

January 2, 2005

Freedom Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan



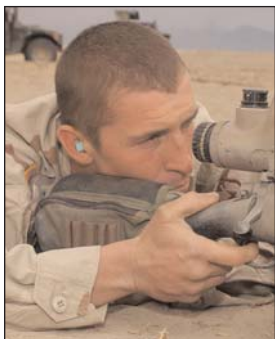


Spc. Cheryl Ransford

Holiday cheer

The Praise Choir sings in front of Base Operations during the Christmas tree lighting ceremony at Bagram Air Base Dec. 19. Since many service members and civilians deployed to Afghanistan will be unable to be with family for the holidays, the spirit of Christmas was brought to them with a live tree donated by students in the United States.

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Freedom Watch

Freedom Watch is the weekly publication of Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander – Lt. Gen. David Barno
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Freedom Watch, an Army publication, is published each Sunday by the 17th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 6,000 copies per week.

In accordance with AR 360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

Deadline for submissions is 0730 Zulu each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the 17th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Bldg. 425, Room 107, Bagram Air Base. We can be reached at DSN 318-231-3338.

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Visit the CENTCOM Web site at www.centcom.mil and click on the *Freedom Watch* or Forces in Afghanistan link at the bottom of the page to get to the *Freedom Watch*. To be added to the weekly distribution list, e-mail stumpc@baf.afgn.army.mil.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau

Entertainment celebrities joined Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston as he visited service members deployed to Kandahar Airfield Dec. 22 on the United Service Organizations' Hope and Freedom Tour.

The tour, which began in 2002, is dedicated to raising the morale of deployed service members during the holiday season.

"You try to get out and touch as many Soldiers as you can throughout the year," said Preston. "It's important this time of year with them away from their families and their loved ones."

The USO has been sponsoring entertainment for service members for 64 years. During this year's tour, the group visited troops in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait.

"There's no more fulfilling way to spend our holiday than to come overseas and spend time with the men and women of the armed services," said country music singer Mark Wills.



Clockwise from top left: Actress Karri Turner talks to the troops at Kandahar Airfield Dec. 22 during the USO's Hope and Freedom Tour.

Audience members react to a joke made by comedian Al Franken during his performance at Kandahar Airfield.

Sgt. 1st Class Keith Melick (right) and 2nd Lt. Linda Hird, both of 325th CSH, dance during a performance by country singer Mark Wills.

Country singer Darryl Worley performs a song for Spc. Jennifer Schettino, 1st Plt., 209th MP Co. Schettino's husband, Sgt. Mike Schettino, met Worley during the group's stop in Iraq and asked him to pass a message to his wife serving in Afghanistan.



Bobcats patrol, interact with Afghans

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

TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan — A young Afghan boy trots along, trying to stay in stride with the camouflage-clad Soldier walking down the muddy street.

The Soldier is a member of 2nd Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, on a dismounted patrol through Tarin Kowt in southern Afghanistan's Oruzgan province.

"Through these patrols I've learned that the people here really appreciate the American presence," said Sgt. Joseph Laflair, a 2nd Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., team leader.

This is Laflair's third deployment — he has spent time in Kosovo, Iraq, and now, Afghanistan — and he recognizes how vital his experience is to his team.

"Most of my guys are new Soldiers," he said. "My biggest fear is that something will happen to them when we are out on a mission."

But the team has worked closely together, and also knows the area and the people of Tarin Kowt.

"The people of Tarin Kowt know we're not here to harm them. There's a big difference now from when we first arrived here," said Spc. Jorge Herrera, a 2nd Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., grenadier.

The 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., "Bobcats" arrived at Tarin Kowt in June. Since then, they have run mounted and dismounted patrols regularly from Forward Operating Base Ripley.

"We usually do dismounted patrols when we need to meet with the local leaders to



discuss business," said 1st Lt. Eric Hong, 2nd Platoon platoon leader.

During this particular dismounted patrol, 1st Lt. John Bowman, Co. B fire support officer, met with the Tarin Kowt mayor to discuss some pending projects in Tarin Kowt. After some discussion, he invited the mayor to FOB Ripley the following day, where they would review specifics.

