

D-M warriors fight war against terrorism



Airman 1st Class Joseph Gumienny, 455th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron A-10 crew chief from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., ensures the A-10 Thunderbolt II is ready for takeoff Monday at the end of runway.

Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Brian Davidson
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

BAGRAM, Afghanistan—As most Americans look forward to spending the coming holidays with loved ones, many airmen from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., are deploying to remote, desolate areas around the world to join coalition forces in fighting the war on terrorism.

Davis-Monthan pilots, maintainers and support personnel have trained long and hard in preparation for the November Air and Space Expeditionary Force Silver rotation. During the past year, a series of Operational Readiness Exercises at home have kept the airmen ready to

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CA hits the frontlines of combat operations

Story and photo by Sgt. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment

NURISTAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan—Army civil affairs units in Afghanistan are most commonly known for their roles in the distribution of humanitarian aid and helping facilitate various rebuilding projects throughout the country, but for some civil affairs Soldiers, their calling takes them to the front lines of the War on Terrorism, working on combat operations with the infantrymen.

Recently, During Operation Mountain Resolve, Civil Affairs Specialist Spc. Nick Bernson, 486th Civil Affairs Battalion, helped lift some of the burden from the infantrymen's backs, literally, when he helped one of the units obtain donkeys from locals to help them carry heavy equipment during a demanding climb up a mountain.

According to Capt. Toby Moore, Company B commander, 2nd Bn., 22nd Infantry Regiment, having civil affairs resources to draw from during a combat mission is a great help to his unit.

"His help was invaluable in helping us obtain the donkeys and local help," said Moore. "It helped contribute immeasurably to the



During Operation Mountain Resolve, civil affairs was able to help lighten the load of 10th Mtn. Div. soldiers by acquiring donkeys from a nearby village.

success of the mission; they are a great interface with the population."

One of the functions of civil affairs while attached with combat troops is to help the commander obtain whatever he might need from

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



A U.S. Army Soldier stands next to an M1 Abrams tank during a patrol in Baghdad Monday.

Two U.S. Soldiers killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Two U.S. soldiers and a civilian were killed and at least two soldiers were wounded Monday in two incidents near Balad, north of Baghdad, the coalition's press office said.

The soldiers were members of the 4th Infantry Division, which is leading what was described as a massive offensive against insurgents around Saddam Hussein's ancestral homeland of Tikrit, north of Baghdad.

A homemade bomb killed one soldier and the civilian as they were taking detainees to a forward operating base just before 8 a.m. Monday (1 a.m. EST).

It was not clear whether the civilian was American or Iraqi. The number of wounded was not known. The second soldier was killed and two were wounded when their patrol came under attack from small arms and rocket-propelled grenades just after 7:30 a.m. (12:30 a.m. EST), the coalition said.

U.S. Central Command said the 4th Infantry Division's Operation Ivy Cyclone II, launched Sunday night, included air and ground attacks against Saddam loyalists, "foreign fighters and other extremist and subversive elements."

Meanwhile, the coalition press office said U.S. soldiers captured a former Iraqi special forces officer and Fedayeen Saddam leader Saturday who was suspected in attacks on U.S.-led coalition forces.

Kathim Mohammad Faris — also known as Abu Ka'af — was captured about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Baghdad, near Habbiniya, the coalition said.



Muhammad looks around after the verdict.

Attorneys, prosecutors argue over Muhammad's life

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—Virginia prosecutors on Monday began making their case for the death penalty, while defense attorneys sought to save the life of their client, convicted killer John Allen Muhammad.

Muhammad was found guilty Monday of capital murder and three other charges related to a slaying during last year's sniper shooting spree. The seven-woman, five-man jury also found the Army veteran guilty of committing a murder in an act of terrorism, conspiracy and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

The capital murder and terrorism charges carry the death penalty as a possible sentence.

Jurors found Muhammad guilty of killing Dean Harold Meyers, a Vietnam veteran cut down by a single bullet that hit him in the head October 9, 2002, as he filled his tank at a Manassas, Virginia, service station.

Judge LeRoy Millette Jr. said he would limit victim impact testimony to just Meyers' family, upholding a defense motion to limit the testimony.

