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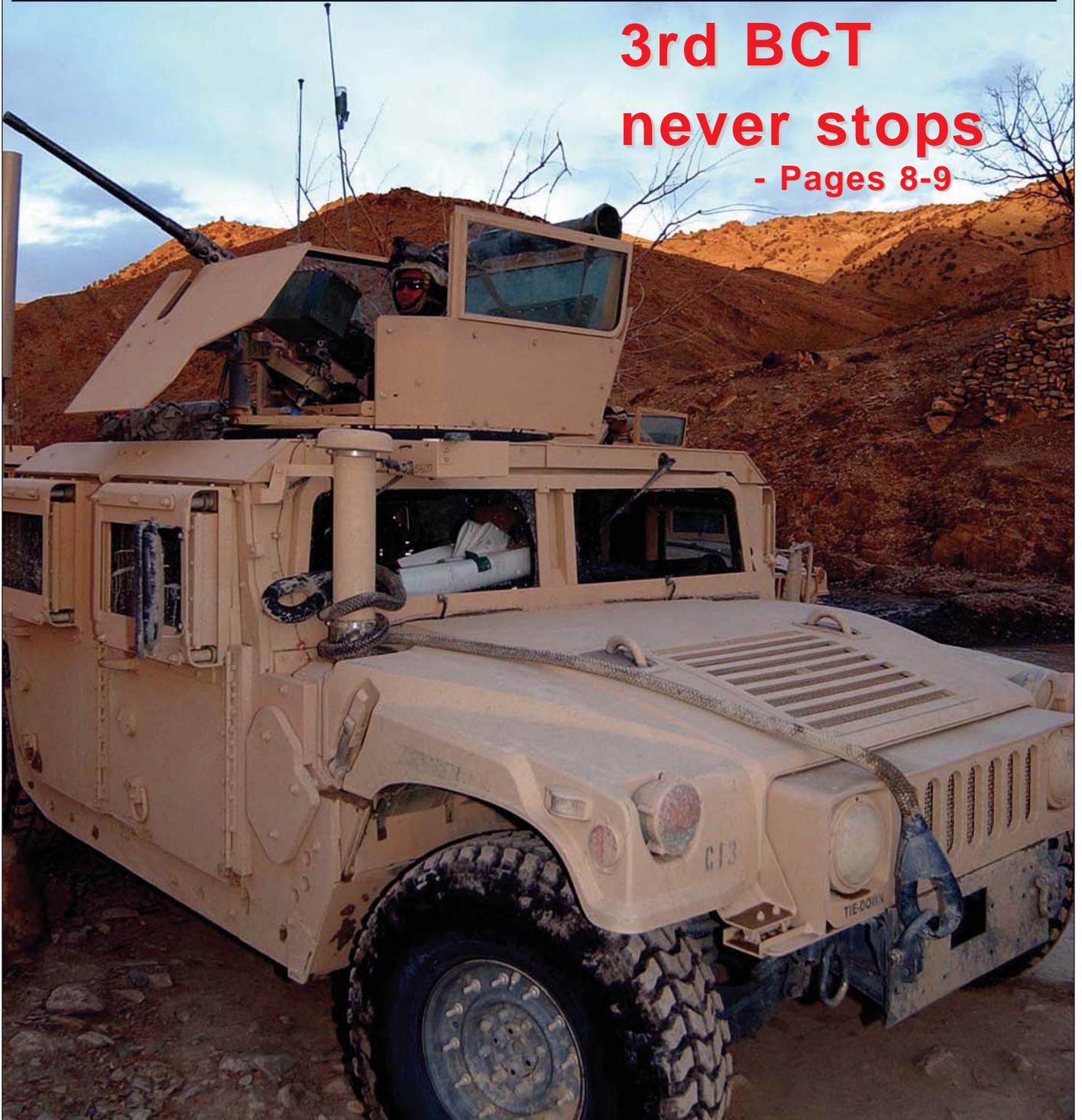
HUMANITARIAN DE-MINERS ♦ GWOT-TROT ♦ SPECIAL DELIVERY

FREEDOM WATCH

AFGHANISTAN

Combined Joint Task Force - 82

3rd BCT
never stops
- Pages 8-9



Defense DIGEST

News from the DoD

Army

Sec. Gates extends Army tours to 15 months

WASHINGTON - All Soldiers in the U.S. Central Command area of operations will serve 15-month tours in the region beginning immediately, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates announced April 11.

"Effective immediately, active Army units now in the Central Command area of responsibility and those headed there will deploy for not more than 15 months and return home for not less than 12 months," Gates said during a Pentagon news conference.

The policy applies to all active-duty Army units with the exception of two brigades currently in Iraq that have already been extended to 16 months. The policy does not apply to Marine Corps, Navy or Air Force units serving in Central Command. It also does not apply to Army National Guard or Army Reserve units deployed to the region.

The 15-month tour applies to active-duty Soldiers serving in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa and

all the countries in the region. U.S. Central Command stretches from Kenya to Kazakhstan and Egypt to Pakistan.

"Soldiers will receive an extra \$1,000 a month for each month or portion of the month that they serve longer than 12 months," Gates said.