While Bowman talked business inside, the Soldiers pulled security outside and interacted with the local population.

"I like being around the people," said Laflair. "I'm trying to learn a little bit of the language from them. Most of the Afghans are trying to learn English from us, so I figure I should try to learn their language, too."



Soldiers from 2nd Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., interact with local children in Tarin Kowt during a dismounted patrol.

Other Soldiers in the platoon also enjoy the interaction they get from the dismounted patrols.

"I'm learning a lot about their culture, their language and their lifestyle," said Herrera. "It also reminds me of home. I have a little girl, so interacting with all these kids reminds me of my little girl. And I know that I'm here trying to make a better home for them to live."



Above: Pfc. Patrick Stellick, 2nd Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., takes a knee during a halt on a patrol through Tarin Kowt. The Bobcats of 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., run regular patrols in the area to meet with local leaders and provide security and stability.

Top: Stellick brings up the rear of a patrol through Tarin Kowt while a young Afghan boy marches along with him during one of the platoon's movements through the area.

Enduring Voices

What is the most important idea/feeling you will take away from this deployment?



Air Force Capt. James Hammond
Task Force Longhorn
"I'll feel like I contributed to the development of Afghanistan."

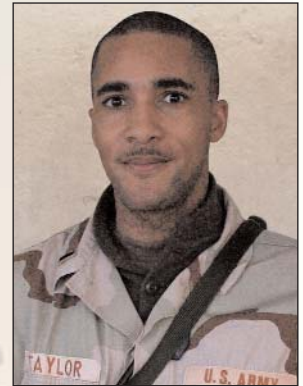


1st Lt. Cedric Taylor
HHC, 33rd ASG
"The sense that I have participated in making history in a country while giving people the same freedoms and liberties I'm afforded in the United States."

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Stephanie Edwards
CJTF-76, CJ2
"Knowing I have played a part in helping the Afghan people and the Soldiers in the field."



Spc. Radley Manansala
72nd Sig. Bn.
"The appreciation for the freedoms and liberties we have as Americans."



Spc. Marcus Johnson
Co. C, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt.
"The support of my family and friends back home is just as important as the cohesion within our team."



Sgc. Kevin Craig
Long Range Surveillance Detachment
"I respect where I come from more. I am prouder of being an American."



Sgt. Dennis Reddish
Co. C, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt.
"The close bond and feeling of brotherhood I feel with the other Soldiers."

Capt. Jennifer Krueger
Task Force Longhorn
"The importance of teamwork and how much you can accomplish with it."



Bronco mechanics keep vehicles ready to roll

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

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — The broad, relentless terrain of Afghanistan presents a challenge to the Soldiers serving in Operating Enduring Freedom.

In order to accomplish their mission, they rely heavily upon wheeled vehicles. But the terrain is unforgiving to these machines, demanding that maintenance specialists ensure the equipment is always ready.

"In the rear, we don't use trucks as much," said Sgt. Lee Coco, a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combined Task Force Bronco, mechanic at Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan. "Here, we sometimes work from sun up to sun down, keeping the trucks up and moving."

Most of the damage to the vehicles is caused by the rough terrain. But other factors, such as damage from detonated improvised explosive devices and land mines, affect the performance of vehicles like the up-armored high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles. These factors pose a whole new chal-



Sgt. Lee Coco, CTF Bronco mechanic, repairs the door of an up-armored HMMWV at Kandahar Airfield Dec. 3. Coco is responsible for the maintenance of all vehicles at Kandahar, as well as any vehicles from the firebases throughout Regional Command South.

lenge to mechanics.

"The up-armored vehicles are a lot harder to work on," said Coco. "But the extra work I have to do is worth it, because that extra protection allows our Soldiers to walk away from accidents with minor or no injuries."

Coco is responsible for the maintenance of any vehicle brought to the CTF Bronco consolidated motorpool, including those brought in from units operating outside the airfield. This is a process that puts a lot of pressure on

him, and also requires a lot of coordination.

