

# Freedom

October 17, 2004

## *Watch*

A U.S. Army soldier in camouflage uniform is kneeling on a vehicle, working on a component. The soldier is wearing sunglasses and white gloves. The background shows a desert landscape with other vehicles and structures.

**Mechanics keep 367th Eng. Bn. rolling  
Cover Story Page 8**

***Soldiers take oath of citizenship in Afghanistan  
Page 3***



Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons

## Splash!!!

**Capt. Matt Pintur, a member of Bagram Base Operations, throws a ball, trying to flush a toilet over Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Bowman, Task Force Eagle command sergeant major, as part of the kick-off for the Combined Federal Campaign. The Bagram community helped raise money for charities with the flushing booth. CFC is a way for service members to donate to their favorite charity. The deadline to contribute is Nov. 1. For more information, see your unit CFC representative.**

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The 367th Eng. Bn. is constantly improving equipment for the mine-clearing mission at Bagram Air Base. Here, Spc. James Krohn, HHC, 367th Eng. Bn., drills holes for an air conditioner on top of an armored bulldozer.

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# Freedom Watch

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CFC-A Commander – Lt. Gen. David Barno  
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### Freedom Watch Staff

Commander – Maj. Steven J. Wollman

NCOIC – Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau

Editor – Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl

Journalists – Sgt. Frank Magni,

Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons, Spc. Dijon Rolle,

Spc. Cheryl Ransford, Spc. Chris Stump

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# Soldiers become U.S. citizens overseas

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — For centuries, the freedoms and opportunities of the United States fueled the dreams of the oppressed. Millions of people overcome great obstacles to travel there, looking to live the “American Dream.”

For 17 members of the Coalition serving in Afghanistan, the American Dream became a reality as they took the oath of citizenship at Bagram Air Base Oct. 1. The National Defense Act signed by President George W. Bush last year legalized the naturalization of U.S. service members on foreign soil, allowing these 17 Soldiers to become the first to take the oath overseas.

“The people around you are welcoming you as citizens with open arms,” said U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad during the ceremony. “You are able to pursue the dreams and high ideals that are part of the American creed.”

Ranging in rank from private first class to staff sergeant, these 17 Soldiers represent 13 countries, but each willing to fight for the country they now call “home.”

“I can’t be any more proud of bringing

the pride and honor of being a citizen to people who are defending America,” said Eduardo Aguirre, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. “It’s important to defend our freedom, it’s not cheap; it costs blood. Each of these Soldiers is willing to pay that price.”

Spc. Christian Rendonvelasquez is one of the Soldiers willing to pay the price to be free. A native of Colombia, Rendonvelasquez has lived in the United States for 16 years and is the last member of his immediate family to become a naturalized citizen. He is also the first person in his entire family to serve in the U.S. military.

“After 9/11 I thought it was my duty as an alien resident to help in the fight,” said Rendonvelasquez, a member of 2nd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. “Now, I think it’s the best feeling in the world to know I am serving my country.”

Non-citizens are able to serve in the U.S. military, but they are restricted to an eight-year period of service. There are other limitations as well, such as the level of clearance they can receive and the ranks they can obtain. These restrictions spurred one Soldier, Spc. Ronald J. Carrion, CJTF-76, to work hard to become a citizen.

“I’ve been in the Army for four years,” said Carrion. “I enjoy serving, and I want to become a warrant officer. I knew to do that, I needed to become a citizen.”

Carrion moved to the United States



**Staff Sgt. Joanna Drozd, a native of Poland, leads the 16 other U.S. Soldiers in the Pledge of Allegiance during the naturalization ceremony.**

from Ecuador 12 years ago.

“My father was looking for a better future for us. He’s still working on attaining some of his goals, but I know we’ve lived a much better life.”

Now that he’s become a citizen of the United States, Carrion is able to continue pursuing his goals within the military. He said one thing has changed, however.

“Now, I am serving *my* country.”



**Above: Eduardo Aguirre Jr., U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services director, leads the U.S. Soldiers in the oath of citizenship Oct. 1.**

**Right: Aguirre presents Spc. Christian Rendonvelasquez, a native of Colombia, with a certificate of citizenship Oct. 1.**



# ANA opens regional command in Mazar-e-Sharif

Story and photos by  
Col. Randy Pullen  
Office of Military Cooperation –  
Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Afghan National Army now has a permanent presence in northern Afghanistan with the opening of its third regional command Sept. 26 in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The Mazar-e-Sharif Regional Command has been designated 209 Corps and will be called Shaheen (Falcon) Corps. Its commander is ANA Maj. Gen. Tag-Mohamed.

The first regional command was established in Kandahar Sept. 19, followed three days later by the second regional command in Gardez.

Establishing the Afghan National Army regional commands marks a milestone in the

development of greater general security for Afghanistan and for the strengthening of the Afghan government.

With the standing up of the Mazar-e-Sharif, Gardez and Kandahar regional commands, a permanent Afghan National Army presence has been made in northern, eastern and southern Afghanistan. The authority of the national government will cover the entire nation with the upcoming opening of the Herat Regional Command.

Prior to the regional commands, troops and units from the ANA's Central Corps, located in the Kabul region, were frequently deployed wherever needed around the country to carry out combat operations alongside Coalition forces in the east and south, and to conduct security and stability operations in the west and north.



**Coalition and Afghan leaders pay respect during the playing of the Afghan National Anthem during the Mazar-e-Sharif Regional Command opening Sept. 26.**

With the new regional commands and with the growing maturity of the ANA, there will be a command and control headquarters in each region of Afghanistan, as well as troops assigned to carry them out. The initial force of 150 to 200 ANA soldiers currently at a regional command will grow to a 3,000-man brigade. As required, additional forces could be placed under the regional command on a temporary basis.