Air Force

Reynolds named academy men's basketball coach

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. - Jeff Reynolds, an assistant coach for the Air Force Academy men's basketball team the past two years, has been named head coach of the Falcons, athletic director Dr. Hans Mueh announced April 17.

Reynolds, the seventh head coach in program history and the fourth in the last five years, signed a five-year contract. Terms of the contract were not disclosed. He succeeds Jeff Bzdelik, who resigned on April 3 to become head coach at the University of Colorado.

During his two seasons as an assistant, Mr. Reynolds helped guide Air Force to its two most successful campaigns on the basketball court. In 2005-06, the Falcons were 24-7, the best record in program history, and played in the NCAA Tournament for just the fourth time ever. In '06-07, Air Force posted a 26-9 record, setting a

new school record for most victories in one season, and advanced to the semifinals of the NIT. Air Force was just one of 17 Division I teams to win at least 50 games the last two seasons.

Marines

Tattoo sleeves become taboo in Corps

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP SMITH, Hawaii - While most Marines have their own opinion on tattoos, the Corps' is the only one that counts.

The new policy explained in MarAdmin 198/07 went into affect April 1. It bans new sleeve tattoos on the arm or leg that are visible in physical training T-shirts or shorts or getting additions to existing sleeves. This includes quarter, half and full sleeves. Any current tattoos will be grandfathered, but any visible tattoos in PT gear must be photographed, measured, described and inserted into that Marine's service record book by the July 1 deadline.

According to the MarAdmin, a full sleeve is defined as one large tattoo or group of smaller ones that cover the entire arm from the shoulder to the wrist or on the leg from the upper thigh to the ankle, or almost covering a portion of the arm or leg. The definition of a large tattoo is up to the Marine's commanding officer..

Tell us what you think!

Freedom Watch magazine is conducting a readership survey from today until April 30. American Forces Network - Afghanistan invites all coalition forces members to participate in the questionnaire in a continuing effort to provide its audience with the best up-to-date news, information and upcoming events.

"We encourage everyone to read the survey and e-mail us your thoughts and comments," said Maj. John Byran, AFN - Afghanistan commander. "We want to make the Freedom Watch the best it can be!"

Send answers to the following questions to freedomwatch@afghan.swa.army.mil.

1. How often do you read Freedom Watch magazine?
 Weekly Sometimes Never

2. How would you rate the stories featured in Freedom Watch magazine?

Excellent Very Good Satisfactory Below Satisfactory Poor

3. Is the Freedom Watch delivered to your location?

4. What do you like most about Freedom Watch magazine? Why?

5. What would you change about Freedom Watch magazine? Why?

6. How often would you read feature stories if they were available on a Freedom Watch Web site?

Daily Weekly Monthly Almost Never Never

7. What would you like most about a Freedom Watch Web site? Why?

8. What would you like to see on a Freedom Watch Web site?

9. How do you get information? What is your number one source for information?

10. How would you prefer to receive information?

Email Newspaper/Magazine Web site Other people

11. Additional comments:

FREEDOM WATCH

AFGHANISTAN

Combined Joint Task Force - 82

COVER

A Soldier from 1st Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, pulls security during a convoy at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, Afghanistan, March 22. (Photo by Army Spc. Matthew Leary)

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Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Oshawn Jefferson

Members of the Afghan National Army go through a field training exercise during the Humanitarian De-mining Predeployment Course at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, April 12. The first teams of Afghan Humanitarian De-miners are scheduled to graduate today.



Photo by Navy Chief Petty Officer Eric Harrison

Thousands of Aria bottled water containers line the wall of the warehouse, just outside Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Thomas J. Doscher

Company B, 122nd Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Atlas command group run to the finish line of the 5km run together. This was their last run together as a command team. The day after, their commander relinquished command.

Correction:

In the April 16 edition of the Freedom Watch, the story "Bagram PRT holds MEDCAP, VETCAP" stated that they handled more than 150 patients, the number should have been more than 600 patients, including men, women and children.

Freedom Watch is a weekly publication of
Combined Joint Task Force-82.

CJTF-82 Commander Army Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez
RC East Public Affairs Officer Army Lt. Col. David A. Accetta

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Visit the CJTF-82 website at
www.cfc-a.centcom.mil

The misadventures of Airman Snuffy McDufflebag

**By Air Force Staff Sgt.
Oshawn Jefferson**
*American Forces Network -
Afghanistan*

What a crazy couple of weeks it has been. First, gas prices have been rising steadily for the last 11 weeks. Californians are close to crossing the \$4 mark for regular unleaded gasoline. We found out that Larry Birkhead is Anna Nicole's baby's daddy (don't act like you didn't care) and even someone with a great smile and no talent can go deep on American Idol. With news like this, I can't wait for football or the next season of America's Next top Model to start so I have something to watch on TV. (You know you watch it!)

Anyway, I ran into my good buddy Master Sgt. Johnny Mentor at the DFAC. He was sitting in the corner by himself, looking at a wall and mumbling. I just knew it had something to do with our old pal Snuffy.

I went over and said hello to Sergeant Mentor and asked him how things were going and if I could join him for lunch. I said, "I already know that look. Tell me what your habitual line stepping Airman is up to now." He said, "combat stress, this idiot complained of combat stress."