"It's important that we make sure the parts keep flowing," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Benito, CTF Bronco consolidated motorpool shop foreman. Benito tracks more than 20 CTF Bronco mechanics positioned throughout Regional Command South, as well as the vehicles they maintain.

One way the Soldiers keep the vehicles operational is by ensuring regular maintenance is conducted.

"The easiest way to prevent

a downed vehicle is to do little things like tighten bolts regularly," said Coco.

A little minor up keep goes a long way in lightening equipment stress and keeping vehicles mission ready.

Limiting the stress on the vehicles in turn limits the stress put on those who maintain them. But when the mechanics need someone to go to, all they have to do is look to the motor sergeant.

Master Sgt. Ron Elsenheimer, CTF Bronco motor sergeant, considers it his responsibility to ensure they are taken care of.

"It's important that we let them know individually that we care about them," he said of his Soldiers.

One way Elsenheimer does this is by ensuring they get the personal items they need while they are at firebases. He also rotates the Soldiers to different locations to build their morale.

"My Soldiers don't just do their job," he said. "Every convoy the infantry goes on, one of my mechanics is with them. And every time I send one of them out, I make sure I shake their hand and spend some time with them before they go. This is my family here, and I'd work with any one of them, anywhere."

AAFES SERVICES HOURS OF OPERATION

Bagram Air Base

PX	Massage
0230-1630	0400-1800
Shoppette	Alterations
0230-1630	0430-1430
Burger King	Embroidery Shop
0430-1730	0430-1430
Food Court	Gift Shops
0600-1630	0430-1430
Barber Shop	Sports Apparel
0430-1530	0430-1430
Day Spa	Coffee Shop
0400-1600	24 hours

Kandahar Airfield

PX	Alterations
0500-1700	0500-1700
Burger King	Embroidery Shop
0430-1730	0500-1700
Coffee Shop	Gift Shops
24hrs	0500-1700
Main Barber Shop	Sports Apparel
0500-1700	0500-1700
Lagoon Barber Shop	Black Ops Store
0300-1700	0500-1700
Day Spa	Leather Shop
0500-1700	0500-1700

TF Phoenix

PX
0430-1630
Barber Shop
0330-1530
Alterations
0330-1630
Coffee Shop
24 hours

Kabul Compound

PX
0430-1630
Barber Shop
0330-1530
Coffee Shop
24 hours

** All times in Zulu/GMT*

TV address expands Coalition reach

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

GHAZNI CITY, Afghanistan — Two Soldiers entered the Ghazni Radio and Television Studio to produce their weekly address to the people of the community as part of an effort to reach out and inform area Afghans.

“Once a week we come to the station and talk to the people via television and radio,” said Lt. Col. Gerald Timoney, Ghazni PRT commander. “It’s a chance for us to let the community know what the Coalition is doing in the area.”

The address is taped and broadcast throughout the week.

“We talk about a lot of different things during the show,” said Lt. Col. Blake Ortner, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, commander. “We talk about the messages we have for the community.”

Reconstruction and security are two of the major components of the weekly message.

“We are always asking for the community’s help,” said Ortner. “We ask them to turn in any weapons they have and report any suspicious people to the police.”

A request the people have been very responsive to.

“The response to the weapons turn-in program has been overwhelming,” he said. “We’ve had so many weapons and munitions turned in that we had to set up a turn-in point off the base to accommodate all of it.”

The weekly address does more than ask for help from the local population, said Timoney. It also lets the community know



Coalition members and Afghan officials prepare for their weekly broadcast on the Ghazni television station. The broadcast is a way to keep citizens informed of Coalition reconstruction and security efforts.

what Coalition forces in the area are doing.

The more people are informed of the Coalition’s intentions and plans for the area, the better, he said.

“If the people are informed that we are working to bring peace to the province, it makes them more confident in and supportive of the Coalition. But more importantly, in their own government,” said Timoney.

This is a great way to connect with the local community, said Ortner.

“People are always coming up to me telling me they’ve seen me on TV,” he said.