The soldiers of this army and the critical role they perform in Afghanistan were discussed by the commanding general of Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan.

“Today we have nearly 14,000 ANA trained and over 11 battalions deployed in support of security missions around the country,” said Lt. Gen. David Barno, CFC-A commander. “With the Afghan Ministry of

Defense, we have focused the ANA training on quality, competence and discipline – traits which have paid off in battles with terrorist elements across the south and east, as well as in the incredible resolve and discipline shown by the ANA in civil disturbance operations ranging from Chagcharan to Herat. This is a highly professional and well-led force who impress all with whom they come in contact – friend and enemy alike.

“As the ANA and ANP (Afghan National Police) grow and become stronger, more and more they are working side-by-side with Coalition forces to hunt down and remove terrorists and confront the forces of lawlessness,” said Barno. “Their success and their growing role form the cornerstone of long-term security and stability in the country.”



**Above: Afghan Minister of Defense Fahim Khan raises the Afghan flag at the opening for the Mazar-e-Sharif Regional Command Sept. 26.**

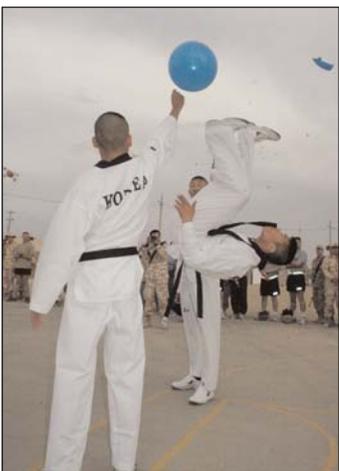
**Right: Students from the Ashya School wait to present the Afghan minister of defense with flowers during the regional command opening Sept. 26.**



# Korean medics run Taekwando class

Story and photos by  
 Korean Maj.  
 Kim Bong Young  
 Korean Engineer Group

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The Korean Medical Support Group, which has been contributing to Coalition forces and local nationals with humanitarian medical practice, is now running a Taekwando class to share the spirit of Korean traditional martial arts.



**Korean soldiers demonstrate some advanced Taekwando techniques.**

To celebrate the start of the class, Coalition members and local children gathered for a ceremony Sept. 21 at the Korean Engineer Group parade field.

“Through Taekwando I shared the root of the Korean spiritual strength and the characteristic courtesy (of the Koreans),” said Maj. Gerald S. Nall, one participant in the class from the 109th Engineer Group, Combined Task Force Coyote. His interest in this class, like many other Coalition participants, stemmed from a desire to learn more about the Korean culture.

Taekwando is not only a way to introduce Korean culture, but it also gives unbreakable strength of mind and body that could give hope to the children of Afghanistan who have suffered from the ruins of war, said Korean Lt. Col. Yoon Sang Rok, Korean Med. Spt. Grp. commander.

The classes will be take place three times a week at the Clamshell on Bagram Air Base. Three instructors, including Korean Cpl. Won Bum Jang, a third-grade black belt, will share



**A Korean soldier demonstrates a take-down move for U.S. service members.**

their knowledge of Pum Sae Taekwando. These classes will continue throughout the redeployment of the 6th Korean Med. Spt. Grp.

## Enduring Voices

*How do your civilian job and military career relate?*



**Spc. Jerry Stover**  
 450th MP Co.  
 U.S. Army Reserve  
*“The leadership experience I have gained in my civilian job has better enabled me to lead my team in the Army.”*



**Marine Cpl. Kyle Gisell**  
 HMLA 773, Marine Reserve  
*“I have learned how to be quicker and more creative in how to use tools as a mechanic both as a civilian and in the military.”*



**Spc. Joseph Parrish**  
 367th Eng. Bn.  
 U.S. Army Reserve  
*“The military has helped me be able to cope with other people better.”*



**Capt. Matthew Tyson**  
 416th ENCOM, FET 17  
 U.S. Army Reserve  
*“I have received job skills from both civilian and military that have made me a better electrical engineer.”*

# Insignia ceremony highlights 25th ID (L) birthday

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The 25th Infantry Division (Light) celebrated its 63rd birthday Oct. 1, a long way from home.

Even though most of the Soldiers from the division out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, are currently deployed, the event wasn't any less meaningful. In fact, it became even more meaningful for Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan.

A formation of Soldiers from the 25th Inf. Div. (Light), representing Combined Joint Task Force-76, gathered beside the Joint Operations Center here to receive the shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service.

"There's no better day to award this insignia than on the birthday of our great division," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, CJTF-76 and 25th Inf. Div. (Light) commander. "You were all ready when your nation needed you. Of the millions and millions of Americans, you were ready."

This is not the first time the Soldiers of the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) have stood up to answer their nation's call.

Activated Oct. 1, 1941, the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) saw combat less than three months later. The Soldiers of the division responded to the attacks on Pearl Harbor, assuming a defensive stance to protect Hawaii. They also moved into an offensive role for participation in Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons and Luzon campaigns.

It was at Guadalcanal that the division earned its nickname, "Lightning." When Marine forces found themselves fighting a tenacious and determined foe, the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) was called upon to provide assistance. The Marines quickly dubbed them the "Lightning Division," for their hasty response. Soldiers from the division added the word "tropic," denoting the tropical environment of the region in which they served.

After World War II, the Soldiers of the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) faced combat in Korea and Vietnam. Small elements of the division were also deployed to support Operation Desert Storm and most recently, the Global War on Terrorism.