Muhammad, 42, is the first person to be convicted under Virginia's terrorism law, passed after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The verdict followed a six-week trial in which prosecutors methodically laid out evidence in the sniper shootings that killed 10 people in the Washington, D.C. area and three in other states.

The highly anticipated decision came as testimony began in neighboring Chesapeake, Virginia, in the trial of 18-year-old Lee Boyd Malvo, whom authorities say served as Muhammad's accomplice and trigger man.

Malvo has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. His attorneys will argue he was brainwashed by Muhammad.



Schwarzenegger speaks after being sworn in as governor Monday.

Gov. Schwarzenegger signs order to roll back auto fees

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Newly inaugurated California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed an order rolling back a 300 percent increase in state vehicle registration fees Monday, just hours after taking the oath of office.

Executive Order No. 1 repealed the \$4 billion increase in the "car tax," imposed earlier this year to help shrink a massive budget shortfall from \$38 million to \$8 million. Analysts believe the fee hike contributed heavily to his predecessor's defeat. Reversing the car tax was one of actor Schwarzenegger's leading campaign promises.

Schwarzenegger, 56, a Republican, took office nearly six weeks after voters recalled embattled Democratic Gov. Gray Davis. After being sworn-in as the state's 38th governor, Schwarzenegger called on Californians to "put the rancor of the past behind us and do the extraordinary."

Schwarzenegger said the recall "was the people's veto of politics as usual," and pledged swift action to lead a state he said is "in crisis."

"We spent ourselves into the largest budget deficit in the nation," he said. "We have the worst credit rating in the nation. We have the highest worker compensation costs in the nation."

"I did not seek this office to do things the way they've always been done," he said in his inaugural address. "What I care about is restoring new confidence in your government."

California Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald George administered the oath of office, as Schwarzenegger stood with his hand on a family Bible that George said dated to 1811.

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take their place at the tip of the sword.

Airmen and A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft began their deployment in late October and continue traveling to support Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Most of those personnel and aircraft are now in Afghanistan and already conducting operations.

Based at Bagram Air Field, near the foothills of the Hindu Kush Mountains, the 354th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron "Bulldogs" are flying as the watchdogs for soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division as they continue to rout al Qaeda and Taliban forces from hiding.

Now attached to the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group, under the command of Combined Joint Task Force-180, the Bulldogs are flying close air support in the most recent operation against those who would threaten peaceful nations, Operation Mountain Resolve.

As ground forces brave treacherous terrain and possible Anti Coalition Militants in Eastern Afghanistan, Davis-Monthan airmen are flying at the worst possible time, when weather conditions are commonly cloudy, foggy, snowy and

cold, with the most inhospitable conditions found in the mountains.

Leaving Arizona just as the blazing Sonoran summers have faded to pleasant winter temperatures, most of D-M's airmen traveled for days, through Germany, Turkey, Tajikstan and other neighboring countries to their final destination at Bagram.

Once a Soviet airfield, Bagram is a remnant of the 10-year war between Afghanistan and the former Soviet Union. Airmen live and work in a stark, rugged, war-torn environment surrounded by the wreckage of old Russian aircraft, tanks and other instruments of war. A striking sight around the base are the hundreds of small, red marking flags that warn of the vast, mine fields that serve as another reminder of Afghanistan's war-torn past.

"The real heroes here are the ground troops. Those are the people that are getting the job done and we're here to support them," said Capt. Jennifer Short, 345th EFS O/A-10 pilot who is carrying on a family tradition of military service. Already a veteran at flying combat missions with only three years piloting the A-10, Short is serving her second tour in Afghanistan in just over a year. Her last deployment put her in hostile skies, here and over Kuwait, where she flew more than 40 missions.

"It really means a lot to me when I'm flying over the Army positions and I recognize the voice or call sign of the controller on the ground and realize we have worked together before," Short added. "Sometimes I fly a mission to support a ground operation, and then a few days later I'm back, and those same troops are still pushing forward, living and working out there regardless of the terrain, weather or danger from enemy forces."

The O/A-10, informally called the "Warthog," is right at home in this harsh environment and is the only Air Force aircraft specifically designed for close air support of ground forces. D-M's pilots can loiter near the battle area for hours and operate effectively in the mountainous regions. Due to night vision technology and a revolutionary "Litening" targeting pod upgrade accomplished in recent weeks, the A-10 pilots fly missions around the clock, in almost all weather conditions.

