

Salang tunnel vital link to Afghan infrastructure

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – When soldiers think of tunnels in the mountains of Afghanistan their first thought is often of the hide-outs used by the al Qaeda and Taliban, but at 11,100 feet up in the Hindu Kush there's a tunnel that's a vital part of Afghanistan's infrastructure.

A group of engineers from Combined Joint Task Force 180 visited this transportation artery, known as the Salang Tunnel, Sunday to check the progress of its reconstruction and to witness its design. The Taliban destroyed the tunnel's southern entrance and ventilation system in 1998.

The tunnel is a two-lane road through the mountains that links the northern and southern parts of the country.

"It's a very critical part of the infrastructure of Afghanistan," said Capt. Matthew Luzzatto, an engineer officer with CJTF 180, CJ-7. According to Luzzatto the tunnel was built in 1958 to link the two halves of Afghanistan.



CJTF 180 engineers look out onto northern Afghanistan from the entrance to the Salang Tunnel. The tunnel is a vital link between southern and northern Afghanistan.

According to a report by the United States Agency for International Development, one of the organizations funding the reconstruction, transportation of cargo from northern Afghanistan to Kabul is about 10 hours with the tunnel and about 72 hours without it.

The nearest bypass around the tunnel is

through the Shibar pass, said Maj. Mark Cerda, chief of the Roads, Bridges and Tunnels Cell.

For the CJTF 180 engineers the trip was a chance to tour through the Afghanistan countryside as well as witness a reconstruction effort.

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Afghan National Army staff officers graduate

KABUL, Afghanistan -- On July 17, over 30 officers received their certificates at the graduation ceremony for the third Brigade Staff Officer Course held at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC). This ceremony was attended by several dignitaries from both the Coalition and Ministry of Defense.



Courtesy Photo

An ANA officer pledges serve Afghanistan

3rd Brigade, Central Corps staff officers in the grades of lieutenant

The eight-week course serves to prepare

to colonel to perform staff functions at brigade level. The extensive course curriculum covers subjects ranging from the role of a staff officer, to preparing and conducting briefings, staff estimates and operational orders. Additionally, officers learn to apply the principles of the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP).

This course, jointly taught by members of the a U.S. civilian contractor staff and ANA instructors, underscores the combined efforts of the Coalition and the Ministry of Defense to educate and improve the professional skill set of the officer ranks.

A key leader offered that one of the most important things they learned from the course is being held accountable for your actions and being loyal to the ANA and the people of Afghanistan.

(Information from CJTF-180 Press Release)

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Lynch was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and POW medal Monday.

Jessica Lynch heads home

PALESTINE, West Virginia — Former prisoner of war Jessica Lynch returns to her home in the rugged green hills of West Virginia today, following a dramatic rescue and months of painful recuperation.

Thousands of well-wishers are expected to cheer the Army private first class as she and her family are honored with a parade.

Lynch is scheduled to arrive mid-afternoon in Elizabeth, about 70 miles north of Charleston, the state capital.

She will appear before the assembled media in a tent, then travel in a military motorcade to Palestine, her tiny hometown about 3 miles away.

A family spokesman said last week Lynch plans to seek a discharge from the Army.

Lynch has spent more than three months at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., recovering from injuries.

Multiple tornadoes cause damage in Iowa

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Several tornadoes barreled through Iowa, ripping roofs off homes and leaving up to 30,000 households without power, officials said.

National Weather Service meteorologist Mike McClure said the agency received reports of two tornado touchdowns Sunday in Linn County, including one in downtown Cedar Rapids.

McClure said law enforcement officials

also reported tornado touchdowns in Jones County near Morley and Martelle. There were no confirmed reports of injuries early Monday morning.

In Cedar Rapids, a tornado reported by fire and rescue officials tore roofs off homes and an apartment building and left up to 30,000 homes without power. Many of the city's main streets were closed because of downed trees and power lines, McClure said.

"It's just widespread damage," he said. "Sounds like they really got hit pretty hard there."



A protester outside the U.S. Embassy holds a sign that reads: "Bush kill the Liberian people."

Liberians dump bodies at U.S. Embassy in capital

MONROVIA, Liberia — Liberians dumped mangled, bloodied bodies Monday outside the gates of the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia to vent their anger at the United States, some of them saying, "If you had intervened, this would not be happening."

A Marine anti-terrorist team arrived at the embassy Monday to strengthen security as a battle raged between rebel forces and government troops.

But President Bush is still deciding whether to commit peacekeeping troops to help quell the latest uprising in 14 years of almost continuous civil war that have seen an estimated 250,000 people killed.