In the summer of 2003, the division leadership received word that the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) was needed in its entirety.

In January, the Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team deployed to Iraq, and has been conducting combat operations in



**Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson (left), CJTF-76 commander, presents Lt. Col. James Boisselle, CJTF-76 director of Operations, with the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.**

support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The division headquarters, its 3rd Brigade Combat Team and other elements of the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) began deploying to Afghanistan in February. In mid-April, the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) headquarters assumed command of Combined Joint Task Force-180, which is now CJTF-76.

"You are standing shoulder-to-shoulder to defend our nation and everything it stands for," said Olson after presenting the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) "combat patch" to the Soldiers in formation.

The "combat patch" is awarded to Soldiers who participate in or support combat operations in what has been determined a hostile area. For many Soldiers, the patch represents sacrifice. From the sacrifice of the service members who have been killed or injured in operations, to the personal sacrifice that comes with deploying for a year, as the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) has.

"The combat patch isn't about my sacrifice," said Cpl. Martha Dawson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CJTF-76. "It's about the sacrifice of the Soldiers who have fallen and the sacrifice of their families."

Dawson, who has been separated from her husband since January when he deployed to Iraq with 2nd BCT, said the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq are worth

the personal sacrifice she and her husband have made.

"Being away from my husband isn't easy," she said. "But I made the decision to be here, and I'm serving here in the name of all the Soldiers who have been here before and especially those who have been killed. I work harder because of their sacrifice."



**Olson presents the 25th Inf. Div. (Light) "combat patch" to a 25th Inf. Div. (Light) Soldier serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.**

# CMA team provides care to Zabul residents

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

ARGHNOB DISTRICT, Afghanistan — Soldiers from Task Force Victory's Surgeon Cell traveled to Zabul Province in southern Afghanistan to provide medical and veterinary care to the people of the remote region.

This medical care is called a Cooperative Medical Assistance. "A Cooperative Medical Assistance is generally sponsored by Task Force Victory," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Rodriguez, Surgeon Cell Operations noncommissioned officer in charge. "It brings basic healthcare to the people of Afghanistan who are normally not able to reach a medical facility."

The medical professionals see men, women, and children who have traveled over the mountainous terrain to receive treatment.

"We are seeing a lot of skin problems because their skin is so dry," said Capt. Heather Canzoneri, 325th Field Hospital nurse. "This can cause infections because the skin is broken and exposed to the dirt."

The medical professionals provide the most basic healthcare, which is more than many of the local population have ever received.

"We're giving antibiotics," said Canzoneri. "We are treating the

skin infections, nasal and ear infections with antibiotics. We are vaccinating women of child-bearing age against tetanus."

The CMA team didn't just treat the people, however. It also helped with their livelihood.

Down the hill from the makeshift clinic, Coalition veterinarians were corralling herds of animals for treatment.

During the three days of the CMA, more than 5,000 animals were treated, said Maj. Trudy Salerno, Task Force Victory Surgeon Cell veterinarian.

"We concentrate mostly on herd health," she said. "We move through the herd. All animals get vaccinated with a combination vaccine for multiple diseases, and all animals get a broad spectrum dewormer. The animals that are sick are pulled out and treated accordingly (for) their problem."

This vaccinating and deworming should keep the herds healthy going into winter, said Lt. Col. Michael Lennon, Task Force Victory Surgeon Cell veterinarian.

"This is a largely agrarian society and they depend strongly on their animals," he said. "We're decreasing the parasite load, which is very important. Hopefully in the spring we will see a big benefit just from what we've done here."

This is the second CMA held in the area.

"We've gone up literally 500



**Staff Sgt. Thomas Rodriguez, Task Force Victory Surgeon Cell Operations NCOIC, takes the blood pressure reading of a local national at a Cooperative Medical Assistance in Zabul Province in southern Afghanistan.**

percent in attendance at this CMA," said Master Sgt. Bob Labella, 3rd Special Forces Group.

"We've never seen a woman out in the three and a half months we've been working in this area," he said. "Today we saw 23 women. That means the people in this district are beginning to trust the government. Not just the U.S. government, but they're beginning to trust their own government."

As the trust of the Afghan people grows, the more willing they are to develop relationships with the Coalition forces.

"We are building relation-

ships," said Salerno. "We're making friends with these people and that, in turn, keeps our Soldiers safe. Once you establish a friendship and a relationship with the people, they are not going to want bad things to happen to the Soldiers and they will do their best to help them avoid danger."

By providing much needed care to the people of the remote regions of the country we are letting them see the Coalition is here to help, said Lennon.

"We are trying to show the population that we are really here to help, that we want to establish a free and democratic society in this country.



## PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

**Three CH-47 Chinook helicopters from Co. B, 214th Avn. Rgt., out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, come in for a landing at Bagram Air Base. Co. B, 214th Avn. Rgt., is part of TF Pirate, which has a primary mission of resupplying forward operating bases in Afghanistan.**

*Photo by Spc. Donald Chandler, 1st Bn., 211th Avn. Rgt.*

If you have high quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to [carls@baf.afgn.army.mil](mailto:carls@baf.afgn.army.mil). Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

# Mechanics keep engineer's equipment running

Story and photos by  
 Spc. Chris Stump  
 17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Mine clearing is a dangerous business that puts a lot of stress on equipment as well as Soldiers.

To keep the Soldiers safe and the vehicles rolling, the 367th Engineer Battalion relies on a team of heavy vehicle mechanics.

