

DSU provides higher level maintenance



Sgt. Jeffrey Clarke, 372nd Direct Support Unit, 264th Logistical Task Force, creates a weapons mount swivel for coalition forces at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

Story and photos by
By Spc. Travis Edwards
1st COSCOM PAO

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Troops deployed in Afghanistan use a variety of equipment from environmental control units and High-Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicles to night vision devices and self-propelled artillery cannons. During everyday wear and tear equipment gets dirty, damaged and eventually deadlined.

This equipment has to be fixed properly and precisely. The maintenance units at Bagram turn to one company for support, the 372nd Direct Support Unit, Ohio National Guard. The unit operates as the ‘third-shop’ maintenance facility on the base and is attached to the 264th Logistical Task Force, 1st Corps Support Command, Fort Bragg, N.C.

“Heat, dust, and heavy winds create

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Working at the PX – more than just a summer job

By Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Most people can remember their first summer job at the corner grocery store or at the fast-food restaurant down the street. Learning how to work the register, give back the right change and perform numerous duties simultaneously, made the first few days the most stressful.

The Afghan cashiers at the Post Exchange experienced the same anxieties as young Americans do their first week on the job, only their anxieties are different. Most of them have never seen a register before let alone worked on one. For many of them, this is their first time handling thousands of dollars of American currency in a day, while still trying to speak proper English. For them, the PX is more than just a summer job.

“We have about 12 to 14 guys who work the cash register on two different shifts, who come from all over Afghanistan,” said Maria

Schizas-Price, PX supervisor. “Even though most of them are high school graduates who can speak English, they’ve never worked with American currency or with computer-like registers before. They are learning a lot as they go along.”

Of the Afghan cashiers, two young men have proven to be responsible enough to handle higher levels of responsibility.

“Learning how to work the cash register was very easy for me,” said Naser Yousufi, PX supervisor from Bagram. “I’ve been speaking English fluently for about four years now and I want to advance here and become a manager.”

“My father has been doing business with Americans for years so I had no problems dealing with U.S. currency when I started working here,” said Samai Ehsas, PX supervisor from Chari Kar. “Because of my fluent English and my proficiency on the register, I was given the job of supervisor pretty quickly. God-willing, I will be

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Authorities take Eric Robert Rudolph from the Jefferson County jail to court Tuesday.

Rudolph pleads not guilty to Birmingham bombing

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Eric Robert Rudolph, the serial bombing suspect who eluded authorities for five years in the mountains of North Carolina, pleaded not guilty Tuesday to charges of bombing a Birmingham women's clinic in 1998.

Rudolph, 36, was brought into the Hugo L. Black U.S. Courthouse in shackles, but authorities removed them for the 20-minute hearing.

Wearing a red jail jumpsuit, Rudolph sat between his two attorneys, staring intently at Magistrate Judge T. Michael Putnam for almost the entire hearing.

He responded to the judge politely five or six times, answering a series of questions with "yes" or "no."

A detention hearing was set for next Tuesday. In addition, a tentative trial date was set for Aug. 4, though Putnam acknowledged that date would likely change.

Bush heads for three-way peace summit

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt — After winning a pledge from Arab leaders to crack down on terrorist groups, President Bush faces round two of his Mideast peace mission at Wednesday's summit in Jordan with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

After meeting separately with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, Bush is expected to hold a three-way summit.

Both sides have accepted the U.S.-led road map to peace, which was designed to

lead to an independent Palestinian state by 2005 that exists in peace and security with Israel.

During Tuesday's summit in Egypt with Arab leaders, Bush said Israel "must deal with the settlements" and the Palestinians must not allow "a few terrorists" to thwart Middle East peace.

Those issues are goals of the first of three phases outlined in the road map, developed by the so-called Mideast Quartet — the European Union, Russia, the United States and the United Nations.

"The world needs to have a Palestinian state that is free and at peace, and therefore my government will work with all parties concerned to achieve that vision. I believe now is the time to work to achieve the vision," Bush said in Egypt.

"Israel must deal with the settlements," he said. "Israel must make sure there is a continuous territory the Palestinians can call home."

But the two issues Bush outlined present big challenges for Sharon and Abbas.

Abbas must try to persuade radical Palestinian groups to halt attacks against Israelis and agree to a cease-fire.

That will be a tough sell.

"If the occupation is still there, we will attack the settlers and soldiers," Islamic Jihad leader Abdullah el-Shami told CNN. "And if the Israelis continue to attack us, the only way to make a balance of pain is to attack them inside Israel."

Blair faces probe over WMD

LONDON — The Foreign Affairs Committee of Britain's House of Commons will hold an inquiry into the Blair government's decision to go to war in Iraq.

"The inquiry will consider whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Office within the government as a whole presented accurate and complete information to Parliament in the period leading up to military action in Iraq, particularly in relation to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction," a statement from the committee said.