For those who don't know, according to the U.S Army HOOAH 4 Health Web site, (Yes, that is really the name) combat stress is a natural result of heavy mental or emotional work, when facing danger in tough conditions. Like physical fatigue and stress, handling combat

stress depends on the level of your fitness and training. It can come on quickly or slowly, and it gets better with rest and replenishment.

Wait until you hear what Snuffy is stressed out about. He told Sergeant Mentor that his duty hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the G-14 Classified Interoperability of Afghanistan Operations Office were beginning to wear on him. He also complained that the satellite dish he installed on his hooch can only pick up 62 channels (Four below his dish network at home). And since Snuffy lives in a Z-hut, which has double the size rooms of a normal B-hut, he could only get a queen size bed inside, which is smaller than his king size bed back home. Just to make you more angry, Z-huts are the only hooch's in the AOR you can drink in and they come with an indoor shower and bathroom. Yea, Snuffy has it real rough.

Sergeant Mentor said that he doesn't even have it that good. I tell you it made me want to smack Snuffy and I was just listening to the story.

Still Sergeant Mentor sent Snuffy to see the Combat Stress team on base. Sergeant Mentor learned from the team that studies show many people experiencing combat stress will still function normally in their day-to-day activities. But there are still common signs of combat stress to include:

- Tension head and backache, trembling, fumbling, jumpiness.
- Pain in old healed wounds before combat.
- Pounding heart; rapid breathing.
- Upset stomach; vomiting; diar-

rhea; frequent urination.

- Emptying bowels and bladder at the first sign of danger.

- Fatigue, weariness, distant, haunted ("1,000 yard") stare.

- Anxiety, worrying, irritability, swearing, complaining.

- Awakened by bad dreams; grieving; feeling guilty.

- Anger at own team; losing confidence in self/unit.

Sergeant Mentor said the Combat Stress team suggested some simple techniques that he can do for himself or as a supervisor to help relieve the signs of combat stress:

- Attempt to restore calm and control to a given situation;

- Remember that combat stress is normal and others have it too; it helps to maintain a sense of humor;

- Focus on the team's immediate mission;

- Expect to continue duties; focus on a well-learned task or drill and follow SOPs;

- Welcome new team members and stay in touch with the rest of the team ... keep talking;

- Get the facts; don't jump to conclusions or believe rumors;

- Think of success and talk about it;

- Take a deep breath; shrug shoulders to reduce tension;

- And if combat stress signs don't subside, seek support and help from your leaders or medical unit Combat Stress teams.

Although Snuffy's problems seem mild to say the least, I learned some things I can do to help myself or my troops deal with combat stress. I thanked Sergeant Mentor for his time and told him things could be worse. But then again, he is the supervisor of Airman Snuffy McDufflebag. And we all know when it comes to habitual line steppers, they are always up to something.

ISAF team trains ANA humanitarian de-miners

Story and photos
By Air Force Staff Sgt.
Oshawn Jefferson
American Forces Network -
Afghanistan

Bagram Airfield

International Security Assistance Force soldiers empowered Afghans with taking care of their own security by training humanitarian de-mining teams here.

"This training is a step forward to making a safer Afghanistan," said Army Capt. Chris Nuckols, 207th Regional Security Assistance Command embedded tactical team. "The work we are doing here today will make for a safer tomorrow."

Members of the Afghan National Army spent April 12 to 14 learning



Gul Ahmadi Salhaminm, Afghan Technical Consultant and De-miners Course instructor, teaches an Afghan National Army member about different types of de-mining techniques.



Members of the Afghan National Army go through a field training exercise during the De-mining Pre-deployment Course here April 12. The first teams of Afghan Humanitarian De-miners are scheduled to graduate today.

two levels of de-mining. While taking the de-miners course and de-miners pre-deployment course, the ANA members learned de-mining to international standards. This training made them qualified to conduct de-mining operations anywhere in the world.

"After these ANA members complete this training they will be able to clear land for buildings or farming," said Australian Maj. Alex Thomson, Royal Australian Engineer officer in charge of the Operation Enduring Freedom mine action center. "Being trained will help them be ready to serve their community."

In the past, the de-mining course graduated individual Afghan humanitarian de-miners. Even if those de-miners cleared a field they would still have to wait for someone else trained to international standards to come behind them to clear a field. This new

course will graduate highly skilled teams so they can clear the fields without help.

"We can now help our own people ourselves," said ANA Sgt. Said Arif, ANA humanitarian de-miner. "The classroom instructors have been enjoyable and helped me to be able to serve my country."

When the class graduates, the ANA will have three new de-mining teams of 12 to 14 members capable of clearing 1,500 to 2,000 square meters of fields per day. Not only will the ANA members be able to clear mines, they will also be able to clear unexploded ordnance.

"Seeing the Afghan people empowered to help themselves is something we take pride in," Nuckols said. "They love our assistance and we enjoy helping them help themselves."

The new ANA humanitarian de-miners are expected to graduate today.