The 367th Eng. Bn. is one of the key units in the mine-clearing mission on Bagram Air Base, and has a large fleet of equipment to assist them in that task, said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Tomalewski, Company A, 367th Eng. Bn., motor sergeant.

The Soldiers of Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., U.S. Army Reserve, have spent the last five months keeping their battalion's heavy equipment up and running, and making safety improvements to machines like bulldozers, which are vital to the mine-clearing mission.

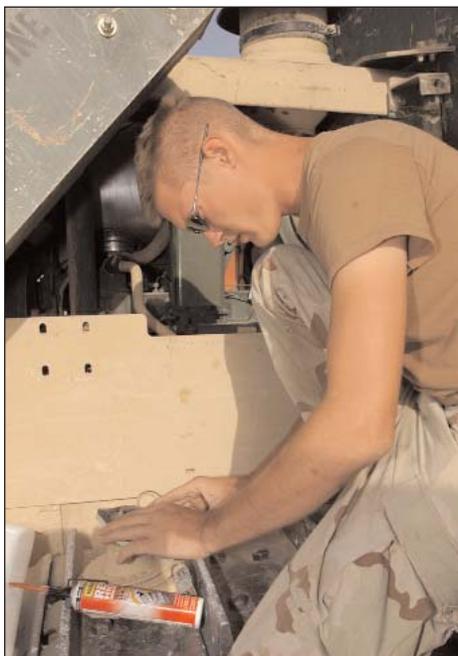
Taking care of all this machinery is a never-ending process, but is one that must be done to keep up with the expansion of the air base and the surrounding civilian area, he said.

Soldiers in the unit are able to fix anything that is used in the mine-clearing process, said Spc. Matthew Erickson, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., heavy equipment mechanic.

"We mostly work on bulldozers and Aardvarks, but we can fix anything," said the reservist who also works on heavy machinery in his civilian occupation.

"It's really just a change in location, not a change in my job," said Erickson.

The location change hasn't affected the



**Spc. James Krohn, HHC, 367th Eng. Bn., fixes a part on an armored bulldozer at the Co. A motorpool.**

Soldiers of the unit. With the exception of the availability of repair parts, the mechanics' mission is the same thing they train for stateside.

"Parts are definitely harder to come by here, but we do what we can to get what we need to fix the equipment," said Erickson.

"There's constant maintenance to keep these machines running in this environment," he said. The bulldozers and other equipment are made for grueling work in harsh conditions, but there's always maintenance to be performed no matter where work is being done or how tough the machine.

Even for skilled mechanics with all the right tools, maintaining the battalion's numerous pieces of equipment can sometimes be a daunting task.

"We have around 60 pieces of equipment that we are responsible for maintaining," said Spc. An Phan, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., prescribed load list and dispatch clerk.

Sixty machines may seem like a lot, but

there are so many mines around Bagram that every one of those machines is essential to mission accomplishment, he said.

That equipment includes bulldozers, flailers, five-ton trucks and dump trucks.

The mechanics of the unit's motor pool can perform many different kinds of maintenance on the heavy equipment they work on. From oil changes to engine swaps the Soldiers can do everything needed to keep the dozers, trucks and other mine-clearing machines running.

Their job doesn't stop with maintenance though.

"We stay pretty busy putting armor kits on the equipment," said Erickson.

The armor the Soldiers are installing on the dozers protects both the operator and the machine from pretty much anything they could run across while clearing a minefield, he said.

Although the motor pool's main focus is armoring the heavy mine-clearing bulldozers, they are also able to install armor on anything that has a kit made for it.

Armoring a piece of equipment isn't easy though, said Spc. James Krohn, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 367th Eng. Bn.

"It takes two or three people about a week to armor one dozer," he said.

But the long days and weeks of work armoring the equipment pay off when the operators hit mines while they are clearing.

The up-armored bulldozers' metal plating stops any mine an operator could come across while clearing in Afghanistan. The armor also stops rifle fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

Keeping the de-miners safe while they are doing their jobs makes the mechanics' daily efforts worthwhile.

"It's a good feeling to keep the mission going and to be able to support the mission," said Spc. John Myhre, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn. mechanic. "It's also a great day-to-day job — great people to work with. Good camaraderie," he said.

One of the most important things to the Soldiers of the unit is getting their job done and seeing the results.

"It's all about accomplishment — getting the mission done," said Sgt. Roland Ahrendt, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., mechanic. "It's great to be able to make sure (operators) are able to drive their equipment and perform their mission."



**Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Garin, Co. A, 367th Eng. Bn., checks the underside of a vehicle in the motor pool.**

# Wartime service recognized by insignia ceremony

Story and photos by  
Spc. Chris Stump  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Every generation has its heroes that serve their country selflessly, and this one is no different. To recognize the wartime service of members of Combined Task Force Thunder, a shoulder sleeve insignia ceremony was held at Forward Operating Base Salerno Oct. 1.

CTF Thunder is comprised of units from every branch of service and nearly every specialty. From Soldiers to Marines to Airmen to Sailors to Kiwis, a diversified task force was represented in the ceremony where each troop received the 25th Infantry Division (Light) patch.

The diversity of the “combat patch” ceremony formation didn’t stop at the task force level though. Many units have diversified their combat roles to adapt to the needs of fighting the war on terror in Afghanistan.

One of these units is Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, an M-198 towed field artillery battery serving at FOB Salerno.

Battery F is the “Big Guns” of the 25th



**1st Lt. Manoj Puthenparampil, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt., executive officer, pins the combat patch on one of his Soldiers during CTF Thunder’s SSI ceremony Oct. 1.**

Inf. Div. (L), specializing in providing fires in support of the division with their 155mm howitzers.