Making that contact, even if it’s through television, is a step in the right direction, said Timoney.

“Other PRTs are doing similar work

throughout Afghanistan,” he said. “You have to connect with the people. It’s all about getting to know them and them getting to know us. For them to know that we are here for them. We are here to help.”

The weekly television address is just one part of the toolbox, he said. Combined with the reconstruction projects and security operations in the area, it helps the Afghans understand that the Coalition wants to help Afghanistan become an independent and strong nation.

“Being here and seeing the growth among the community is great for my Soldiers,” said Ortner. “The Afghans are great people, hard-working and friendly. It’s truly an honor to be part of this mission.”



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

While the sun sets over Forward Operating Base Ripley in southern Afghanistan, Coalition soldiers enjoy music performed by the country band Little Big Town. Soldiers at FOB Ripley conduct missions throughout Oruzgan province to provide security and stability to the Afghan people.

*Photo by Spc. Randy Flores
Co. B, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. 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 stumpc@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Spotlight on Combined Task Force Coyote

Engineer unit brings diversity to OEF mission

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — From mine clearing to airfield upgrades, Combined Task Force Coyote's missions are as diverse as its members.

Comprised of service members from across the Coalition, Coyote is a task force that uses the strengths of each group to effectively serve Operation Enduring Freedom, said Col. Nancy Wetherill, CTF Coyote commander.

"So far in the rotation, our success has come from our ability to be flexible to the command's need," said Wetherill, who is also the 109th Engineer Group (Combat), South Dakota National Guard, commander. "We have figured out the best ways to accomplish the mission using our diversity to our advantage."

Serving as Combined Joint Task Force-76's primary engineer asset, Coyote manages a variety of projects undertaken by the by the many who make up the command.

With engineer assets from the armed forces of Korea, Poland, Slovakia and other nation, CTF Coyote places an



Spc. Cheryl Ransford

Sgt. 1st Class Delano Kroeplin Jr. (left) and his brother, Sgt. James Kroeplin Sr., 367th Eng. Bn., build a winter shelter for a generator at Shindand Airfield.

emphasis on improving the quality of life and force protection for Coalition members.

"Our main mission is to support the base," said Republic of Korea Army Command Sgt. Maj. Bae Haeng Suk, ROK 100th Engineer Group command sergeant major. "We're helping to provide better living conditions and better capabilities for the Coalition."

The ROK 100th

Eng. Group played a large role in the expansion of Bagram Air Base's runways to accommodate fixed-wing aircraft and reconstruction of Steel Beach to better serve CJTF-76's rotary-wing assets.

"Our engineers pour on average 400 cubic meters of concrete per day," said Bae. This is enough concrete to pour approximately 38 double-width driveways or 1.3 miles of sidewalk a day.

CTF Coyote also heads up some of the largest humanitarian assistance projects within Afghanistan.



Spc. Chris Stump



Spc. Cheryl Ransford

Above: Staff Sgt. Gene Lachney, 528th Eng. Bn. horizontal construction platoon squad leader, smooths a drainage ditch with a vibratory roller at FOB Salerno.

Left: Spc. Caleb Klebig, 367th Eng. Bn., probes for mines during mine-clearing efforts on Bagram Air Base. Mine clearance is a large part of CTF Coyote's mission.

“One of our major focuses has been the Kandahar to Tarin Kowt road project,” said Wetherill.

Construction of the 75-mile stretch of road began in July and is projected to last until early 2006. The project is headed up by the 528th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy) from the Louisiana National Guard, and is augmented by Soldiers from Company B, 204th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy), New York National Guard, as well as other Coyote assets.

Another way Coyote uses its assets to help improve the country of Afghanistan is through its efforts in clearing mines.

Sgt. 1st Class David Fletcher, 367th Engineer Battalion – a Reserve unit headquartered in Brainerd, Minn. – works in CTF Coyote’s mine action center. Tracking the efforts of his battalion, as well as other civilian contractors and Coalition partners, the mine action center provides up-to-date intelligence on explosive hazards throughout Afghanistan.