"The committee will hear all the evidence in June, and witnesses will report to the

House in July," it said.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair was already under pressure to prove his justification for joining the U.S.-led coalition, but the new inquiry is likely to turn up the heat.

There are strong feelings in Blair's Labour Party that many MPs went along reluctantly with the war, having been given assurances by ministers that strong intelligence information existed to prove Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

That it is taking so long to find the suspected weapons is leading to a great deal of worry among ministers. It is also giving opposition parties a chance to attack the government.

The Liberal Party, one of those in the opposition, is staging a debate on the Iraq war that will enable party members and others to raise their concerns that the British government exaggerated the threat Saddam posed.

It also will allow them to bring forward the claims some are making that the government doctored intelligence reports — which Blair firmly denies — to dramatize the threat.

Bombing suspect killed in weekend attack

CNN — One of the 19 suspects in last month's terrorist bombings in Saudi Arabia was killed Saturday in an exchange of fire in a city in central Saudi Arabia, the state-owned Saudi news agency said, quoting a senior interior ministry official.

The suspect, Yosif Salih Fahd Ala'Yeeri, was also believed to be one of al-Qaida's leaders in Saudi Arabia.

The statement said he was killed near the city of Turba in an exchange of fire with Saudi security forces. Two security members were killed, and a man who was with Ala'Yeeri was wounded.

The statement was issued Sunday but published in the Saudi daily papers Monday.

It said security first noticed a car stopping by the main road near Turba, and when security asked for their identification, they ran away and then started to fire at them. The two men then threw a bomb at the security members, which killed two and wounded two.



Above: Dust fills the air around Spc. Scotty Sloyer, 372nd Direct Support Unit, 264th Logistical Task Force, 1st Corps Support Command, Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, while he attempts to clean an air conditioning coil.
Right: Spc. Elizabeth Wood, 372nd DSU, 264th LTF, Bagram Air Base, repairs a set of inoperable AN/PVS-7D night vision goggles.

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a majority of the equipment failures on post. The biggest problem out here is, of course, the elements combined with poor preventative maintenance checks and service,” said Spc. Leron Corbin, 372nd DSU, Logistical Task Force 264, Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Corbin, a father of four, works in a lamination factory when not activated as part of the Ohio National Guard.

Since the unit arrived in theatre in April more than 500 job orders have been placed and 471 have been completed, said military officials.

“We get a lot of equipment that fails due to the changing temperature extremes. Everyday there are more and more pieces that come in broken,” said Spc. Scotty Sloyer, 372nd DSU, LTF 264th.

“Even proper PMCS won’t keep the air conditioners and other equipment from breaking down. So, we make sure we have enough parts on hand to replace



what breaks down,” he added.

The unit’s storage room houses repair parts for thousands of pieces of military equipment.

“Once we took over the direct support mission we began to inventory, catalog, label and organize every piece of equipment in the parts room for proper stockage. Over \$1,400,000 has been processed since the project began in April,” said Spc. Ebony Miller, the parts clerk for the unit. Miller is a credit analysis associate when not serving the Ohio National Guard.

“Once an inspector identifies any problems with the equipment, they check to see if we have the parts necessary to repair it properly,” said Miller.

The Maintenance Control Supervisor, Master Sgt. David Merrin, 372nd DSU, verifies all items turned into the DSU then turns the over to Sgt. 1st Class Charles Galati, 372nd DSU, who disseminates the items to specific sections for inspection.

“Every piece of equipment is given a thorough inspection to identify the problem it may be having,” said 1st Sgt. Terry Mullins, first sergeant, 372nd DSU.

“Each section has personnel who specialize in specific equipment. For example, air conditioners and generators have someone, where night vision devices require someone else. We have a wide variety of soldiers in the unit,” said Galati, a shipping company mechanic in the civilian world.

“There are quite a variety of military occupational specialties in our company,” said Mullins. “Everyone learns something every day from each day.”

“In this company the old Army tradition of learning the job of the person above and below you holds true. When our first sergeant went on emergency leave, Master Sgt. Merrin took over and we all moved up one position,” said Galati. “The training of leaders in the unit and cross training has helped us perform above standard in this combat zone.”

“The Ohio National Guard provided LTF 264th with the right kind of soldiers, motivated, dedicated, and professional,” said Lt. Col. Matthew Broaddus, commander, LTF 264.

“Mixing the high speed active-duty personnel in this battalion with the high speed Guardsmen has raised the bar of excellence in the Operation Enduring Freedom theater,” he said.

“The soldiers have taken their basic skills and advanced them to the next level,” said Mullins. “They go the extra mile to get it done right the first time, keeping U.S. forces at Bagram Air Base combat ready to fight the War on Terror.”