For some of D-M's airmen, operating in a deployed environment is a new experience. "I have been training for two years and I'm ready to put that training into action," said rookie Bulldog pilot 1st Lt. Eric Theriault, who hails from San Bernardino, Calif. "I'm prepared to do whatever the mission requires. Everyone is working hard and I'm going to do my part."

The Warthog is also designed to operate from bases with limited facilities within close reach of battle areas, and it is the aircraft maintainers working at these forward bases who put the aircraft in the sky.

Mechanics, crew chiefs, weapons specialists and other support personnel meet the challenge in some of the most austere conditions. Working on the crumbling Soviet-built parking ramp at Bagram, maintainers work at all hours to ensure the aircraft are ready to fly, fight and bring their pilots home safely.

Airman 1st Class Christopher Leiphart, a D-M weapons loader with the 354th EFS, was both nervous and excited when he found out he was selected for this deployment. "My family cried a lot when I first told them I was deploying to Afghanistan," said the airman from York, Penn., whose boyish features make him look way too young to be accomplishing such an important mission. "I told my family that my job is to make sure our pilots have the right weapons at the right time to protect our ground troops as they fight the war on terrorism," he said.

Deploying in support of operations around the world may be a new experience for some of the airmen who work to keep the jets flying, but for others it is just one in a long list of deployments.

"We have more than one mission to accomplish here," said Master Sgt. Raymond Turner, the aircraft maintenance section chief. With 10 deployments under his belt, Turner looks at the big picture, not just the immediate tasks demanding his attention. "We are here as ambassadors for the US, and we also have a responsibility to help the Afghan people get back on their feet. Finally, we are here on a search-and-destroy mission—to make sure terrorists who bring harm to innocent people have no place left to hide."

The AEF Silver airmen work seven days a week, and will remain deployed through the holidays. The next AEF rotation is expected about April.



Airman 1st Class Joseph Gumienny, 455th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron A-10 weapons specialist, arms the weapons and does a munitions inspection to ensure the A-10 Thunderbolt II.

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local resources.

In this situation, Bernson was able to negotiate with the locals to acquire four donkeys and guides to help get the Soldiers and their essential equipment up the mountain.

Whenever civil affairs accompanies troops on a combat mission they usually go out in a three to four man teams and, besides obtaining local resources, can help out in various ways.

According to Bernson, one of their common and most important functions is aiding infantry Soldiers search villages for illegal weapons.

“Soldiers will set up and cordon a village, at which point I can go in and talk to the village elders and try to negotiate the weapons out instead of soldiers trying to search every house,” Bernson said.

Not only does speaking to the locals before searching a village help conserve Soldiers’ energy and time, but Bernson also points out that by asking for their permission before searching their homes, it helps to build rapport with the locals.

As a combat unit’s representative to locals, Bernson appreciates the opportunity of dealing with locals and the learning experiences that comes with it.

“I get a little bit different perspective on the people,” Bernson said. “By talking to them I get to really know these people and know their culture, whereas the average soldier doesn’t get to really understand.”

He also tries to pass on that knowledge to other soldiers whenever he can. “It’s good that I do that because sometimes soldiers will come up to me and ask me hey, is this good or bad, and usually if I don’t know I’ll try to find out for them really quick.”

Compared to humanitarian aid missions, Bernson’s found that the civil affairs role in combat missions can be just as gratifying, and are often more challenging.

“We don’t get taught this stuff in CA school, so we kind of make it up as we go along,” Bernson said. “A lot of the times it’s spur of the moment; with this you have to be creative... and it’s different when you walk into a place with a bunch of soldiers carrying weapons, as opposed to humanitarian aid.”

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

“Austin Power’s Gold Member”

1530Z at the MWR building:
Upon learning that his father has been kidnapped, Austin Powers must travel to 1975 and defeat the aptly-named villain Goldmember - who is working with Dr. Evil.