In his position, Fletcher said he has seen CTF Coyote contribute a great deal to Afghanistan.

“I’m seeing the changes as they happen,” said Fletcher. “Seeing the transformation is amazing. We are giving land back to the people they couldn’t use before.”

Like many other organizations in CTF Coyote, U.S. Soldiers work side-by-side with other Coalition members in the mine action center – another experience that has been very positive for Fletcher.

“They bring a different perspective to the mission,” he said. “It is definitely one of the strengths of CTF Coyote, bringing (all the) different experiences together to get the job done.”

Coalition members like Polish Army Chief Warrant Officer Robert Borowczyk, 1st Special Regiment supervisor, also feels the combined effort helps in everything the task force does.

“We are using one of our major expertise to help the mission here,” said Borowczyk, whose unit has extensive experience in land mines.

“(The mission) not only improves our skills as Soldiers but prepares us to work in other coalitions.”

While mine clearance and road construction are two of the main efforts for Coyote, the task force is also highly involved with airfield expansion and improvement, along with building administrative buildings and living quarters. Coyote is also planning and designing projects that will take place years from now.

Found in just about every location throughout Operation Enduring



Sgt. Frank Magni

Sgt. Wilson Harding, Co. B, 204th Eng. Bn., uses an excavator to collect dirt for use in building the sub-base for the Kandahar to Tarin Kowt road.

Freedom doing a variety of tasks, the focus for Coyote remains very clear.

“The members of (Combined Task Force) Coyote are very proud of the job they are doing in Operation Enduring Freedom,” said Wetherill. “They are playing a very important role in supporting the war fighter and contributing to the future Afghanistan.”



Spc. Cheryl Ransford

Korean engineers from the Republic of Korea’s 100th Engineer Group work on expansion of the runway at Bagram Air Base.



Snipers train for accuracy

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

EAST RIVER RANGE,
PARWAN PROVINCE,
Afghanistan — Soldiers lay in
the prone position, motionless,
while a steady rain soaks into

their desert uniform and drips
off the scopes on their
weapons.

While many units would cancel a range due to inclement weather, the intermittent drizzle in near-freezing temperatures was just what the 25th Infantry Division (Light) Long Range Surveillance Detachment was looking for to train its sniper teams.

Temperature, humidity and elevation all affect the trajectory of a round, said Staff Sgt. Brett A. Henry, a LRSD sniper team leader.

“Knowing those effects is

very important,” he said. “It can be the difference between a sniper hitting his target or missing it.”

In order to learn exactly how different conditions affect their shots, the sniper team, which was formed in early November to support Combined Joint Task Force-76, has been training nearly every day, recording weapon data, so when the call comes for a team to go on a mission, they are ready. The information they collect is vital for determining what settings the shooters need to use on their rifle scopes when they are on missions.

“We needed to get all our shooters zeroed on their equipment and collect their data,” said Henry.

In order to zero and collect data, the sniper and spotter teams fired at 200- and 400-meter targets.

“Firing at the different targets allows us to gather the correct information we need to make the precision shot when it’s necessary,” said Spc. Kevin J. Corter, a LRSD sniper.

After each shot was fired, a spotter checked the target, radioing back to a sniper team leader with the location of the impact. Spotters and team leaders recorded the information in a data on previous missions, or DOP, book. This book contains the information that helps the snipers make adjustments to the windage and elevation settings on their rifle scopes when they are out on missions.

Spotters are the individuals



Spc. Dominic Hoyt, LRSD spotter, uses his spotter’s scope to see the impact of his sniper’s bullet.

who actually determine the adjustments that need to be made, setting their sniper up for a more accurate shot. They track the settings on the scope in specific conditions, recording all the information in the DOP book so they can reference it on missions. The sniper and spotter teams are always the same. The two individuals train together, developing a professional and personal relationship that allows them to accomplish their mission when they receive the order.

“My job is to spot the rounds for my sniper,” said Spc. Bobby C. Duffer, a LRSD senior scout observer and sniper team spotter.

