

New Zealand takes over reins in Bamian

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

BAMIAN, Afghanistan – There’s officially a new flag flying over the Provincial Reconstruction Team compound here as “Old Glory” was brought down to make room for the approximate 100 service members from New Zealand taking over during a transfer of authority ceremony Tuesday.

“Today is a day the people of Bamian will never forget,” said Gov. Muhammad Rahim Aliyar, the Afghanistan Transitional Government’s leader in the province and one of the many guest speakers at the ceremony. “We are sad the U.S. is leaving, but we’re happy to have our new friends.”

The “Kiwis,” as they are affectionately called due to the kiwi bird on their hats and unit patches, will be responsible for helping to maintain security and will oversee reconstruction efforts in the province known for its centuries old Buddhas.

They will join other PRTs, both U.S. and British, in their mission to work with the Afghan Transitional Government to reverse the years of war and destruction that have



New Zealand troops perform their traditional "Haka" dance at the transfer of authority ceremony Tuesday.

left its footprints in the Afghan countryside.

“The security and peace we have in Bamian is because of the work of the PRT,” said Aliyar. “They did a good job here.”

Until Tuesday, reconstruction in the land once controlled by Genghis Khan during the 13th Century and the site of the destruction of the famous giant statues of Buddha by

the Taliban in 2001 rested on the shoulders of U.S. Civil Affairs soldiers.

The New Zealand joint force is looking forward to the challenges they will face in the historic province, according to Lt. Col. Neville Reilly, the new PRT commander.

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213th ASG keeps Afghanistan in unison

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

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – In the early stages of Operation Enduring Freedom, bases throughout the country were run as separate entities, controlled individually without one central command. Base Operations has come a long way since then and bases are now communicating and sharing information with the help of personnel from Task Force Liberty, who are in charge of

keeping it all together.

Prior to the 213th Area Support Group’s arrival, senior mission commanders operated each base. This double tasking took time and resources away from the commanders who also had their primary missions to accomplish.

“Our predecessors identified the need for someone to run all the bases,” said Col. Scott Wagner, 213th ASG commander. With the problem recognized, development began for a single operating force.

Task Force Liberty is now responsible for base operations in Kandahar, Kabul and

Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan with 213th ASG managing most of these locations to include Task Force Dragon in Bagram, commanded by Col. Thomas Boyle.

Command and control is the name of the game for troops from the 213th ASG, Pennsylvania National Guard, who work long and hard to ensure that mission is carried out each and every day.

“There’s a long list of all the base operations’ functions, from the most basic things

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



The detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Guantanamo Bay spy probe expanded Wednesday

WASHINGTON — Following the arrests of two U.S. servicemen suspected of spying, at least two other members of the U.S. military are being closely watched in an investigation of possible espionage activities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, officials said Wednesday.

The Pentagon is broadening its investigation and trying to determine whether a conspiracy is involved, according to the officials.

On Tuesday, Pentagon officials said Air Force Senior Airman Ahmad al Halabi — who worked at the U.S. Navy base where suspected al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists are held — had been arrested and charged with espionage and aiding the enemy.

The charges were denied by al Halabi's attorney, Air Force Maj. James E. Key III, *The Washington Post* reported Wednesday.

Another member of the military who also worked at Guantanamo — Islamic chaplain and Army Capt. James Yee — is being held on suspicion of espionage and treason in at a stockade in Charleston, S.C. Yee has not been charged.

Investigators are trying to determine whether the men are linked in a conspiracy, official said.

According to al Halabi's charge sheet, he is also accused of failing to report unauthorized communications between U.S. troops and detainees, who are designated as enemy combatants. More than 600 suspects, brought to the base after the war in Afghanistan, are housed there.

Al Halabi was arrested July 23 because

he allegedly had classified information on his laptop computer about detainees and facilities at the Guantanamo Bay base, Pentagon officials said. He is being held at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

An American of Syrian descent, al Halabi allegedly e-mailed information to people in Syria that included details about the base's flight schedule, officials said.



Reunited: Bush and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder agree to work together.

Bush, Schroeder mend fences

CNN — President Bush and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said Wednesday that they had agreed to work together in Iraq with Germany offering to contribute economic and technical aid to the reconstruction effort.

The two leaders met for the first time in 16 months, after relations between the two countries were strained by Schroeder's outspoken criticism of U.S. policy towards Iraq in the months leading up to the invasion.

"Only the United Nations can guarantee the necessary degree of legitimacy and enabling the people of Iraq to speedily rebuild their country under an independent representative government," Schroeder told the U.N. General Assembly. "My country, Germany, stands ready to support such a process."

Bush and Schroeder met Wednesday morning at U.N. headquarters.