**See "Freedom Watch Afghanistan"
Everyday at 4:25 and 8:25 p.m. Local
on the **

JLC, DLA make site visit to Aria water plant

Story and photo

By Navy Chief Petty Officer
Eric Harrison

43rd Joint Logistics Command

Bagram Airfield

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - An eight-member logistics team made a site visit to the Aria bottled water plant located just outside Bagram Airfield April 11.

The Aria bottled water plant was opened for processing Jan. 7 and has been approved by the U.S. Army and the International Bottled Water Association for bottled water production.

The Ramin brothers, John, Tahir and Zahir, built the plant with their own money along with a free land lease from the U.S. Army. The goal for them and for officials on Bagram is to be able to supply locally bottled water for the base, and eventually the community.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jose Texidor, the Theater Food Advisor for Combined Joint Task Force-82, is looking forward to the opportunity to have another local bottled water supplier available to the prime vendor, Supreme.

Texidor said the water Supreme gets from Aria will supplement the large amount of bottled water the combined joint operating area already consumes.

"Right now, Supreme gets water out of Dubai, so our price includes shipping costs, which adds to the overall cost,"

he said. "Whereas, if Supreme gets the water from Aria, that cost will be eliminated."

"We came in here and saw a lot of opportunities. The country is developing, so we decided to stick around."

Zahir Ramin

Aria bottled water plant co-owner



Zahir Ramin, co-owner of the Aria water plant, points out the workings of the bottling facility at the Aria bottled water plant, which is just outside Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Aria is negotiating a contract to provide bottled water to Coalition forces in Afghanistan.

The plant also serves as a way for the Ramin brothers to provide more than 300 jobs for Afghans when the plant is in full operation and to inject a financial boost into the local economy.

Following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, John Ramin, an owner of the company, made the trip back to Afghanistan to see where he could help.

"We came in here and saw a lot of opportunities," said younger brother Zahir. "The country is developing, so we decided to stick around."

According to Zahir, one batch line produces more than 160,000 half-liter

bottles of water. If the plant were running all three of its lines at full operation, it could produce 324,000 bottles of water a day.

Now that all water quality hurdles have been met, the only thing left to do is for Supreme and Aria to negotiate a fair price.

"They passed the Army's water test," said Texidor. "So now it's a matter of them working with Supreme."

"We're closer today than we've ever been at any point in time," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bill Taylor, Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, part of the Defense Logistics Agency. "We're very pleased with the commitment that the Ramins have made for the U.S. Army and the forces here and for the commitment they're going to be making for the Afghan population."

Bagram's first permanent customs building opens

Story and photo

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Kevin Tomko

455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs Office

Bagram Airfield

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - A new facility to streamline out-processing for servicemembers opened here April 12.

The new permanent customs building, the first in the country, officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Army and Air Force officials and members of the 1st Expeditionary "RED HORSE" Group who built the facility.

On hand for the ceremony were the 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group commander, Air Force Col. Terri Chaney; the theater provost marshal Army Col. James Gray; deputy commander for base operations, Army Lt. Col. James Bonner; provost marshal Army Lt. Col. Antonio Pietri and deputy provost marshal, Army Lt. Col. Ricardo Guerrero.

"As part of the master plan of this base, this facility will enhance and



Air Force Staff Sgt. Charles Crumity, 1st Expeditionary "RED HORSE" Group heavy equipment operator, places his signature on a beam to signify the completion of the building. The building is the first permanent structure for customs at Bagram Airfield.

secure the movement of cargo, equipment and personnel outbound to the continental United States," said Pietri in a speech.

Sgt. 1st Class Gualberto Gonzalez, the customs non-commissioned officer in charge, said the new \$524,000 facility will be a vast improvement over the current facility.

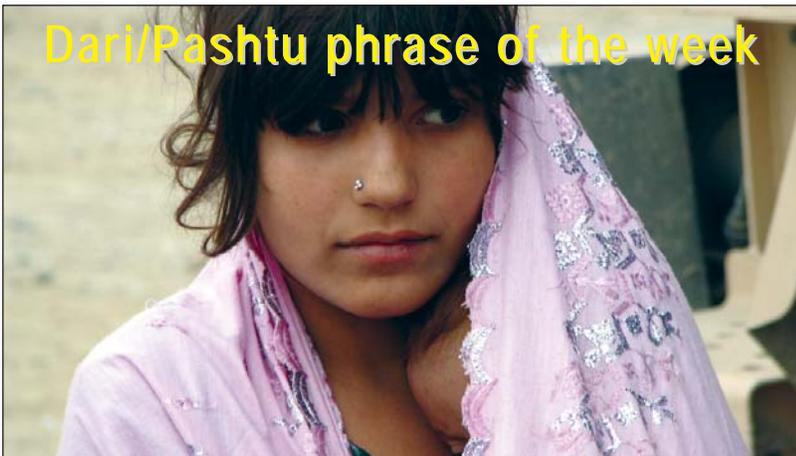
"We have much more room for processing," said Gonzalez. "The area is also more secure. The service members will have more facilities, and there are even plans to put in a concession area."

The new customs building was built entirely by the 1st Expeditionary "Red Horse" Group members of this rotation and the one prior.