(Editor’s note: Spc. Travis Edwards is the public affairs NCOIC of the Joint Logistics Command.)

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a manager soon.”

Even though many of the cashiers have never worked on a cash-register before, Ehsas said it didn't take long for them to catch on.

“The biggest problem we had was getting them to validate checks since dollar bills were the only form of currency they were used to dealing with,” said Ehsas. “It took a few weeks for them to get used to the register and processing different types of currency, but they learned quickly and do their job well.”

Jeff Gardner, Army and Air Force Exchange Service retail business manager for the Stans, said it takes more than just knowing register procedures to manage a store.

“We've been teaching some of the cashiers how to work different computer programs such as (Microsoft) Excel for imputing data,” said Gardner. “If they have aspirations to be managers, one of their jobs will be processing merchandise orders that are backlogged as far as eight weeks at a time. It's important that they are proficient in Excel spreadsheets so they can understand our data.”

According to Schizas-Price, the young Afghan supervisors will have no problem filling management positions when the time comes.

“Samai is the best at what he does,” said Schizas-Price. “Not only is he smart, but he has the right attitude when it comes to his job. He is definitely management material.”

Wanting the Afghan employees to advance and succeed are not the only reasons the PX management is helping them develop good management skills.

“We are not going to be here forever,” said Schizas-Price. “When we leave, it will be up to these young Afghan supervisors to take the initiative and run things. All we're doing is giving them the tools they need to be successful.”

PX maintenance hours

The Post Exchange will be opened from 0230Z-1030Z today. It will be closed the remainder of the day for a power upgrade.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.” A young Greek woman falls in love with a non-Greek and struggles to get her family to accept him while she comes to terms with her heritage and cultural identity.



Tomorrow's movie will be “The Good, The Bad and The Ugly.”

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

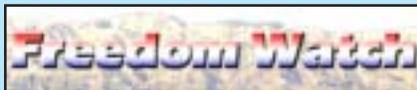
	Today	Thursday
Bagram:	Mostly clear H: 93F L: 63F	Mostly clear H: 91F L: 63F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 104F L: 75F	Dusty H: 104F L: 77F
Kabul:	Mostly clear H: 90F L: 63F	Partly cloudy H: 91F L: 63F
Uzbekistan:	Partly cloudy H: 96F L: 59F	Mostly cloudy H: 98F L: 58F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)



Trade deadline acquisition Steve Thomas was the hero of Game 4, scoring just 39 seconds into overtime to sink the New Jersey Devils, 1-0.

Fine print, fine results

ANAHEIM—As the NHL reached its trading deadline on March 11, 2003, some high-profile players were on the move as stars like Owen Nolan, Glen Wesley, Mathieu Schneider, Anson Carter and Chris Osgood were changing addresses as teams stocked up for the

The trades both teams made in advance of the trade deadline were “depth deals” that, at first, glance, didn’t get the pulse racing.

The Mighty Ducks added two veteran forwards in Rob Niedermayer from the Calgary Flames and Steve Thomas from the Chicago Blackhawks. New Jersey acquired winger Grant Marshall from the Columbus Blue Jackets and defenseman Richard Smehlik from the Atlanta Thrashers.

Niedermayer and Thomas have been instant hits in Anaheim, playing important roles in the Mighty Ducks’ success. In New Jersey, Marshall added a needed dose of grit to a line with skilled forwards Scott Gomez and Patrik Elias, and he also has become a clutch Playoff scorer. Smehlik has been a support player on defense, coming in and out of the lineup as coach Pat Burns fully utilizes his team’s terrific defensive depth.

“What Rob needed with us was a role and he’s got it,” said Murray, who originally drafted Niedermayer (fifth overall in the 1993 Entry Draft) when he was the GM of the Florida Panthers.

That role has been as a wide body in the tough, physical play of Playoff hockey. In 17 Playoff games, Niedermayer, 28, has three goals and five assists and has been averaging over 24 minutes per game. He played a key role in the winning goal of Game 3 of the Finals, when he checked a couple New Jersey forwards, allowing

Lemieux says he will remain with the Penguins

PITTSBURGH — Synonymous with the Pittsburgh Penguins, superstar center Mario Lemieux has no intention of abandoning the franchise.

The New York Post reported Sunday that Lemieux could divest himself of ownership of the Penguins and sign with another NHL team, possibly the New York Rangers.

However, Lemieux issued the following statement on Monday.

“I am not considering selling my interest in the Pittsburgh Penguins. As I said to our season ticket holders last week, I have not decided whether I will play in 2003-04. However, if I do play, it will be for the Pittsburgh Penguins.”

Rangers general manager Glen Sather also scoffed at



Mario Lemieux.

Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Ironically, the 2003 Stanley Cup Finalists — Mighty Ducks of Anaheim and New Jersey Devils — made deals that got little more than agate-sized mention in the transactions section of the daily newspaper.

