combined Joint Task Force 180 to one of its creators in appreciation for the event.

For an hour, coalition personnel were swept away from Operation Enduring Freedom and whisked into a peaceful atmosphere where communication was cre-



Coalition troops gathered together Sunday at the first coalition classical music concert to enjoy the harmonic sounds of classical music and share their love of the art.

ated not with words but by the beauty of the conductor's work.

"That's the intent," said Maj. Richard Sater, CJTF 180 deputy PAO, announcer for the day's event and classical music

announcer for Ohio University Public Radio when in the United States. "For me, classical music, Sunday morning and a

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Strykers readying for first deployment in Iraq

By Spc. Bill Putnam
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army's newest vehicles are loaded on ships and ready for travel to Iraq in November.

Now Soldiers in the Army's first Stryker Brigade Combat Team — the Fort Lewis, Wash.-based 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division — just have to wait until early November for their flights to Kuwait and move into Iraq.

But waiting won't be a big deal for Cpl. Jose Chavez because deploying to war is why he and the guys in his unit joined the Army, he said.

Chavez is an infantry team leader in 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, at Fort Lewis and joined the brigade a year

ago just as it received the Stryker vehicles.

The low-intensity guerilla war the Army is fighting doesn't concern Chavez or the men in his unit either, he said. Their training was always serious and "to standard," but everything became even more serious after their deployment orders arrived, Chavez said.

The Army was concerned about the Rocket Propelled Grenade threat, what Chavez called the "enemy's weapon of choice."

So two new types of armor have been installed on the vehicles. The most obvious add-on to the discerning eye is called slat armor. It resembles a "bird cage" that will add three feet to the Stryker's width, Chavez said.

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



John Allen Muhammad listens as defense attorneys make their final juror picks Friday.

First trial in sniper killings set to open Monday

WASHINGTON — One year after investigators first uttered the name John Allen Muhammad, prosecutors plan to spell out their case Monday against the older of the two suspects in 2002's Washington-area sniper killings.

Prosecutor James Willett will address 12 jurors and three alternates when opening statements in Muhammad's trial begin.

The jurors are Virginia Beach residents chosen partly because they said they had limited knowledge of the shootings that gripped the Washington region, a three-hour drive to the north. The jury was completed Friday in a process that took four days and started with 123 prospective jurors.

Muhammad is charged with murder, terrorism, conspiracy and illegal use of a firearm in the killing of Dean Harold Meyers, an engineer who was shot October 9, 2002, while refueling his black Mazda at a Sunoco station in Manassas.

Muhammad faces a possible death sentence if convicted on the murder or terrorism count.

After Willett's opening statement, attorney Peter Greenspun plans to speak to the jurors and may give the first real insight into the defense strategy.

Meyers, 53, was the seventh of 10 people killed during the October shootings. Three others survived gunshot wounds during the spree.

Prosecutors acknowledge that their case is circumstantial. They have neither a witness to the shooting nor a confession from Muhammad. But lawyers say a circumstantial case is not necessarily a weak case.



Bush and Chinese President Hu Sunday in Bangkok

Bush proposes alternative to N. Korea standoff

BANGKOK, Thailand — President Bush on Sunday restated his opposition to a U.S. non-aggression pact with North Korea, while proposing multilateral security assurances if Pyongyang pledges to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

North Korea has demanded bilateral talks with the United States and refused to consider giving up its nuclear program without a non-aggression treaty with the United States.

"We will not have a treaty," the president told reporters. "That's off the table. Perhaps there are other ways we can look at — to say exactly what I said publicly on paper, with our partners' consent."

Bush addressed the issue after a meeting with Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra — and pitched the idea later to Chinese President Hu Jintao, who will play a key role in the strategy for resuming dialogue with North Korea.

"He told President Hu that he's very committed to the six-party talks in which we are engaged, in which Beijing has been such an important player," National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said on ABC's "This Week."

"... The president made clear to President Hu that he is prepared to explore ways within the six-party context to address the security concerns that the North Koreans have put on the table," Rice said.

The other partners in the six-party dialogue are Japan, South Korea, China and Russia.