"We've had differences and they're over, and we're going to work together." Bush told reporters after the meeting. "I appreciate his efforts to help Iraq grow to be a peaceful and stable and democratic country." Schroeder said Germany and the rest of

Europe had a vested interest in a secure and stable Iraq.



U.S. troops patrol a street in Khaldiyyah, Iraq, recently. More National Guard and Reserve troops may be needed in Iraq, a general says.

General: More reservists may be called for Iraq duty

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon may be forced within several weeks to alert a large number of additional National Guard and Reserve troops for duty in Iraq, a senior general said Wednesday.

Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said more reservists could be called upon if other countries do not soon pledge thousands more troops to form a third multinational division in Iraq.

"We need to be making decisions about alerting reservists over the next four to six weeks," he said.

"I would think that by around the end of October or the beginning of November we should be alerting those forces that may need to be called up to relieve or be prepared to relieve (troops there now) if we don't have specificity by then on a third multinational division," said Pace.

He said the Guard and Reserve troops should be notified about four months before they would need to ship out because they require some training time.

When it announced a troop rotation plan in July, the Pentagon assumed that it would have available a third multinational division of 10,000 to 15,000 troops to replace the Army's 101st Airborne Division early next year.

U.S Army Racing Team wins O'Reilly Mid-South Nationals

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – The U.S. Army Racing Team had a Cinderella ending to the rain-delayed O'Reilly Mid-South Nationals at Memphis Motorsports Park Sept 22.

Tony "The Sarge" Schumacher, who endured a crash in qualifying Sept. 19, came back to secure the Top Fuel crown with a win over Larry Dixon. It was his second straight victory.

Schumacher, who has been nursing a sore knee since his crash, piloted his U.S. Army Top Fuel dragster to wins over David Grubnic, Clay Millican and Doug Kalitta, before disposing of Dixon with a stellar 4.581-second pass at 317.79 mph.

"This was just a superb job by the Army team," said Schumacher. "To be able to put aside the crash Friday night and go out and win the race is really something. This team stayed focused on the job that had to be done."

"We lost a great race car Friday night, but I guess we pulled out another great race car. Alan Johnson (crew chief) is truly a master. I'm certainly glad he's in our corner," Schumacher added.

After recording his third victory of the season, the 1999 Top Fuel world champion moved to within a point of third-place Darrell Russell with five races remaining in the 2003 season.

"Obviously, we want that third-place spot, but we want to win as many races as we can the rest of the way," said Schumacher. "We're trying to set the table for next year."

The NHRA POWERADE Drag Racing Series moves to Route 66 Raceway in Joliet, Ill., next weekend for the CARQUEST Auto Parts Nationals. The Top Fuelers will compete, while the Pro Stock Bikes will wait two weeks to return to Reading, Pa. for the postponed Lucas Oil Nationals.

(Information from Army News Services Press Release)

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "Swimfan." A high school senior with a promising swimming career has a one-night stand with sinister consequences.



Tomorrow will feature Hispanic Heritage Month's Lation Comedy Fiesta.

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Friday</i>
Bagram:	<i>Scattered TSTMS</i> H: 82F L: 54F	<i>Mostly clear</i> H: 81F L: 48F
Kandahar:	<i>Dusty</i> H: 82F L: 63F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 79F L: 59F
Kabul:	<i>Scattered TSTMS</i> H: 81F L: 46F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 79F L: 45F
Uzbekistan:	<i>Clear</i> H: 74F L: 40F	<i>Clear</i> H: 74F L: 45F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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CJTF-180 Commander —

Lt. Gen. John R. Vines

CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —

Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey

Public Affairs Officer —

Col. Rodney Davis

Public Affairs Sergeant Major —

Sgt. Maj. Harrison Saries

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Commander — Maj. Matthew L Garner

NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson

Editor — Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson

Journalists — Sgt. Stephanie Hall,

Sgt. Gregory Heath, Spc. Wes Landrum, Spc. Kelly Hunt

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“We’re guests here . . . and we’re going to do everything we can to help you,” Reilly said to the many guests present at the ceremony. “We’re pleased and proud to work with the Afghan Transitional Government.”

New Zealand’s ambassador to Afghanistan, Neils Holm, echoed Reilly’s optimism as he read a statement from the country’s Prime Minister Helen Clark.

“Our countries may be distant, but in an increasingly inter-dependent world, the challenges of Afghanistan are also New Zealand’s challenges,” he said on behalf of the prime minister.

Holm went on to say that the PRT was a way that New Zealand could “join with the U.S. in a very tangible way” in the global war on terrorism.

Under a newly raised New Zealand flag, and with the 1,500-year-old Buddha statues as a backdrop, the New Zealanders ended the ceremony by performing a traditional Maori Haka dance to the crowd’s delight.