However, when they learned of their deployment, they also learned their howitzers would be left behind and they would deploy as a mortar “battery,” taking on the role of an infantry company, said Capt. Brendan Raymond, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt., commander.

After being certified as indirect fire infantrymen at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga., the battery left for Afghanistan to accomplish its new mission.

“We initially deployed as a 120-millimeter mortar battery, providing support to infantry units and doing patrols ourselves,” said Raymond.

Many of the company’s men enjoyed their time serving as infantrymen, but were happy when they got their “big guns” back.

In August, the battery received its M-198 155mm howitzers from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and its Soldiers immediately set to work certifying its six guns and two fire direction centers, all while maintaining the ability to provide support as mortar men.

“I had good experiences going on patrols and experiencing the culture and people here, but it was nice to get our 155s back,” said Spc. William Toledo, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt., artilleryman.

“Going out as infantry was good, but I think it’s an honor to get the combat patch as an artilleryman. I’m proud to wear it,” he said.

Even the battery’s non-artillerymen are proud to have gone to war not just with the battery, but the Tropic Lightning Division

“I’m proud of having the 25th combat patch. The 25th has never lost a major engagement – I know I’m part of a winning team,” said Sgt. Richard Kilgo, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt., medic.

“When I look back – when my kids and grandkids look back – they’ll see and be proud of what I did here,” he said.



**Command Sgt. Maj. Edmond Murrell, CTF Thunder command sergeant major, pins the combat patch on a Soldier during CTF Thunder’s SSI ceremony.**

But it’s not all just for glory or pride – the Soldiers also believe deeply that they are helping the country to a safe, secure and free future.

“It’s good to help the people of Afghanistan and give them the opportunity to have free elections and everything else that we as Americans may take for granted,” said Pfc. Michael Matthys, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt., artilleryman.

“I think this patch brings pride to the unit, pride to myself and shows the world that we came here and helped,” he said.

The Tropic Lightning patch also means success and victory to the Soldiers who wear it.

“I feel we’re serving a great purpose here,” said Toledo. “We’re winning and preventing terrorists and Taliban from re-emerging and coming back to prevent the Afghans from having their elections.”

The patch’s connotation of success in past conflicts also inspires a feeling of personal success in those who now wear it on both of their sleeves.

“I believe in success. It’s a big part of who I am,” said Kilgo. “And I’m very proud to wear a patch that stands for success.”

# First human resource conference held in Kabul

Story and photo by  
Lt. Col. Susan Meisner

Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — Civilian control of the military is a basic tenet of U.S. government policy, but in Afghanistan, the concept is taking hold for the first time.

The Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan and the Center for Civil Military Relations – part of the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif. – helped develop the basics for Afghanistan by sponsoring the first-ever Human Resource Development and Personnel Management Conference in Afghanistan.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Craig Weston, OMC-A chief, opened the conference, stating that the sessions would focus on “developing the framework for civil service policy that allows the Ministry of Defense to begin hiring civil service employees in the right positions, with the right qualifications, in a fair and open process.”

The week-long conference was well attended at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. The conference covered topics that would be familiar to participants at a typical human resource management conference in the United States – work force planning; job design and analysis; education and training; performance management; recruiting and retention; and compensation and benefits.

Attendees included Afghan national government representatives responsible for implementing the new civil service system, as well as individuals from several Afghan government ministries. All were passionate about what they were there to accomplish.

“Our goal here is to familiarize you with our personnel management systems and use that as a basis to tailor your discussions,” said Bob Tomasovic, Naval Postgraduate School Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace program leader.

Tomasovic said that while this was the first personnel management seminar, he hoped there would be more in the future to further develop the new processes and concepts.

Participants were passionate about “wanting to do the right thing in setting up their civilian personnel system,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Darlene Roquemore, OMC-A personnel mentor and conference organizer.

“We want to learn about the relationship between civilians and the military and establish systems for this relationship,” said Mohammad Amin, Afghan Ministry of Defense Department of Personnel and Education, Training and Education chief. He wanted to further his understanding of the philosophy behind the training and education system for civilians working with the military.

Rashida Rahmti, one of the few women in attendance, had a different focus. A specialist for the Commission on Civil Reforms, her learning emphasis was on recruitment and retention programs. Her first task, she said, “is to evaluate government employees and their education (and experience) and ensure the right people are assigned to

the right positions.”

While instructors used a lecture format to impart basic information, the heart of the seminar was small-group workshops.

Participants actively engaged in discussions, expressing a variety of opinions on how to best approach group problems and solutions. The groups defined tasks that they will accomplish in the future, with further assistance from OMC-A mentors. The conference thus served as the first step in what will be the foundation of the future Afghan civil service system.

While facilitators have a lot of information and experience to impart, the key is “not to be prescriptive,” said Steve Saunders, a CCMR HR consultant. “What works for us (in the United States) may not work in this culture.”

Instead, instructors hoped to impart guiding principles and concepts that the Afghan government could use to develop a unique system.

“It’s our job, our country, but we are glad you are here to help us do our job,” said Assistant Minister for Personnel and Education Fawzi, who goes by only one name. “As every day passes we take more steps toward improvement.”



Assistant Minister for Personnel and Education Fawzi (left), his translator, and OMC-A Chief Air Force Maj. Gen. Craig Weston discuss conference goals prior to the seminar opening.