Chief Master Sgt. Michael Scott, the NCOIC of the project, said the biggest obstacle in the construction of the building was the weather in the colder months.

"The roof could only be worked on in fair weather, and the roof had to be closed before any interior work could progress," he said.

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Courtesy photo

You are a good friend.

Dari

**Shuma yak doste khoob hasted.
(Shoo-ma yak doe-stay khoob has-tand.)**

Pashtu

**Tasoo yow khu malgeray yaste.
(Tah-soo yow khoo mal-gah-ray yaws-tay.)**

The two main languages spoken in Afghanistan are Dari and Pashtu. Dari, derived from "darbari," meaning the language of the court of kings, is spoken in the central, northern and western provinces of Afghanistan. Pashtu is spoken in the eastern, southern and southeastern provinces.

Murphy's Law delays, not defeats, 3rd BCT

Story and photos

By Army Spc. Matthew Leary
Task Force Fury Public Affairs Office



FOB Orgun-E

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan - Used to extended missions and unforeseen complications, the Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division embarked on a mission March 22 a few hours after daybreak, but they wouldn't return until well after nightfall, the mission lasting more than 13 hours.

Many Soldiers chalk it up to what has become a popular term within the platoon: Murphy's Law.

On the way out to a remote outpost to deliver supplies, the convoy was held up by several civilian vehicles stuck in the mud. The same mud-laden roads that stopped the flow of civilian trucks slowed down the military vehicles as they went up and down hills and crossed small streams. And just as the platoon was almost back home, two vehicles experienced a mechanical breakdown, one requiring extensive work.

So as the light faded and the weather turned cold, the Soldiers joked about the situation. Someone realized they might miss Mexican night at the dining facility, and this set off a heated debate about what good Mexican food is.

This situation is familiar to the unit, the plan changing midway through a mission, said Spc. Justin M. Ray, a rifleman with 1st Platoon, Co. C.

"It's Murphy's Law," confirmed Army Sgt. Jordan L. Ansley, a team leader in 3rd Squad, 1st Platoon. "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong."

But for Ansley, a native of Twin Falls, Idaho, nothing proved the theory

of Murphy's Law like the extension of their entire brigade in January.

In early January, the 4th BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, began deploying to Afghanistan to replace the Soldiers of the 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., who were finishing a year-long deployment. In late January, the Department of Defense announced an increased force structure plan for Regional Command-East. Instead of one brigade covering the area, two brigades would split the battle space, doubling the combat effectiveness within the area.

So although the 4th BCT, 82nd Airborne Division arrived as a replacement force for 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn., they became a supplementary force.

This meant 2-87th Inf. and the rest of 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn., would stay in Afghanistan for an extra four months as Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade prepared to relieve them. The Soldiers went from being weeks away

from returning home to being four months out.

"It was definitely a surprise," said Army Sgt. Craig R. Putnam, a squad automatic weapon's gunner with 3rd Squad and native of Flint, Mich. "A lot of guys were down at first."

But the Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Co. C quickly rallied together and focused on the mission at hand, Putnam said.

"We've been through worse," he added, speaking about enduring grueling missions in the mountains of Afghanistan. "Being here a little extra time didn't make that much of a difference. Nothing goes exactly as planned, so this was no different."

The extension was a perfect example of Murphy's Law in action, Ansley said. But the Soldiers grouped together and made the best out of the situation, keeping unit morale high.

The platoon continued on with the missions they were given, their spirits



Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division stop and survey the area during a convoy March 22. Like most of the Soldiers from 3rd BCT, 1st Platoon has spent more than 14 months here in Afghanistan.



Army Staff Sgt. Sean Lepper, a squad leader with 1st Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, pulls security during a convoy stop March 22.

only slightly dampened by the extension.

It's been two months since the extension, 14 months since the beginning of their deployment, and 1st Platoon, Co. C. is still conducting patrols and going out on convoys.

"In nine days, it will be one full year, straight through, that I have been here," Ansley said. Ansley took his R&R leave early on the deployment, and will serve more than 400 consecutive days in a combat zone as a result of the extension.

"I think they handled it better than most," said Sgt. 1st Class Gonzalo E. Lassally, 1st Platoon Sergeant. "Everyone probably thinks that their platoon is the best, so I am not going to say they're the best, but they are the tightest."

A majority of the platoon has been training together for over a year-and-a-half, Putnam said, and it was this close-knit community of Soldiers that

acted as a support mechanism within the platoon. More than 10 members of the 1st Platoon have been together since the unit's first deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2004.

"These are like your brothers right here," said Ray, who is in Afghanistan for the second time with Co. C. "So this deployment, even though it's long, it's like your family. People remember that this is the Army, and we are at war. Anything can happen."

The high spirits seen as they prepare to go out on convoys, work on their vehicles in the motor pool or simply spend time in their rooms can all be traced back to one thing, Ray said. It's all about the guy to your left and to your right, he said.

"Civilians will never understand that bond, how deep it is," Ray added.

"I don't think anybody would have gone back home, unless the whole pla-

toon went home," Lassally said. "They are practically family to one another. Amazingly enough, considering what they have been put through, they are still re-enlisting. We are at a 90 percent re-enlistment, with 70 percent staying in the unit."