North Korea would not have to completely dismantle its nuclear weapons program before receiving the security assurances, a se-

nior U.S. official said. The official said any security assurances or other measures that could be negotiated with North Korea would be "conditioned on verifiable progress" toward ending and dismantling its nuclear weapons program — but not conditioned on finishing implementation of any agreement.

The Bush administration's efforts in talks to convince North Korea to halt reprocessing of nuclear fuel rods have been stymied in part because of Pyongyang's demands for a non-aggression pact with the U.S., a tactic the White House says is virtually nuclear blackmail.

But U.S. officials said Bush hoped to reach agreement with the Chinese president on an approach under which, in exchange for a verifiable end to the North Korea weapons program, the United States and all of its partners in the talks would agree in writing that their shared goal was a peaceful, non-nuclear Korean peninsula and that no parties to the talks had any hostile intentions toward or plans to attack the North.

Senior administration officials say their offer is not a formal treaty, but a less formal written agreement.

"North Korea is not gaining anything by being possessors of nuclear weapons," Secretary of State Colin Powell said on CNN's "Late Edition." "It doesn't help an economy that's in need, it doesn't feed anyone, and it doesn't scare anyone."

Two U.S. soldiers killed, one wounded in ambush

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Two U.S. soldiers were killed and one wounded late Saturday in an attack near the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, a military spokeswoman told CNN.

With the latest deaths, 338 U.S. troops have been killed in the Iraq war since it began in March — 218 of those by hostile fire.

Around 10:45 p.m. (3:45 p.m. EDT), a U.S. mounted patrol of Humvees was attacked by rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire, according to 4th Infantry Division spokeswoman Maj. Josslyn Aberle.

The 4th ID patrol returned fire, but the assailants fled, she said.

The wounded soldier is in stable condition.

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cup of coffee always go together so it's nice to bring something like that here."

The idea to bring classical music to a coalition audience was born with the help of Lt. Col. Wolfgang Schuster, a German Liaison Officer who decided it was time for a change of pace here, even if only for a few moments.

"I was sitting in a chair and heard a

bit of music," he said. "I thought it would be good to have a bigger audience."

Schuster's intent was to use the love of classical music to bring relaxation to forces and with the help of Sater, the coalition classical music concert was born.

"Being a classical music announcer at home, this is the kind of thing that I love to do; programming music, talking about music, playing music, listening to music," said Sater. "It's very gratifying to see so

many people from different coalition forces participating (and) having a good time.

"This is an opportunity to do something really different; just close your eyes and listen to the music," he said.

The concert went well according to Schuster and Sater who both agree that they would like to offer coalition troops another classical music concert again in the future.

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The slat armor installed on the Strykers resembles a big catcher's mask that wraps around the vehicle. The armor is basically a grill of wire mesh that will cause the RPG to detonate away from the vehicle.

"Therefore it loses its effectiveness," said Peter Keating, a spokesman for General Dynamics, the chief contractor for the Stryker program.

Keating said that adding the slat armor prior to the brigade's deployment would give the unit an "operational advantage" once it hits the ground in November.

That slat armor is only one step in the extra protection on the Stryker, though.

The Army has also installed ceramic tiles on the vehicles to give them the capability of stopping heavy machine gun rounds up to 14.5mm, said Keating. Depending on the model, up to 126 tiles could be installed, he said.

That caliber benchmark was as an add-on capability by the Army, he said.

"That's better protection than generally most armored vehicles of this type category have in the world today," Keating said. "It's a real advantage to have that."

A metal plate has been added to the tile's backside because a General Dynamics sub-contractor didn't stick with the original design of the tiles, Keating said. The ceramic/metal plates will be replaced at a future date possibly during or after the deployment, he said.

Keating said the tiles will act the same as the ceramic plates most Soldiers are wearing in Iraq right now. Lightweight and durable, the added weight won't affect the Stryker's performance in Iraq because that weight was figured into its design, he said.

"That's something people tend to forget," Keating said.

Plans are in the works to add another type of armor package to the inventory next spring, said Keating. That add-on armor is called "reactive armor." Essentially that armor explodes when an RPG or other anti-tank round hits it, he said.