# Flag tributes raise donations for Afghan youth

Story and photo by  
Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Lindsey  
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — For most Americans, the U.S. flag conjures up a feeling of pride in their country. But each time Barry McKelvy sees the stars and stripes waving from the Camp Cunningham air control tower, it evokes a feeling of pride in knowing that his nation's symbol will provide a little bit of comfort for Afghan children.

The 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Flag Flying program hoists flags to the highest point on camp and flies them in honor of family and friends of service members in Afghanistan. The service members contribute donations to the program that are used to provide children of nearby orphanages with shoes, clothes, school supplies, radios, toys and basic toiletries.

Originally, McKelvy, the program's coordinator, flew the flags as a "good gesture."

"But then Lt. Col. (James) Kott, suggested that I start collecting donations that could be used to help the children here," said the Bagram airfield manager.

Some people fly the flags as souvenirs of their tour here, but most people fly them in honor of their loved ones — some living and others who have passed on. On Sept. 11, McKelvy flew about 50 flags from the tower.

People requesting to participate in the program provide the flags. A large, high-quality flag costs less than \$20 at the base exchange and the smaller, lighter, nylon flags cost less than \$10.

"We originally thought if we would raise a couple of hundred dollars that would be good," said McKelvy, a retired Air Force technical sergeant from Bracketville, Texas.

However, within two months of operation, the program raised more than \$600 to purchase goods for the children.

A program volunteer who serves on base as an interpreter purchases the goods for donation locally, helping support the economy, and ensures the proceeds are spent on the children. Kott ventured into Bagram village Sept. 14 with members of the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team, who perform reconstruction projects, to make the program's first delivery.

The children were a little shy at first,

but after the colonel shook hands with one little boy, a group of children came up to meet the Americans bearing gifts, said Kott, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group deputy commander.

"It was an amazing experience," said the deputy commander, an Air National Guardsman deployed from Beaver Crystal, Va. "I handed a simple, little stuffed toy to this 5-year-old girl and she just beamed at me. Poverty is everywhere here, but you wouldn't know it by the smiles on the children's faces. As we drove by, the children would wave and give us the thumbs-up."

The 455th AEW Flag Flying program supplements other base humanitarian relief programs here, including the

wing's Adopt-A-Village program.

McKelvy, who served in the Philippines in support of the Vietnam Conflict for eight years, has a son and two grandchildren. The airfield manager has worked at Bagram Air Base supporting Air Force operations for more than a year.

"I love kids," he said. "I feel for children who don't have anything, and Afghanistan has plenty of underprivileged kids.

"I don't remember seeing a lot of outreach programs back when I was in (the Air Force). Today, you see the military doing a lot of reconstruction and efforts to build up the local communities."



**Retired Air Force Tech. Sgt. Barry McKelvy, Bagram airfield manager, hoists a U.S. flag on the Camp Cunningham air control tower for a contributor to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Flag Flying program.**

# 1 Panther provides added security

Story and photos by  
Spc. Johnnie French  
82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — History. The 82nd Airborne Division is filled with a long and storied history. From the bridges of World War II to the streets of Iraq, and from the jungles of Vietnam to the mountains of Afghanistan, America's Guard of Honor has always stood ready to answer the nation's call to protect her freedom with little or no notice.

The Division's Ready Brigade and the Division's Ready Force One are always on call to deploy within 18 hours to anywhere in the world, fight and win.

Not since the 82nd was alerted to jump into Haiti has the DRF One been called upon on short notice. That all changed when 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment — known as 1 Panther — was called to deploy to Afghanistan to provide security for the presidential election.

Within 48 hours, 1 Panther was ready to step into history. Not only the Division's history, but world history as well, helping support the first free democratic elections in Afghanistan's history.

"I waited 32 years to be a part of history," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, Coalition Joint Task Force-76 commander, speaking to the Paratroopers of 1 Panther upon their arrival at Bagram Air Base.

"When I joined at the end of the



**Paratroopers from 1st Bn., 505th Para. Inf. Rgt., prepare for a convoy brief before a mission in Afghanistan.**



**Paratroopers from Co. B, 1st Bn., 505th Para. Inf. Rgt., dismount from their High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles after a rehearsal mission. The Paratroopers are deployed to provide added security during the Afghan election.**

Vietnam War I felt like my country didn't need my service. Right now it needs yours. You all are making history," he continued.

The Paratroopers of 1 Panther are honored to be here helping support the Afghan presidential election.

This is a great mission to be a part of, said Staff Sgt. Randy Kramer, a squad leader with Company B. "We are helping establish a democratic government in a country that has never seen freedom before."

The mission is truly a part of the Army values, especially selfless service, said Capt. Philip Kramer, 1 Panther's chaplain. "We are here to facilitate someone else's freedom.

"What we are doing is right at the core of who we are and whom we ought to be as American's," he continued. "Democracy, liberty (and) freedom from oppression are all things Americans hold near and dear to their hearts, and our nation was born out of a desire for those things."

Not only are the Paratroopers excited about their mission, they are excited

about what Olson had to say to them.

"Without the help of 1 Panther on the ground here, the elections probably wouldn't happen," said Olson.

"It is great that he came down and touched bases with us so we could see the man calling the shots," said Kramer. "He gave us his perspective of the mission all the way down to the lowest-ranking Paratrooper."

The commanding general also talked about why the 82nd was called upon instead of another military unit.

While many units could have been requested to help in Operation Enduring Freedom, Olson said he asked for the Paratroopers because he knew they could add to the great work being done in Afghanistan to help the people.

"The 82nd and (1st Bn., 505th Para. Inf. Rgt.) are the best of the best," said Olson. "That is why we asked for you and that is why you are here."