A Liberian diplomat in Washington told *CNN* that civilians were "dying in the hundreds" and that the United States had "a moral obligation" to help the country settled by freed U.S. slaves in 1822.

The embassy complex, which sprawls along Africa's western coast, was hit several times with mortar rounds and small-arms

fire over a two-hour period as rebels moved on the capital to oust President Charles Taylor from power.



FBI to bear brunt of September 11 criticism

WASHINGTON — The FBI is expected to bear much of the criticism from the joint congressional committee investigating the September 11 attacks, which is to release its final report Thursday, according to sources.

One issue discussed in the report is the help two of the hijackers, Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar, got once they settled in the San Diego area in January 2000, and whether there were signals the FBI should have picked up on. Both have been identified as some of the hijackers who flew American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon.

In the December report, the committee said the nation's intelligence community "failed to capitalize on both the individual and collective significance of available information that appears relevant to the events of September 11th."

Sources have told *CNN* the coming report also criticizes the intelligence agencies for failing to collect enough intelligence on al Qaeda activities in the United States and in their training camps in Afghanistan. Both CIA and FBI officials have acknowledged that was a problem and have already taken steps to do what they can to correct it.

And according to a U.S. government official, "This inquiry has uncovered no intelligence information in the possession of the intelligence community prior to the attacks of Sept. 11th that, if fully considered, would have provided specific advance warning of the details of those attacks."

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“It’s a professional development trip for us,” said Luzzatto. “The roads, bridges and tunnels cell comes up periodically to check out the progress of the reconstruction. We decided to come up with them to check it out.”

“The project is being done with Norwegian consultants and Turkish contractors,” said Cerda. “It’s truly a ‘United Nations’ project.”

Danish help train young Marines

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

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – When Cpl. Charles Freeman and Lance Cpl. Shane Proulx of 374th Marine Wing Support Squadron, discovered that Danish airmen who shared their same job were working with equipment the Marine Corps will be fielding in 2005, they knew they had to seize the chance to get a head start on the rest of their Marine counterparts.

For the last five months the two Marine airfield recovery specialists have been receiving training by members of the Royal Danish Air Force on how to operate the Danish built Bac-12 Arresting Barrier, or M-31, as newly classified by the Marine Corps.

When asked by the two young Marines back in February to give some training on the equipment, Danish A.F. Sgt. Kim Carsten, said, “We were happy about (training them.)”

The Marines and Danish airfield recovery specialists’ primary jobs are very comparable, with the main difference being they work with different aircrafts, the Danish with the F-16 and the Marines working with the F-18. Their main responsibility is to quickly stop fixed-wing aircraft on a small airfield (normally 4000 feet or smaller).

They stop the aircraft using an arresting barrier, which is composed of two machines anchored on each side of the landing strip, with a steel cord between them. As the aircraft lands its tail hook catches the steel cord, and the two machines quickly stop the plane usually within 900 feet. For the young Marines, getting the opportunity to train on the new

The workers at the site are busy cleaning up debris, clearing out the drainage system and reconstructing damage done by the Taliban and the elements.

“There’s a lot of cleanup that is being done,” Luzzatto said.

Cerda said that there is a lot more to the reconstruction than just a cleanup project including installing heaters in the drainage.

“Because the tunnel is in living stone

with water running through it, there has to be a heating system in the drainage,” he said.

“The intent is to have the tunnel semi-operational by winter,” said Cerda.

“We’re going to try and keep the road open through winter.”

And keeping the tunnel open through the winter means keeping two lanes open on the path to reconstruction.

gear was a wish come true.

“It’s ‘dream gear’ to us,” said Freeman. “Day to day it’s almost maintenance free. There are just a lot of visual checks and a lot of simple preventive maintenance.”

The Danish M-31 will be replacing the M-21 gear, which has been used by the Marine Corps since the Vietnam War.

“We fight everyday with the M-21 gear, it definitely keeps us busy,” said Freeman, and adding jokingly, “We have a lot of job security, but we’d more than welcome the M-31 gear. It would make our job that much easier.”

As airfield recovery specialists their main mission is to make sure pilots are confident using the tail hook landing equipment.

Besides being lower maintenance, the M-31 is also “smarter” than the M-21, according to Proulx.

“With the M-21 we have to adjust our gear and set our throttles manually,” Proulx said. “(The Danish) breaking system is self adjusting, depending on the speed and weight of the plane.”

Although Freeman and Proulx aren’t the first in the Marine Corps to train on the equipment, their training experience is significant because they get to train with airmen who’ve been working with the landing equipment since the Danish Royal Air Force first fielded it 14 years ago.