It's already on M-2 Bradley fighting vehicles in Iraq right now, Keating said.

That reactive armor won't always be on the Stryker, said Keating. It can be put on and taken off as a situation warrants, he said.

The idea for the slat armor isn't new.

"Historically that type of protection has been used as far back as Vietnam," he said.

But developing and approval only took about six months, Keating said. The approval came in August, he said.

"It's been live-fire tested and it's been a real rapid response," he said of the testing process.

When Operation Iraqi Freedom started, the unit was going through the first of its two evaluations for deployment. Those tests took place at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., and the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

The situation on the ground in Iraq -- a low-intensity guerrilla war -- was envisioned by then Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki as only one of the environments a Stryker unit would be in, said Maj. Gary Tallman, Army spokesman at the Pentagon.

Shinseki also envisioned major theater wars and support-and-stability operations, also known as humanitarian missions, Tallman said.

The best way to see if the Army's first Stryker-equipped unit is ready to deploy is to look at the validation process the unit went through, Tallman said.

The unit went through what Tallman said was "a full spectrum of training events" before it was certified ready for deployment.

Training included simulating a major theater war, small-scale contingencies and stability and support operations.

All of those events, from the desert environs of Fort Irwin and the restricted, urban-like terrain of Fort Polk, has helped ready the Stryker relatively quickly for deployment, Tallman said.

All of that field time before and after the evaluations was "unbelievable" but necessary, he said.

"You gotta make sure it's ready to go to war," he said.

So now it comes down to Chavez and the other soldiers in the brigade.

Are they ready? Chavez thinks so and said his unit is chomping at the bit.

They heard rumors about deploying to Iraq when they were in California and were disappointed when they didn't go right away, he said. But that doesn't matter now, he said, they're going and can't wait to hit the ground.

Exercise Silver Flag gives troops idea of Iraqi, Afghan environment

By Marni McEntee
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — More than 250 airmen from around Europe have transformed a muddy corner of Ramstein Air Base into a base you might find in Iraq, Afghanistan or Kuwait.

A tent city — a bank of generators, a chow hall and cooking area complete with tinned rations — is up and running at the fictional deployment area.

It's all part of exercise Silver Flag, a training program for 260 U.S. Air Forces Europe troops to get them ready to deploy more quickly and efficiently, said Chief Master Sgt. Den Bushnell of Ramstein's Construction and Training Squadron.

The exercise, which usually includes only support forces, such as civil engineers and services airmen, is larger than ever. For the first time, security forces, a communication unit, personnel and medics are on board to bring greater realism.

"When you go downrange, everyone has to operate together, but you don't always train together," Bushnell said. This exercise is meant to change that trend.

The exercise is highlighting some rough spots, said Master Sgt. Chris Robbins of the 100th Security Forces Squadron from RAF Mildenhall, England. Robbins said the exercise is not in sync with the security forces' regular training regimen.

"Because it's the first time this is being done, there will be some knots to work out," he said.

About one-quarter of the airmen at the exercise are new to the Air Force, so they haven't been to a deployed camp yet. They'll see things at Ramstein that they're sure to see in Iraq, such as a water purification system that makes life possible in the desert, said Staff Sgt. Craig Conrad of the training squadron.

Explosive ordnance experts are studying how to defuse bombs like the type commonly used in Iraq against U.S. troops, said Lt. Col. Rick Brubaker, squadron commander and exercise leader.

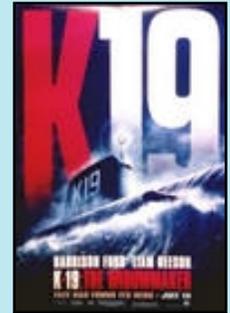
The exercise started with four days of classroom instruction, then the troops set up the mock base camp, where they will live and work until Sunday, Brubaker said. It is the first of seven such exercises scheduled for this fiscal year.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

"K19 The Widowmaker"

1530Z at the MWR building: When Russia's first nuclear submarine malfunctions on its maiden voyage, the crew must race to save the ship and prevent a nuclear disaster.