"I absolutely agree with him," said Kramer. "I am a former Marine and I am proud to wear the double A on my sleeve. I see in this unit the standards and discipline that achieve great results."

# Personal security protects your belongings

## Safeguarding the Coalition

Story and photo by  
Spc. Chris Stump  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

Afghanistan — Coalition personnel supporting Operation Enduring Freedom work too hard for their money to spend it replacing lost or stolen personal and issued items that they could have very easily secured.

Securing personal effects such as portable electronics, games, movies and DVDs, as well as government property, is ultimately a troop's responsibility, but leaders should also play a role in ensuring their Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines are keeping a close watch on their gear.

"Leaders should go through and inspect their (service members') gear to ensure it's secure," said Marine Capt. Conlon Carabine, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, safety officer.

Troops should secure their belongings with whatever they have available, like duffel bags or locking foot and wall lockers.

"I have my squad leaders go into my guys' areas and make sure everything is squared away and accounted for," said Marine Sgt. Graham Davis, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Bn. 6th Marines, platoon sergeant.

"It really is personal responsibility, but NCOs should be doing their job making sure everything is squared away and accounted for," he said.

Often it takes the dedication and experience of leaders to perform checks on their subordinates to ensure everyone's property remains in place.

"Even when I'm not on duty I go through myself and make sure everyone is keeping not only their personal gear locked up, but also their issued items," said Davis.

Maintaining awareness is also a key factor in keeping valuables secure.

"Everyone needs to keep their situational awareness up and if something looks out of the ordinary — it should be addressed," said Carabine.

In an environment like Afghanistan, where there are many different people constantly moving in and out, personnel should always be cognizant of where their property is at all times.

Personnel can also prevent theft by using their comrades in arms to help keep a watch on their property.

"If it's not locked up, someone should be watching it. And if no one is able to watch it, it needs to be secured every time you leave your tent," said Carabine.

Securing troops' issued equipment is very important, not just because they're responsible for it, but because it could fall into enemy hands.

"If something gets lost or stolen, it can find its way into the hands of the enemy," said Carabine.

"It's important that leaders take inventory of their (service members') equipment on a regular basis to ensure everything is accounted for," he said.

Items like night vision equipment, ammunition and especially weapons themselves can be valuable to the enemy and costly to the Coalition. They should be locked up just like any piece of expensive personal gear.

"Equipment like weapons should be on a person at all times here. And if other equipment is not on the person, it should be properly secured," said Davis.

Aside from the fact that many items are of use to the enemy, if the person fighting the war doesn't have his gear, he will not be effective in combat.

But equipment isn't the only thing troops need to be concerned about protecting. Personal information is something that is often overlooked as a safety concern. Personnel also should take the same amount care in guarding their privacy that they do with their equipment.

Mail and other correspondence with personal information should be guarded just as closely as a troop's weapon or other gear.

"Mail, or anything with personal information, should be destroyed, not thrown out," said Carabine.

Just like in the United States, or anywhere else in the world, there are many



**Burning all papers that contain personal information, such as names, addresses, social security numbers and credit card numbers (including receipts), will help prevent identity theft and financial hardship.**

ways someone can harm another person using information obtained from bank statements, credit card receipts or forms of identification.

These types of documents should never be thrown away — they should always be completely destroyed.

Leaders should also regularly check to ensure their troops have their identification cards and any other sensitive items like access badges.

"There's a lot that could happen if the enemy gets a hold of secure information and items. It can be rapidly used against us," said Carabine.

Safeguarding personal belongings, issued equipment and other effects is all too easy a task, but one that many don't take the time or effort to do.

Just like operational security issues, the same amount of care should be taken in safeguarding personal and issued items to prevent loss to the fighting men and women here and keeping supplies out of the hands of the enemy.

# Engineers improve FOB as numbers increase

Story and photos by  
Spc. Chris Stump  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Stud by stud and nail by nail, Forward Operating Base Salerno has been growing to meet the needs of the Coalition troops who have arrived.

There is always a construction project in progress at this ever-expanding base to provide troops a better environment to work in or enjoy much deserved morale, welfare and recreation opportunities.

All this construction is even more important with the arrival of Combined Task Force Thunder and its additional troops to Salerno.

On the ground throughout the new construction, Company A, 528th Engineer Battalion, Louisiana Army National Guard, has ensured everything requested has been built in an efficient, timely manner.

“This place has grown drastically since we’ve been here,” said Spc. Mitch Cooper, Co. A, 528th Eng. Bn., engineer.

The company is responsible for more than 80 percent of any new construction since their arrival, he said.

The unit arrived in Salerno in mid-May and has been working tirelessly, building



**Sgt. Richard Davis, Co. A, 528th Eng. Bn., engineer, ensures a construction job is lined up and level at Forward Operating Base Salerno.**

as much as they can and making as many improvements as they can while they are here.

The company of engineers can build anything that is requested, both vertical and horizontal construction.

A few of their vertical construction projects include the CTF Thunder tactical operations center, Marine combat operations center and the MWR buildings.

“Just about anything new here has been (built by) the 528th,” said Cooper.

“All the projects are going good. It really benefits the Soldiers when we build things like the TOC and MWR (facilities),” he said. “The projects we’ve completed provide more activity for people here – more MWR phones and computers.”

The unit also remodels and refits existing buildings like the gym to provide everyone with the best structures possible.

“We’re improving living conditions as much as we can,” said Sgt. Palmer Wheeler, Co. A, 528th Eng. Bn., plumber.

“The more Soldiers that come in, the more construction we do,” he said. “We do what we can to make this place better.”