“We feel training with these experienced professionals definitely gives us a head start,” said Freeman.

The Danish airmen are currently trying to further the two Marines education by attempting to reserve them a slot in the Bac-12 Arresting Barrier certification school in Denmark. According to Carsten, this is a class that not many Foreign Service members are given the oppor-



Marine Lance Cpl. Shane Proulx, 374 MWSS, inspects the cable used on the Danish Bac-12 Arresting Gear. The Marine Corps will begin fielding the Bac-12 in 2005.

tunity to attend.

Proulx hopes to attend the course so he can possibly go and be an instructor at the Marine Airfield Recovery training school. He said his goal is to help Marines get comfortable with the M-31 by the time they field it in 2005.

Both, the Danish airmen and young Marine were skeptical when they heard they were joining forces, but as they worked together that changed.

“The first time I heard they were Marines I thought they might be ‘tough guys,’” said Carsten. “But they are just normal people.”

“If anyone gets the chance to work with another coalition force I would say do it because it’s an awesome experience,” Proulx said.

Rocket attacks close Bazaar

Story by Pfc. Kelly Hunt
4th Public Affairs Detachment

Bagram, Afghanistan – The base bazaar closed July 12 after a rocket attack on base threatened the safety of the surrounding area.

“We closed the bazaar until the Afghans in the local area can guarantee the security of the base,” said Col. Kurt McNeely, Base Operations Commander. “They know where the rocket was fired from, they have witnesses and I think we’ll be able to track down who shot the rocket.”

McNeely added he expects the bazaar to reopen soon.

“The bazaar started for two reasons,” said McNeely. One reason is situated around the locals and the other is the troops stationed at Bagram.

“The bazaar provides a lot of benefit to the local economy,” he said. An Afghan’s annual income ranges around three hundred dollars a year. “If they sell one rug to an American soldier, and the guy makes six hundred dollars on that rug, that’s two annual salaries on one sale, so it’s a very good thing for locals to get a pass from the bazaar.”

Local officials also provide Bagram Air Field with valuable force protection.

They know when someone is new in the area and they investigate those individuals, said McNeely.

“The bazaar was one way of saying thanks for what they are doing for us and at the same time, providing a legitimate form of income for them,” said McNeely.

A significant benefit of having the bazaar was for the soldiers arriving to Bagram who may not get off the base very often. “We don’t have the freedom here in Bagram, like we do in other places, to go out into the economy, mix with the locals and buy local products,” said McNeely. “I personally don’t want to see a soldier coming over here, spending six months in Bagram, going home, and all that soldier has ever seen of Afghanistan was Bagram Air Field.”

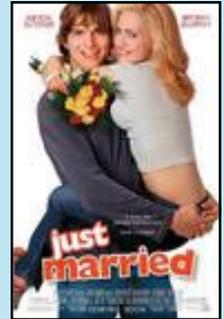
“It’s an opportunity to mix with the local population, to get out there, talk to them and meet them,” said McNeely. “That is really the biggest reason we have a bazaar. To provide added quality of life to our soldiers.”

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building:

“Just Married.” A young newlywed couple honeymoon in Europe, where obstacles challenge their ability to sustain the marriage.

Tomorrow’s movie will be “Abandon.”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
Bagram:	Dusty H: 102F L: 72F	Dusty H: 102F L: 72F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 106F L: 81F	Dusty H: 106F L: 82F
Kabul:	Mostly clear H: 104F L: 64F	Haze H: 100F L: 64F
Uzbekistan:	Clear H: 109F L: 68F	Dusty H: 99F L: 63F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Kobe's team: attorney Pamela Mackey and his wife, Vanessa.

'It's hard to prove' non-consensual sex

DENVER — When Kobe Bryant said he “made the mistake of adultery,” he handed prosecutors the challenge of proving that whatever happened between him and the woman who accused him of sexual assault was against her will.

“How do they prove it's not consensual? That's the whole enchilada right there,” said Steve Kron, a longtime sports criminal defense attorney in Los Angeles.

“It's hard to prove (with) two adults in a room having sex that the sex was not consensual,” he said.

Bryant, the Los Angeles Lakers superstar, was charged Friday with felony sexual assault against a 19-year-old woman who worked at an exclusive spa where Bryant was staying while in Colorado for knee surgery.

“I am innocent of the charges filed today. I did not assault the woman who is accusing me. I made the mistake of adultery,” Bryant said in a written statement.

Bryant reiterated his innocence later at a news conference at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. His lawyer plans to plead not guilty.

Prosecutors said the alleged victim would not be made available for comment. A man at her home said there would be no statement.