It’s funny how deals that at the time elicited little, if any, reaction, have paid off so handsomely for the finalists. Both Ducks GM Bryan Murray and Devils boss Lou Lamoriello had made bigger trades during the course of the season, with their biggest deal being one made between the two teams that has resulted in Petr Sykora being a star for the Ducks and Jeff Friesen and Oleg Tverdovsky being big-time contributors for the Devils.



2003 National Hockey League standings

Eastern Conference

Atlantic

(2) New Jersey	108 pts
(4) Philadelphia	107 pts
(8) N.Y. Islanders	83 pts
N.Y. Rangers	78 pts
Pittsburgh	65 pts

Northeast

(1) Ottawa	113 pts
(5) Toronto	98 pts
(7) Boston	87 pts
Montreal	77 pts
Buffalo	72 pts

Southeast

(3) Tampa Bay	93 pts
(6) Washington	92 pts
Atlanta	74 pts
Florida	70 pts
Carolina	61 pts

Western Conference

Central

(2) Detroit	110 pts
(5) St. Louis	99 pts
Chicago	79 pts
Nashville	74 pts
Columbus	69 pts

Northwest

(3) Colorado	105 pts
(4) Vancouver	104 pts
(6) Minnesota	95 pts
(8) Edmonton	92 pts
Calgary	75 pts

Pacific

(1) Dallas	111 pts
(7) Anaheim	95 pts
Los Angeles	78 pts
Phoenix	78 pts
San Jose	73 pts

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the Post's story, saying in Monday's New York Daily News that he had "zero contact with Mario or anyone that represents him."

Lemieux ranked sixth in the league last season with 91 points, but the Penguins floundered and he was forced to unload All-Star winger Alexei Kovalev to trim an already lean payroll. They struggled through a 16-game winless streak and were next to last with 65 points.

Forced into retirement by persistent back pain, the 37-year-old Lemieux made a remarkable comeback in 2000. He collected 35 goals and 41 assists in just 43 games after sitting out three seasons.

A nagging hip injury limited Lemieux to 24 games in 2001-02, but he won a gold medal with Canada at the Salt Lake City Olympics.

Oilers and Canadiens will play outdoor game this fall

EDMONTON, Alberta — The Edmonton Oilers and Montreal Canadiens will play an outdoor game at Commonwealth Stadium in November that could draw more than 55,000 fans.

"The NHL has approved it," Oilers president Patrick LaForge told the Edmonton Journal, saying he had spoken with Bob Goodenow, head of the Players' Association. "He's cool. There's no hurdle there that hasn't been handled."

The Oilers officially made the announcement during a news conference at the stadium on Tuesday. The game will be part of the team's 25th anniversary celebrations.

An afternoon old-timers' game that will likely feature Wayne Gretzky is also on the schedule. Gretzky had said in the past he wasn't interested in suiting up in old-timers' games but when former teammate Kevin Lowe, now the general manager of the Oilers, came calling Gretzky couldn't say no.

The idea for the novel game took root after Michigan State and the University of Michigan drew 74,554 spectators to Spartan football stadium on Oct. 6, 2001.

Islanders fire coach Peter Laviolette

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — Mike Milbury dismissed yet another New York Islanders coach Tuesday, firing Peter Laviolette after playoff trips in each of his two seasons with the team.

Milbury has fired seven coaches, including himself twice, in the seven-and-a-half years he has been Islanders general manager. Laviolette was replaced with minor league coach Steve Stirling, who coached in the AHL the last two seasons.

"I'm not happy about being here and was looking for any possible way around this," Milbury said. "While we accomplished some significant things in the last two years, in the end I thought we were backtracking."

Laviolette and the Islanders were eliminated twice in the first round of the playoffs after not qualifying since 1994. There was a positive feeling a year ago after a tough seven-game loss to Toronto, but those good vibes were gone after a five-game wash-out against Ottawa in April.

"There's a lot of good things about Peter to believe in, but the one thing that kept coming back to haunt me is when a coach and a team part company, it's not very often that they reconnect successfully," Milbury said.

Laviolette was a finalist for the Bruins' job in 2001, but was passed over in favor of Mike Keenan.

He was hired soon after by the Islanders. Since then, Boston has dismissed Keenan and his successor, Robbie Ftorek.

Milbury said he wouldn't stand in the way of Laviolette seeking another NHL job.

"He'll surface again and I hope shortly," Milbury said. "I think he's learned some things from the experience. I know I have."

When the Islanders lost four straight to Ottawa after winning the series opener, there was much complaining and finger-pointing among the players.

New York was outscored 13-4 by the Senators in the losses.

In conducting interviews with players following the ouster, Milbury said he was surprised how wide the gap had become between Laviolette and the team.

He was concerned that his club became "cliquey."

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



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support