The improvements to Salerno don’t stop with new buildings – the unit also works on horizontal projects like the small arms range and building up the perimeter to provide more security for the troops stationed here.

“The construction projects are important to the livability, safety and expansion of the base for incoming units,” said Capt. Michael DeSelle, Co. A, 528th Eng. Bn., commander.

With 35 active projects, there is enough work for two companies, but his company has risen to the challenge and completed every task they’ve been assigned.

“For our annual training, we build a project in 10 days or less. The guys are used to working 14 hours a day to get the mission accomplished – that has carried over to here,” said DeSelle.

The engineers don’t always put in 14 hour days, but their work ethic has allowed them to complete over 15 major projects since they’ve been here.

“We’re staying really busy,” said Wheeler. “We have projects lined up right until we leave.”

“But when you work with good people, it all goes pretty well and the time passes quickly,” he said.

“I love my company and I love the Soldiers,” said Wheeler. “That makes the mission here go much better and it makes the individual projects better.”



**Spc. John Talbert, Co. A, 528th Eng. Bn., engineer, digs a trench for electrical wires on FOB Salerno Sept. 30.**

# Korean soldiers celebrate ‘Thanksgiving’ holiday

Story by Sgt. Stephanie Carl  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — On the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, Koreans celebrate Chou’sok, or Thanksgiving.

This year, the holiday fell on Sept. 28, and was celebrated in a traditional manner by Koreans deployed to Afghanistan.

“Chou’sok is one of the most important traditional holidays in Korea,” said Korean Col. Park Sang Ryool, Korean Engineer Group and Support Group commander. “It’s a time for us to give thanks to our ancestry.”

To do this, the holiday began with the making of Songpyun, a special rice cake. These cakes were made by the Korean soldiers the night before the celebration. The rice cakes became part of the traditional breakfast the soldiers ate the morning of Chou’sok. The soldiers came together for the breakfast, symbolic of the holiday tradition.

“In Korea, families are scattered around in different villages,” explained Park. “For Chou’sok, everyone travels to gather in their hometown, where they share their ancestry and talk.”

As with U.S. service members, Korean soldiers don’t always get the opportunity to share holidays with their families. Instead, they share the holiday with their military family.

“Very few soldiers actually get to take a holiday,” said Park. “Instead, a commander gets together with his soldiers to celebrate.”

That is what the Soldiers did, though they still recognized the tradition of the holiday.

“It’s very important to remember your ancestry,” said Korean Command Sgt. Maj. Park J.K., Korean Engineer and Support



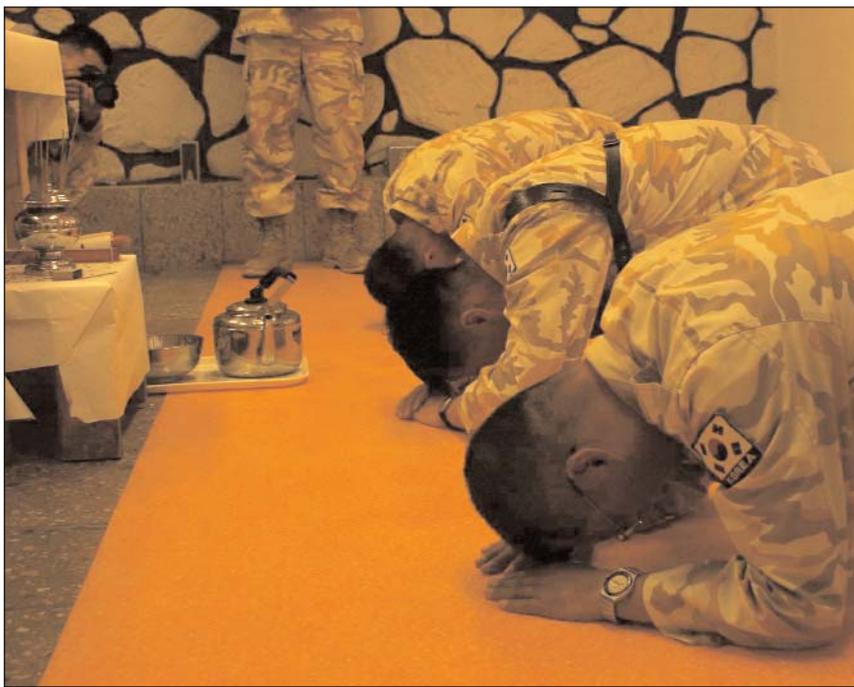
Sgt. Frank Magni  
**Korean Command Sgt. Maj. Haeng Suk Bae takes down Korean Pfc. Jae Hyuk Choi, both of the Korean Medical Support Group, during a match of Sirum. The Sirum match was a part of the festivities held in honor of Chou’sak.**

Group command sergeant major.

The soldiers took the time to do the traditional bows to their families before they partook of the ceremonial breakfast. These bows are to give thanks to their families and for the bountiful harvest season.

After the traditional part of the holiday, the soldiers had the opportunity to let loose and enjoy a break from the day-to-day operations of their deployment.

“The holiday was very enjoyable,” said Col. Park. “We were all able to throw away our stresses for a little while, play games and enjoy a special meal.”



**Above: Korean soldiers bow in honor of their ancestry, giving thanks for everything they have. (Photo by Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl)**

**Left: Korean Pfc. Min Jae Lee, Korean Medical Support Group, sees how many times he can kick a jegi during a jegichagi tournament held on Chou’sak, the Korean Thanksgiving. (Photo by Sgt. Frank Magni)**

# Friendship