Even though they are separated from their spouses and children, they know they are doing something worthwhile in the Army, Ray said.

"It's what we signed up for, and it's why I just re-enlisted," he said.

And more importantly than serving their country, the bond they have within their unit motivates the Soldiers to stay part of the team.

"They would rather get deployed together, with the same group of guys they have deployed with," Lassally explained.

"We are a tight group of guys," confirmed Army Sgt. Mark T. Clinger, an anti-armor specialist with the platoon.

Aviation task force hosts GWOT Trot



More than 2,000 members of the Armed Forces, Coalition forces and civilian workers take off from the start and finish line to compete for first place in the Army Aviation Association of America's annual 5 kilometer/10 kilometer run known as the "GWOT - Trot."

Story and photos

By Army Pfc.

Aubree Rundle

Task Force Pegasus Public Affairs



Bagram Airfield

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - More than 2,000 runners arrived April 14 to participate in the Army Aviation Association of America's annual 5 kilometer/10 kilometer run known as the "GWOT - Trot." This event was held not only here, but also at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan, and Fort Bragg, N.C., on the same day.

Members of the Armed Forces, Coalition forces and civilian personnel here registered and competed in the run to win first, second and third place medals for the top three men and women to complete the 5km and 10km run. There was also a medal awarded to the first team to complete.

"The turn out for the run was well over what was expected, which seemed to have a positive impact on every-

one's morale," said Army Capt. Thomas J. Whitlow, Company A commander, Task Force Atlas. "More than 300 people showed up the day of the run to register."

Recognition and thanks were given by AAAA, Iron Mike Chapter President, Army Col. Kelly Thomas,



Melanie Taylor takes a sample from one of the chili recipes submitted for the chili cook off held after the race by Morale Welfare and Recreation.

Task Force Pegasus commander, just before the race began.

"This run was organized to support the AAAA, Iron Mike Chapter and also bring us all together to participate in the first run of the season," said Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Nichols, command sergeant major for TF Atlas.

The first place winners for the 5 km race were Nick Diorio and Jennifer Caci.

The first place winners for the 10 km race were Daniel Kiui and Micala Hicks. The team that won called themselves "Fort Hoodlums."

"It felt good to come out and run with other enlisted Soldiers, officers, Coalition forces, and other members of the Armed Forces that are stationed here," said Chance Gibbons.

After the race, a chili cook off was hosted by Morale, Welfare and Recreation. The runners were given the opportunity to taste test different chili recipes. Army Sgt. Larry Howard, Aviation Dining facility, was the winner of the cook off.



Army Specialist Clayton Commons

Unit and occupation: 450th Movement Control Battalion

Time in the military: three years

Hometown: Manhattan, Kan.

What service do you provide on Bagram Airfield? I am an administration specialist. I process all the awards, leaves, mail, passes and promotion packages for the battalion.

Hobbies: skateboarding and playing the guitar.

Most memorable moment in Afghanistan:

On my second day here, one of my co-workers and friends almost died from the suicide bomber at an entry control point.

What do you miss most about home? I miss Brandy, my girlfriend, the most.

The first thing that you're going to do when you get



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Matt Lichtenberg

back: I am looking forward to spending my deployment money on a new truck and going on a road trip in it.

Interesting personal fact: I was the first person to snowboard down a mountain in Valdez, Alaska, when I was 15 years old.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Matt Lichtenberg

If you have high-quality photos of servicemembers supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@swa.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

On April 8, Easter Sunday, members of the Republic of Korea Forces Support Group passed out more than 300 "Amazing Easter Eggs" to Coalition forces after the worship service. The "Amazing Easter Egg" is an eggshell-shaped pot in which the seed of a sword bean is planted. When it sprouts out of the soil, the Korean letters for nine different Spiritual Fruits in the Bible appear embroidered on the leaf. The nine Korean symbols stand for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

ANA graduates 86 from pre-NCO course

Story and photo

By Army Sgt.

Tony J. Spain

22nd Mobile Public Affairs

Detachment



Camp Shirzai

CAMP SHIRZAI, Afghanistan - A

graduation ceremony was held here for soldiers of the Afghan National Army who successfully completed the Team Leadership Course March 29.

The TLC is a required developmental course for ANA soldiers to become non-commissioned officers. Eighty-six ANA soldiers serving in the 205th "Hero" Corps received their certificates and took the next step to becoming a NCO in the ANA.

During the three-week course, U.S. and British Soldiers trained and advised ANA instructors on tactical situations and how to survive in a field environment. The ANA instructors then trained their Soldiers under the supervision and evaluation of the U.S. and British Soldiers.

ANA Maj. Gen. Rhamullah Rawofi, 205th "Hero" Corps commander, was the guest speaker for the ceremony and praised the U.S. and British soldiers for their efforts.

"We are thankful for the United States and other countries who are here to teach and support us," said Rawofi.

"Your teachers helped you successfully complete the Team Leadership Course and I'm very happy you've done well," he said to the graduates.

Rawofi also reminded the graduates they are the future of the ANA. If they work hard, they'll be in positions of command in the future.