Tomorrow's movie: "Blood Work"



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>
Bagram:	Haze H: 73F L: 48F	Partly Cloudy H: 75F L: 48F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 77F L: 45F	Mostly Cloudy H: 79F L: 45F
Kabul:	Haze H: 73F L: 46F	Partly Cloudy H: 75F L: 48F
Uzbekistan:	Partly Cloudy H: 84F L: 42F	Mostly Cloudy H: 70F L: 37F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

Freedom Watch falls under the supervision of the Combined Joint Task Force - 180, and is published daily, Monday - Saturday.

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Freedom Watch, an Army newspaper



publication, is produced by the 4th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

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Contents of Freedom Watch are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

All submissions are subject to editing for size and content by the 4th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Motel 6, CJTF-180, Bagram Air Base.

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)

Titans hand Panthers first loss



Steve McNair has either thrown or rushed for a touchdown in every game this season.

CHARLOTTE, N.C. —

The Carolina Panthers hardly expected to go 16-0. They just acted like it.

One example: Defensive tackle Kris Jenkins showed up for Sunday's game against Tennessee wearing a jersey from the Miami Dolphins' perfect 1972 season.

The Titans had other ideas, jumping out to a 20-0 lead and converting four fumbles into scores while handing the Panthers their first loss of the season, 37-17 Sunday.

"I had no visions of going undefeated," Carolina coach John Fox said. "But I

didn't want to lose a game like that."

The Panthers (5-1) fumbled away the opening kickoff, leading to Steve McNair's rushing touchdown. Then the Titans (5-2) padded their lead to 14-0 and grabbed momentum with a 50-yard pass from Billy Volek to Eddie Berlin on a fake punt.

Keith Bullock later scored on a 35-yard fumble recovery, and Gary Anderson added field goals of 32, 34 and 40 yards for the Titans.

"We wanted to score first and see if they could come from behind," McNair said. "They couldn't."

Not with all of the Panthers' mistakes. They found themselves playing to a chorus of boos before halftime.

And the game exposed many of Carolina's weaknesses.

The Panthers' vaunted defense struggled to stop the pass, allowing McNair to go 12-of-22 for 190 yards, including a 22-yard touchdown pass to Drew Bennett. It also had difficulty containing a mobile quarterback: McNair scrambled for 30 yards, with a 7-yard touchdown run in the first quarter.

"He's tough when he's scrambling around. You've got to make him stay in the pocket," safety Mike Minter said. "We couldn't do that and it cost us because he makes too many plays."

Also glaringly evident is that when Carolina's running game doesn't work — and it never did against Tennessee — the Panthers have little to fall back on.

Torre turns to Pettitte on short rest

NEW YORK — Andy Pettitte will be in his accustomed position Sunday night, starting Game 2 of a postseason series for the New York Yankees.

Manager Joe Torre had little choice in the matter.

After pitching five innings in Game 6 of the ALCS against Boston, Pettitte was the only starter Torre did not use in Game 7. That limited the manager's options.

"It's interesting," Torre said. "Thursday night [in Game 7] we really didn't care or know who was going to pitch. Actually, as of last night when we left here, we didn't know for sure. We didn't have it until we came to the ballpark today. Andy does well at home, so pitching Game 2, if it goes beyond 4 and 5, he'll have Game 6 and that will be at home also."

Franks fired in midst of losing season

DURHAM, N.C. — Duke

fired coach Carl Franks on Sunday and appointed defensive coordinator Ted Roof as his replacement for the rest of the season.

The firing comes a day after the Blue Devils (2-5) fell behind Wake Forest 42-0 at halftime, and lost 42-13 for their 29th-straight Atlantic Coast Conference loss.

"Halftime of the game yesterday was the straw that broke the camel's back for me," athletic director Joe Alleva said.

Franks is the third Division I-A head coach to be fired so far this season, joining John Mackovic at Arizona and Todd Berry at Army. Mississippi State's Jackie Sherrill announced last week that he would retire at the end of the season.

Franks, a former Duke tight end, was 7-45 in 41/2 seasons.