Tomorrow’s movie: “Training Day”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>
Bagram:	<i>Clear</i> H: 55F L: 28F	<i>Mostly Cloudy</i> H: 57F L: 30F
Kandahar:	<i>Misty</i> H: 55F L: 32F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 55F L: 34F
Kabul:	<i>Haze</i> H: 45F L: 27F	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 35F L: 21F
Uzbekistan:	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 47F L: 30F	<i>Partly Cloudy</i> H: 52F L: 37F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *SI.com*)

Alex Rodriguez wins AL MVP Award



Alex Rodriguez batted .298 with 47 homers and 118 RBIs and made just eight errors.

NEW YORK – For sale: American League MVP.

Asking price: about \$179 million.

An hour after becoming only the second player from a last-place team to win a Most Valuable Player award, Alex Rodriguez confirmed that the Texas Rangers have talked to him about a possible trade.

“Management has approached me with a situation and some choices, and I’m just going to keep my doors open right now,” Rodriguez said Monday from Mexico during a conference call.

Rodriguez received 242 points for the American League award in voting

by the Baseball Writers’ Association of America. Toronto first baseman Carlos Delgado was second with 213 points, followed by New York Yankees catcher Jorge Posada with 194.

Showing the split among the writers, 10 players received first-place votes, one short of the record set in the 1947 NL vote and matched in the 1977 AL vote.

Rodriguez was the only player picked on every ballot. He hit .298, tied for the major league lead with 47 homers, and led the AL in runs (124) and slugging percentage (.600). He had 118 RBIs, second in the AL to Delgado’s 145. Regarded by many as the best all-around player in the league, Rodriguez became the first AL player to win the MVP while playing for a last-place team. Andre Dawson won the 1987 NL award with the last-place Chicago Cubs.

Last year, Rodriguez finished second in MVP voting to Oakland shortstop Miguel Tejada and in 1996 he finished three points behind the Rangers’ Juan Gonzalez.

“It means the world to me,” Rodriguez said. “I’m so proud. It really is a validation to all the hard work and dedication.”

NBA splits up each conference into three five-team divisions in new plan

NEW YORK – The NBA’s board of governors approved a realignment plan Monday that creates three divisions of five teams each in the Eastern and Western conferences.

The expansion Charlotte Bobcats, the NBA’s 30th team, were placed in the Eastern Conference and the New Orleans Hornets were moved to the Western Conference. The Hornets previously played in Charlotte before moving to New Orleans two seasons ago.

Joining the new Charlotte franchise in the Southeast Division of the Eastern Conference will be Atlanta, Miami, Orlando and Washington.

The Central Division will have Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indiana and Milwaukee. Atlantic Division teams will be Boston, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia and Toronto. New Orleans will play in the Southwest Division of the Western Conference with Dallas, Houston, Memphis and San Antonio. The Northwest Division will have Denver, Minnesota, Portland, Seattle and Utah. The Pacific Division teams are Golden State, the Los Angeles Lakers, Los Angeles Clippers, Phoenix and Sacramento.

Teams will play divisional opponents twice at home and twice on the road. They will play conference opponents outside their division three or four times, and teams from the other conference twice — at home and away. Divisional winners each earn a playoff berth. The remaining five playoff berths for each conference will be based on regular-season records with no regard to divisional alignment.

Home court advantage throughout the playoffs will be based solely on regular-season records. That means a divisional winner will not necessarily have home court advantage in the playoff series.

Belichick’s defense shuts down Cowboys

FOXBORO, Mass. – Between a pregame cold shoulder and a postgame lukewarm hug, Bill Belichick showed his old boss how defense is really played.

The New England Patriots won this much-hyped meeting of masterminds with Bill Parcells and the Dallas Cowboys, a 12-0 victory over the NFL’s stingiest team Sunday night.

Sticking to their game plan of playing down their relationship, neither coach stressed it after the Patriots had three interceptions and outplayed the Cowboys’ top-ranked defense.

“Bill congratulated me on the win and I told him I thought he had a good football team,” Belichick said of their midfield embrace. “I wished him luck and I do.”

Although they stayed at opposite ends of the field during warmups, Parcells shot down the idea that he dislikes Belichick, who resigned as New York Jets coach on Jan. 4, 2000, one day after succeeding Parcells, who planned to remain in the front office.

“I’m about tired of talking about that kind of thing. The guy did a hell of a job for me for a long time,” Parcells said. “People in the media can try and drive a stake between us if they want to, but that’s not going to happen on my point.”