"We must be powerful because the people of Afghanistan are counting on us. By graduating from this course, you help the ANA become more professional," Rawofi said.

The commander also told the soon-to-be NCOs it's part of their duty to train soldiers using the knowledge they have acquired.

"It is important that you apply what you learned to operations in the field and that you teach your fellow soldiers," said Rawofi.

ANA soldiers receive training in several areas throughout the course. They spend the first 10 days learning how to mentor, motivate and discipline soldiers. In that same time frame, they also learn rank structure and customs and courtesies. The rest of the course focuses on battlefield tactics, like moving under fire in buddy teams, moving in battle as a squad, checking for vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices at a check point and cooking in the field.

ANA Sgt. Sabar, 205th Hero Corp, is proud to be a graduate of the course.



ANA soldiers assault an objective during training in the Team Leadership course near Camp Shirzai March 27.

"I learned how to take care of my fellow soldiers," Sabar said. "I was happy to complete the course and hope I will be able to lead the Soldiers working under me."

Army Staff Sgt. Victor Colon-Rosa, an American adviser serving on the mobile training team, based at the Kabul Military Training Center said the students of the 205th Hero Corps did an outstanding job.

"This was my first class at Shirzai, these soldiers were the best I have seen so far," said Colon-Rosa, who has instructed several classes at KMTC in Kabul. "I see a lot of good leaders already in this group. I see five to seven good leaders that could make a platoon sergeant and there are a lot of good squad leaders here," he said.

Colon-Rosa also said this is the result of three weeks of hard work and training.

"Today you see the results [of this course] with 86 soldiers graduating. It is unreal to graduate that many from this type of course," he said.

Colon-Rosa said most courses start off with 120 to 130 students. Out of those, 25 to 30 students graduate. Most drop out of the course because of discipline problems or for missing more than three days.

Colon-Rosa expressed his pride for the new graduates.

"I am extremely proud of this class. What I came to realize about this group is about 80 percent of them are privates," Colon Rosa said. "Those are the ones that will make the future of this army. I hope and pray they take what they have learned here, apply it to the battle field, and teach other soldiers that have not been through the training."

Fireman makes special delivery to children

Story and photo

By Army Pfc.

Jaime D. Mial

Task Force Spartan
Public Affairs



JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The plumes of smoke may have settled years ago, but the memory of what happened on Sept. 11, 2001, will never go away. For some, the memory is closer than for others - some lived it very personally.

For some special New York City firefighters and their families, the emotions they still feel about that day sparked a generous outpouring of school supplies to help children in an Afghan town that used to be home to the very man that caused them so much pain.

"It started when some of the firefighters heard that the Taliban was burning schools and they wanted to help," said Navy Cmdr. John Gormley, the regional adviser for Combined Joint Task Force-82 to the ISAF commander. Gormley is a reserve sailor. In civilian life, he serves as a fire captain in New York City.

Gormley and colleagues discussed sending donations to Afghan children.

"I told them that if they sent the stuff to me, I'd get it there," he said. "When I talked to my best friend, Lt. Patrick Neville - he's a firefighter with Ladder Company 42 in New York, he said, 'We got the same people that affected our lives on Sept. 11, 2001, affecting these young children's lives too. This is an opportunity to help those young children who have suffered from the same element that hurt us on Sept. 11, 2001.'"

With good intentions, willing hearts and now a way to make their vision happen, the firefighters of New York and their families prepared to send love to a place that had once been home to so much hate.

"They sent books, pencils, paper,



Navy Cmdr. John Gormley hands out school supplies to a group of young girls at an Afghan school in Jalalabad April 3.

crayons and the love from the spirits of the brothers that were lost on 9/11," Gormley said.

An opportunity to distribute the assembled supplies presented itself during a meeting. Gormley coordinated with the provincial reconstruction team at Jalalabad, a major Northeastern Afghan city and the capital of Nangarhar Province.

"When I saw the PRT commander at a conference and told him what we were trying to do, he told me he had a really deserving school," he said.

From his base at Bagram Airfield, the fire captain began to collect items for distribution. At one point his room was so full of boxes filled with donations he could barely find a path to his bed. When the day came to load those boxes up for delivery to the Hada Farms School in Jalalabad, the dozens of packages bearing "FDNY" in bold black marker were ready for the final leg of their long journey.

As the convoy rolled into the schoolyard dozens of eager little eyes peered out from the windows. In one building, a mass of little boys sat on a large rug, no longer paying attention to the neatly dressed teacher in front of them. Their eyes, instead, fixated on the procession of uniformed men walking behind them and into their principal's office.

Once the identities of those who donated the supplies were revealed to the principal, he expressed his deepest condolences for the families and thanked the servicemembers for their support. The school supplies, all neatly packaged into large plastic bags, were then distributed to the waiting children.

The mass of tiny boys were the first to receive their gifts, hugging the servicemembers and thanking them in Pashtu.

In the next building, the young girls were learning school lessons, with the youngest outside under a tent. Some initially shied away from the large men offering them gifts. But soon they were all singing for them and smiling.

"It might have been 65 little kids squashed into a tent, but in their eyes you could see the promise of hope in the future," Gormley said.