He had signed a contract extension through 2006 after going 2-10 last year, but it's unclear how much of his salary was guaranteed. Alleva declined to discuss any details of the contract at a news conference Sunday.

Franks did not immediately return a call to his home seeking comment. He issued a statement through the school which read: "I am disappointed that we didn't have more success. I certainly wish I could have finished out the season, but Joe Alleva decided that a change needed to be made."

Early this season, Alleva said Franks would have to win at least one ACC game and the team would have to show significant progress to keep his job.

However, Alleva pulled the plug on Franks after just four conference games. The Blue Devils have four ACC games remaining and a nonconference meeting at No. 22 Tennessee on Nov. 1.

Alleva said he kept Franks around for this year because the Blue Devils last year were showing improvement. Duke returned a league-high 20 starters from last year's team, but were averaging an ACC-worst 15 points a game.



Carl Franks' Blue Devils were picked 7th in the ACC preseason media poll, but were off to an 0-4 conference start.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Bush aides defend handling of Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (AP)— Bush administration officials assured lawmakers they were on the right track toward rebuilding Afghanistan despite continued violence, rising drug trafficking and President Hamid Karzai's failure to consolidate power.

An increase in attacks linked to Taliban fighters and the refusal of warlords to disarm and relinquish territory won't stop plans to complete a constitution soon and hold elections next year, Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman told the House International Relations Committee.

"We think we can handle both of these challenges," he said Thursday.

But the State Department's Afghanistan coordinator, William B. Taylor Jr., acknowledged that the gains in Afghanistan since the Taliban were toppled two years ago were tenuous.

"Failure is not an option in Afghanistan, but it is still possible," he said.

Before the House panel and later at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Rodman and Taylor heard criticism that the administration, focused on Iraq, has not given enough attention to Afghanistan, once the main battleground in the fight against terrorism.

Rep. Tom Lantos, the House panel's top Democrat, said the "effort to transform Afghanistan is in serious jeopardy." Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y., said, "The administration's attention to that war-ravaged nation has wandered."

Republicans also expressed concern.

"If the efforts toward a secure environment which will permit the installation of a basic infrastructure are not successful, then one must ask how it is possible to ensure free and fair elections in less than one year's time," said Chairman Henry Hyde, R-Ill.

Rep. Doug Bereuter, R-Neb., said, "we're not doing well with respect to opium production," noting that production is much higher than during the Taliban's rule.

Taylor and Rodman stressed the difficulty of rebuilding a country battered by Soviet rule, civil war and the Taliban government. They cited progress toward building a political system, averting famine and restoring rights for women.

They also said the administration is trying to step up assistance to Afghanistan. It is seeking \$800 million as part of the \$87 billion spending request for Congress that is mostly for Iraq. In addition, it is shifting \$390 million in State Department and Pentagon funds to help Afghanistan. This is in addition to the \$900 million spent annually in 2002 and 2003, Taylor said.

The money will be used for strengthening security, helping develop the political system and speeding up reconstruction, he said.

Panel warns of repression in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (Washington Post)— Members of a federal panel warn that religious freedom and other human rights remain imperiled in Afghanistan—even under a United States-backed government.

Members of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, reporting on an August visit to Kabul, said the U.S.-backed interim government is in danger of allowing the nation to return to the patterns of severe repression of religious freedom that characterized the Taliban's rule there. The Taliban was deposed by U.S.-led forces in 2001 for harboring Osama bin Laden and other members of al Qaeda.

Noting that the country was in the "crucial period" of preparing a proposal for a permanent constitution, the report said "there are indications ... that the gains for human rights achieved by the U.S.-led coalition's victory over the Taliban are in peril."

The commission mentioned reports of abuse of religious freedom and other human rights taking place in areas of the country that have not yet been brought under the transitional government's authority.

The commission has before noted that an Afghan judge—whose salary is subsidized by the U.S.—has handed down blasphemy rulings.

Afghans are currently drafting the proposed constitution. A spokesperson for the commission said the proposal will be released sometime this fall.

"I've fallen, and I can't get up."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support