David Givens set up the game’s only touchdown with this 57-yard catch.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Five suspected al Qaeda terrorists killed

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) – Suspected al Qaeda terrorists attacked a contingent of U.S. and Afghan troops in eastern Afghanistan, sparking a firefight in which five fighters were killed, a spokesman for the U.S. military said Monday.

The attack occurred Friday in the Barmal district of eastern Paktika province, U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty told *The Associated Press*.

“Anti-coalition forces attacked U.S. and Afghan National Army forces in the Barmal area,” Hilferty said. “We returned fire and killed five al Qaeda terrorists,” he said, adding that eight Afghan soldiers were wounded in the clash.

He did not say what led coalition forces to believe the men were part of Osama bin Laden’s terror network, as opposed to members of the ousted Taliban regime, who have also been carrying out attacks on U.S. forces and their Afghan allies.

Hilferty strongly denied allegations by Paktika police chief Daulat Khan that U.S. forces had killed six civilians in the area on the same day.

“We take our rules of engagement very seriously and I can assure you that these terrorists were not peaceful civilians,” the spokesman said in an e-mail response to a written request for information about the incident.

Khan had said six civilians were killed when U.S. warplanes dropped a bomb on their vehicle on a road in Barmal on Friday.

Meanwhile, the military announced that U.S. and Afghan forces pursuing suspected Taliban insurgents through the steep, snow-covered mountains of eastern Afghanistan had confiscated rockets, mortars and other ammunition in recent days.

But there has been no fighting since Friday in the operation, dubbed Mountain Resolve, which began Nov. 7 in Nuristan and Kunar provinces, Hilferty said.

An American soldier was killed on Friday when his vehicle struck an explosive device near Asadabad, the capital of Kunar. An American soldier also was reported wounded there, but it was not known if he was hurt in the same explosion.

U.N. suspending operations in parts of Afghanistan after series of attacks

UNITED NATIONS (AP) – The United Nations suspended operations in southern and eastern Afghanistan on Monday after the killing of a French U.N. worker and a series of terrorist attacks.

U.N. associate spokeswoman Marie Okabe announced the suspension of the operations, which deal mainly with humanitarian relief, health care and refugees.

She said U.N. international staff from the southern provincial

capital of Ghazni, where Bettina Goislard was killed on Sunday, had been relocated to Kabul. Afghan staff in the city were confined to their compounds and homes, she said.

“We hope it’s a temporary suspension, because as soon as we can get security clearance, we want to start resuming our assistance to the people,” Okabe said. The United Nations is continuing its operations in the northern half of Afghanistan, including in the capital Kabul and the cities of Mazar-e-Sharif in the north and Herat in the west, she said.

There are currently about 800 U.N. international staffers in Afghanistan - more than 500 in Kabul and the rest in about a dozen locations, Okabe said.

She did not disclose how many were in the south and east but said only those in Ghazni had been relocated to Kabul. The rest were remaining in the region.

Mailing prohibited items could result in UCMJ action

The postal system continues to find items in the mail that are prohibited from mailing by the U.S. Postal Service and CFLCC policy. Although post office personnel inspect packages prior to soldiers mailing them, some items have either gone undetected or soldiers have placed prohibited items in the packages after the inspection.

Soldiers must be aware that if a prohibited item is not detected during the inspection, it will be detected in Bahrain where packages are X-rayed for prohibited items. The soldier’s name is documented and provided to military and federal authorities. Mailing prohibited items is in violation of CFLCC policy and can be punishable under UCMJ. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, a soldier could also face federal charges.

The following are some items that are prohibited from mailing:

- Firearms, parts thereof, to include internal mechanisms, ancillary product (e.g. telescopic sights, silencers),
- Weapon magazines,
- All live, used or blank ammunition,
- Knives and sharp instruments,
- All explosives and flammable material, and
- Lewd or pornographic material

A complete list of prohibited items is listed on the wall of the post office.

To make your postal experience smoother, have your package open and ready to be inspected. Do not gift wrap your Christmas presents until it has been inspected. The mailing of prohibited items can result in unfavorable action this season.

(Information provided by the 10th Soldier Support Battalion.)