U.S. and New Zealand soldiers prepare to raise the New Zealand flag over the Provincial Reconstruction Team compound in Bamian during the transfer of authority ceremony.

UNISON, from Page 1



Sgt. 1st Class Donald Newman and Spc. Corry Lansberry, 213th Area Support Group, Task Force Liberty, direct a local contractor Sept. 17, at the Base Escort Office. Task Force Liberty is the base operations control for Kandahar, Kabul, Karshi-Khannbad with 213th ASG personnel managing most locations to include Task Force Dragon here.

such as running the chow halls, billeting, the discipline of police (to) making all the rules and policies (and) coordinating force protection,” said Wagner.

One of our prime objectives is to standardize uniform levels of service, so what you get on one base, you’ll get at another, said Wagner. We’re basically striving to improve the quality of life for our troops while they’re here.

While improving living conditions for soldiers across the country, personnel dis-

covered that communication was the key to increase positive growth.

“One thing that I think is important is that we have dialog amongst all the bases and if there’s a great idea at one base, we know about it and we can help facilitate it at other bases,” said Maj. Pam McGaha, 213th ASG.

In addition to improving quality of life on bases, Task Force Liberty is looking for ways to push the advancement out to troops in forward operating bases as well.

“Base support is not just limited to the actual base,” said McGaha. “It’s much broader than that.”

The job is big, but that’s just what 213th ASG personnel expected when they set out for Bagram Air Base.

Arriving at the end of June, personnel stepped foot onto new territory that they knew would be both a challenging and rewarding experience.

“A lot of our soldiers are working in levels that are higher than they would normally work in,” said McGaha. “Our senior NCO’s (non commissioned officers) are certainly working in a much broader capacity than they normally would, (and) we’re really proud of that.”

“Most of our people bring civilian skills, education, or personality to help them excel in the specific job that they’re in,” said Wagner. For example, “we’ve got people that like weapons working in range control.”

Combining civilian skills and military training has been a crucial element in the success of Task Force Liberty. Running bases across the country may be a difficult task, but for 213th ASG personnel, it’s just a matter of dedication and knowing that what they do greatly affects troops’ morale and overall happiness.

“Our soldiers are going to notice a huge increase in the quality of life from the time we got here until the time we leave,” he said. “Our intensions are to leave this place better than we found it and that’s probably the bottom line of what we’re trying to do here.”



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)



Sidney Ponson was in complete control until the seventh inning when the Astros' bats got hot and stole the game to stay in the wildcard hunt.

Vizcaino delivers game-winning hit to keep Astros in the hunt Wednesday

HOUSTON – The Houston Astros were on the brink and they knew it. Then Jose Vizcaino came up with a big hit that kept them from dropping even farther back in the NL Central.

Vizcaino pinch hit in the seventh inning and singled home two runs to lead Houston over a lineup of San Francisco substitutes 2-1 Wednesday.

"If we lost today, we were in serious trouble, but we live to fight another day," Craig Biggio said. "Obviously, that was a huge hit."

Houston, which began the day one game behind the division-leading Chicago Cubs, stopped a four-game losing streak, which had tied a season high.

"This was huge for us. It was make or break for us," said Billy Wagner, who closed with a perfect ninth for his 44th save in 47 chances. "We've got to win out and hope they lose one or two. If they win out and we win out, then so be it. You get out there and the adrenaline is pumping. We've got to win this game."

Roy Oswalt (10-5) won his fourth straight start since coming off the disabled list, allowing three hits in eight innings, including Pedro Feliz's second-inning homer. Oswalt struck out six and walked none.

Sidney Ponson (3-6), backed by three double plays, allowed just two singles in the first six innings, but got in trouble in the seventh.

Ponson hit Jeff Kent with a pitch with two outs and Lance Berkman followed with a double off the left-field scoreboard, sending Kent to third.

San Francisco intentionally walked Richard Hidalgo and Vizcaino, batting for Brad Ausmus, lined a single to center to drive in the tying and go-ahead runs.

"He was tough," Vizcaino said. "In that situation, when I go out to pinch hit, he's the one in trouble. He has to throw a strike."

Not a good 'Mourning' start; Zo not guaranteed job in New Jersey

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — When Alonzo Mourning begins playing for the New Jersey Nets, he will not be guaranteed a spot in the starting lineup.



Alonzo Mourning

"We're going into training camp with the mindset that we have four centers," Nets coach Byron Scott said Wednesday. "And we're going to let these four guys fight it out. I'm not stuck on Zo being the starter."

Dikembe Mutombo, Jason Collins and Aaron Williams also will play center for the Nets, the two-time defending Eastern Conference champions who open camp Sept. 30.