"The children really loved it," said Danny Hall, a State Department representative serving with the Jalalabad PRT. "I think it's very moving that people who were so touched by tragedy themselves can still reach out to others."

As the convoy rolled out to return home, the children waved their good-byes, gripping their packages close to their hearts.

RAF members awarded Army medals for excellence

Courtesy Combined Joint Task Force-82 Public Affairs



KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - This week, eight Royal Air Force Regiment service members were awarded U.S. Army medals in recognition of their excellent service while working to safeguard the International Security Assistance Force's main operating base in the South, Kandahar Airfield.

British Wing Commander Andy Knowles, Squadron Leaders Steve Carter and Matt Stowers and Warrant Officer Mike O'Hara received Army Commendation Medals. Flight Lieutenant Mark Folley, Flight Sergeant Andy Smith and Sergeant Carl Nunn received Army Achievement Medals. All members are part of the Kandahar Airfield Force Protection Team.

"These fine soldiers demonstrated exemplary dedication and commitment to the protection of Kandahar Airfield and upheld the highest ideals of military service," said Army Col. Richard Stephen Williams, Commander, 207th Infantry Brigade and U.S. National Command Element South. "Their service is a credit to themselves, the 207th Infantry Brigade and the Royal Air Force Regiment."

The Kandahar Airfield Force Protection Team is composed of soldiers from Romania, Canada, the U.S., United Kingdom, Netherlands and Denmark. The team was responsible for substantially increasing security around NATO's Kandahar Airfield; the largest operating base in the South as well as conducting numerous village outreach projects in the surrounding area which benefit the neighboring local population areas.



Courtesy photo
Army Col. Richard Stephen Williams pins U.S. medals on Royal Air Force Flight Lieutenant Matt Stowers.

Canal upgrades begin in Kandahar Province

Courtesy Combined Joint Task Force-82 Public Affairs



KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - The 207th Infantry Brigade began work on a \$46,000 project intended to repair, upgrade and clean canal systems in the village of Takhta Pol in Daman District of Kandahar Province April 16. The contract will also upgrade the Takhta Pol Karez - a gravity based system, which draws ground water for distribution through the canals.

\$48,000 has also been dedicated to the repair, upgrade and clean canal systems in the Village of Mowmand, also in the Daman District. These two projects will increase water use for agricultural purposes as well as improve the quality of water supplied to approximately 40,000 villagers in Daman District. The contracts also provide employment

opportunities for locals within the village.

"It is important that we invest in construction projects. We need to focus on projects that will help improve indus-

“Investing in construction projects and providing employment opportunities for young men will decrease the reason that most young men join and fight alongside the Taliban.”

- Army Col. Richard Stephen Williams
207th Inf. Bde. commander and
U.S. National Command Element South

try, commerce and education, along with improving the quality of life," said Army Col. Richard Stephen Williams, 207th Inf. Bde. commander and U.S. National Command Element South.

"Investing in construction projects and providing employment opportunities for young men will decrease the reason that most young men join and fight alongside the Taliban," he added.

SUDOKU

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Puzzle courtesy of Pappocom

Difficulty: Medium

Last Week's Solution

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

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Great moments in reflective belt history



Courtesy www.armylawyer.blogspot.com

Normandy, June 6, 1944: Poor navigation, overrun drop zones and Nazi flak scattered the elite U.S. paratroopers throughout the French countryside. If not for their Army-issue reflective belts, they would have never been able to form LGOPs * (Little Groups of Paratroopers), thus enabling them to complete their mission.

Reviews You Can Use

The Last King of Scotland (R)

Starring Forest Whitaker
DVD Release: April 17th



Plotline: Based on the events of the brutal Ugandan dictator Idi Amin's regime during the 1970s as seen by his personal physician.

I can't think of a better actor to toggle between media-savvy jester and stone-cold killer than Forest Whitaker.

Movie Goof: The microphone changes in the speech scene. When Amin is speaking, it's large and white. For long shots a smaller, black one is used.

Review by: Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly

Weekly Top Ten List

Top 10 Ways To Maintain A Healthy Level Of Insanity

10. At lunch time, sit in your parked car with sunglasses on and point a hair dryer at passing cars. See if they slow down.
9. Page yourself over the intercom. Don't disguise your voice.
8. Every time someone asks you to do something, ask if they want fries with that.
7. Put your garbage can on your desk and label it "in."
6. Put decaf in the coffee maker for 3 weeks. Once everyone has gotten over their caffeine addictions, switch to espresso.
5. In the memo field of all your checks, write "For smuggling diamonds."
4. Finish all your sentences with "In accordance with the prophecy."
3. Don't use any punctuation
2. Have your co-workers address you by your wrestling name, Rock Bottom.
1. When the money comes out the ATM, scream "I won! I won!"

Got a joke, review, or top ten list? Email it to:
freedomwatch@swa.army.mil
and you could see them printed here!

Freedom Watch

April 23, 2007



Army Capt. Jason R. Dye, company commander for Company B, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, checks for enemy forces in the area after his company set fire to several Taliban shelters. Dye and Company B conducted patrols along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border March 29 to April 2 as part of Operation Cat Fury. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Matthew Leary)