“Now it's going to be interesting,” said Kron, who has represented Paula Poundstone and other celebrities.

“Do you have witnesses or physical evidence? Was she bruised, scratched, injured in some fashion?” Kron said.

Kron and others said Bryant's attorneys will scrutinize the woman's life and look for ways to discredit her. Jurors may not want to believe allegations against a superstar, they said.

Clooney to pay around \$25M for club

ESPN — Hollywood actor George Clooney reportedly is set to buy Italian Serie B soccer team Como for approximately \$25 million, Britain's *ITV.com* reported Monday.

According to the report, the former *ER* and “Ocean's Eleven” star has told friends he is “about to buy a small soccer team” near his Italian lakeside home in Villa Oleandra.

A Como supporter told *ITV* that “Someone saw George at the ground last week. Buying (the team) would make sense — he only lives 20 minutes up the road. He has money for extra players and would attract female fans, bringing in extra gate money.”

“I have seen all the reports and I hope Clooney does buy the club,” a club receptionist added. “He's gorgeous.”

Como spent last year in Italy's prestigious Serie A, but was relegated back to the country's second division after finishing second-to-last with a 4-18-12 record and 24 points.



Dotson, in handcuffs, leaves the Chestertown, Md., police station.

Dotson: 'I didn't confess to anything'

CHESTERTOWN, Md. — The former roommate of missing Baylor University basketball player Patrick Dennehy has been charged Monday with murder and is being held without bond at Kent County Detention Center, authorities said.

The warrant naming Dotson was issued by police in Waco, Texas, where Dennehy has been missing since mid-June, Chestertown Police Chief Walter Coryell said. No body has been found.

Dotson, 21, was arraigned Monday evening, a Chestertown police spokesman told CNN. The spokesman also said Dotson will go to Kent County District Court on Tuesday morning for a bail review and perhaps a hearing for extradition to Texas.

Two officers escorted Dotson, who was wearing handcuffs, into the police department about 9:20 p.m.

The Dallas Morning News has reported that Dotson has confessed to killing Dennehy. But Dotson disputes that his statements have amounted to a confession.

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As he left the court commissioner's office Monday night, Dotson told a reporter: "I didn't confess to anything. Call the FBI." Shortly after his arrest, Dotson had referred all questions to his lawyer.



Lance Armstrong is five stages away from a historic five-peat.

Armstrong stages big comeback after fall

LUZ-ARDIDEN, France — Lance Armstrong routed two rivals in a riveting climb in the Tour de France on Monday, recovering from a fall to stamp his authority on the race after two difficult weeks.

His victory in the misty mountains of the Pyrenees bolstered his chances of equaling Miguel Indurain's record of five straight Tour victories.

Jan Ullrich, the 1997 Tour winner, is now 67 seconds back overall, giving Armstrong a more comfortable lead with five stages left. Ullrich, grimacing near the finish, started the day trailing by just 15 seconds.

Armstrong crossed the finish line 40 seconds before Ullrich did — and padded his lead by an additional 12 seconds thanks to a time bonus for winning the stage.

Another rival left behind was Alexandre Vinokourov. The Kazak had been 18 seconds behind, but he was left flailing and is now out of contention.

That essentially reduces the Tour to a duel between Armstrong and Ullrich leading to the finish in Paris on Sunday.

The fall came with about 6 miles left in the 99-mile stage. Armstrong slammed to the road after a spectator's outstretched bag caught his handlebars.

He grazed his left elbow and dirtied the left shoulder of his yellow jersey when he drove into a spectator. He then climbed back on his bike and got back in the race.

The Texan also grazed his left hip but was otherwise unhurt, said Jogi Muller, spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service team.

"After the fall, I had a big, big rush of adrenaline," Armstrong said.

He said he then told himself, "Lance if you want to win the Tour de France, do it today."

Armstrong said he was partly to blame because he was riding too close to the edge of the road.

Spain's Iban Mayo also fell after crashing into Armstrong as he lay on the road.

The drama didn't stop there. A few seconds after getting back on his bike, Armstrong nearly fell again when his right foot slipped out of his pedal.

Ullrich had to swerve to avoid the crash. He waited with other riders while Armstrong and Mayo got back on their bikes and caught up.

"Jan is a good guy, he's an honorable guy," Armstrong said. "He probably didn't forget that when he crashed in 2001, in what appeared to be a serious crash, I told everyone: 'We can't race until he gets back up.' As we say in English: 'What goes around comes around,' and so I appreciate him doing that."

"Can you sew a pocket for my cell phone?"



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support