The Nets signed Mourning, a four-time All-Star, to \$20 million contract in the offseason — a risky move since Mourning missed last season because of a kidney disease.

Mourning, who has averaged 20.3 points, 9.8 rebounds and three blocks per game over his 10-year career, has played only one season in the last three because of his kidney ailment. But the Nets hope the 33-year-old is fully recovered and ready to make a solid contribution.

"We've had him working out an hour and a half every day, and he's fine. It's crazy to think that Zo could play every game," Scott said. "It's an unknown factor right now. Zo's goal is to play basketball again and to win a championship. He's the biggest question mark right now — how he'll fit in and how he'll hold up."

Sosa ties Mantle with home run Wednesday

CINCINNATI – The television screens went blank, and the Chicago Cubs went out and won.



Sammy Sosa

Sammy Sosa tied Mickey Mantle for 10th place on the career home run list Wednesday night, and Shawn Estes pitched a four-hit shutout as the Cubs beat the Reds 8-0 and preserved their one-game lead in the NL Central.

"You want to play in October, you've got to win," said Sosa, who started the decisive rally with his 536th career homer. "We don't have that much room."

Before the first pitch, Cubs players were engrossed in the bank of television sets in the visitors' clubhouse. They muttered curses when second-place Houston rallied for a 2-1 victory over San Francisco, meaning Chicago would have to win to remain one game ahead.

The Cubs finish with one more game in Cincinnati, and three at Wrigley Field against the lowly Pittsburgh Pirates.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Karzai tells Bush worried about 'Talibanism'

UNITED NATIONS (*Reuters*) - Afghan President Hamid Karzai told U.S. President George W. Bush on Tuesday he was concerned that support for the Taliban was being preached by some people in border regions of neighboring Pakistan.

A senior U.S. official, briefing reporters on Bush's meeting with Karzai on the fringes of the U.N. General Assembly, said Karzai told him "there are still people preaching a kind of 'Talibanism'" when they cross into Afghanistan from Pakistan.

During the 45-minute meeting, Bush promised to raise the issue with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday.

The United States toppled the Taliban from control of Afghanistan for providing safe haven to the al Qaeda network after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Violence has plagued southern Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001 and has worsened in recent weeks.

Since the beginning of August, more than 280 people have been killed and scores wounded across Afghanistan, among them civilians, Afghan aid workers, police and militiamen, three U.S. soldiers and many Taliban guerrillas.

The U.S.-led international force in Afghanistan launched the Mountain Viper operation last month in response to the presence of hundreds of Taliban guerrillas and their allies in Uruzgan and Zabul provinces.

The U.S. official said Bush and Karzai discussed efforts to break up al Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan. The official said they did not discuss the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden.

"He's pretty well hidden," Bush told *Fox News* in an interview aired on Monday. "As I like to jest, he's not leading any parades. I mean, he's isolated."

But he expressed confidence bin Laden as well as deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein will eventually be found.

Last week Bush asked Congress for an additional \$1.2 billion for Afghanistan's reconstruction, of which \$400 million would be available immediately and \$800 million was requested from Congress for next year.

He also sought \$11 billion for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

Bush recently addressed the UN about the United States invasion of Iraq, defending the actions and calling for international assistance in the reconstruction of the nation.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on America, the United States has been adamant in its quest to stop terrorism and reprove the countries that harbor, support or fund terrorist.

Hispanic Heritage Month Spotlight

When one of his soldiers need that extra "top" support in their missions or daily lives, 1st Sgt. Gilbert Rodriguez, first sergeant for the 797th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), takes care of it. "I advise the commander on soldier issues," he said. "I (also) keep track of what's going on (to) make sure the teams are out their performing their mission, and I support them."

This native of Southern California said his parents, especially his father, are his sources of inspiration to go that extra mile even if it's an uphill battle. His father didn't have a strong educational foundation, "but he worked really hard and he managed to put seven of us through private school," said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez uses his parents' lives as an example for how he leads his own life. "It was such a struggle for them," he said. "It didn't seem like that at the time, but now as I look back on where we lived and how we lived, it was definitely a struggle but they just managed to make education such an important part of our lives."

Rodriguez has used the lessons he learned in childhood and applies them to his current military career, which began when he entered the service in 1978. Since he joined, the military has changed dramatically in terms of ethnic tolerance, he said. When he first entered, there was a noticeable separation between the different ethnic groups. "You could see the tension and feel the tension when I first came in the military," he said. "Over the years the military has put a lot of effort into trying to get that out. There's more acceptance and tolerance of everybody."

Overall, "I think it's a good opportunity for any Hispanic to join the military (because) there are a lot of opportunities," said Rodriguez. "I got to see a lot of the world. It's been a good career."