Duffer and other spotters position themselves carefully behind their snipers, trying to closely replicate the same picture through their spotter’s scope that the sniper has



Spc. Joseph Crum, LRSD sniper, fires the M-24 sniper rifle during training at East River Range Dec. 18. The training helps the snipers maintain accuracy for missions.

See *Snipers*, Page 12



ENDURING IMAGES

Combat Camera's lenses capture activities of Coalition around CJOA

Spc. Johnny Aragon

Marines with 2nd Bn., 6th Marines, arrive at the presidential palace in Kabul to provide security during Afghanistan's first presidential inauguration Dec. 6.



Spc. Johnny Aragon

Veterinarians from Task Force Victory's Surgeon Cell administer medicine to a calf during a cooperative medical assistance mission in Khargar Dec. 15.



Sgt. J. Antonio Francis

Above: Sgt. Jason Manning, HHC, 76th SIB, holds a local boy on his lap while eating with elders in a village near Gardez city Dec. 17.



Sgt. J. Antonio Francis

Left: Soldiers from Task Force 168 convoy through the winter snow on their way to conduct a CMA in Khargar Dec. 15 .

Marines renew focus on Afghan mission

Story and photo by
Marine Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly
 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment

CAMP EGGERS, FORWARD OPERATING BASE ASADABAD, Afghanistan — During a visit to Marines and Sailors deployed to Afghanistan, the deputy commanding general of Marine Forces Central Command, gathered the Marines and Sailors of India Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, who have just completed their first month deployed along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

Marine Brig. Gen. Jerry McAbee, a former commanding general of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, the home station of 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines, gave the Marines and Sailors a pep-talk Dec. 14, as they settle in for the long-haul of their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Clustered in a “school circle” around the general, and framed by the backdrop of Asadabad’s imposing mountains, the troops of “America’s Battalion,” were eager for word of their sister unit, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment’s activities in Iraq, as well as any information on what they could expect during the rest of their tour in Afghanistan.

Rather than spend just a few minutes extolling the virtues of the Global War on

Terrorism, McAbee answered questions from the Marines about a variety of subjects ranging from how long they could expect to be deployed, to how the future landscape of forces projected into the Middle East might look.

“Your clock started the moment you got in country,” said McAbee, to the relief of many of the Marines. “You can expect to be here seven months. If you look to the future, that’s what we’re going to do. You’ll be home seven months and deployed seven months.”

McAbee, in his traditionally forward style, also addressed the Marine Corps’ ability to remain heavily taxed with deployments and still provide Marines with the same training opportunities.

“We haven’t closed off any options to Marines,” said McAbee. “There won’t be any school stoppages. You’ll still be able to go to those alternate billets and train the way you always have.”

Many Marines said they felt they had a renewed focus of their mission after the general’s talk.

“We’ve only been here a month, but it’s easy to lose site of why we’re here and what we’re doing,” said Marine Lance Cpl. Brian Thomas, a rifleman with 1st Platoon, Co. I, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines, after speaking with the general.

“It reiterated our purpose for me,” continued the 21-year-old who has been

patrolling with his company in the Asadabad area for the past month, building a rapport with the community during missions.

“The kids all love us,” said Thomas. “The older people, like our age, are curious. The old folks are really appreciative. They come up and want to shake your hand and say ‘thank you’ and ‘we love the Marines.’”

Thomas was joined in his sentiments Marine by Pfc. Andrew Freudenberg and Dan Wiesen, both of Co. I, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines.

“Everything we do here – it really feels like we’re helping somebody,” said Wiesen.

“Hearing why you’re doing something somewhere helps make it feel worthwhile when it gets difficult to be away from home,” added Freudenberg.

McAbee assured the Marines they would be deploying again after their tour in Afghanistan, and Marines and Fleet Marine Forces Sailors could expect to be involved in the Global War on Terrorism for a long time to come.

“This war that we’re in is going to be longer than the Cold War, and will be fought on more fronts,” said McAbee. “You Marines and Sailors are fortunate. You will always be able to tell your grandchildren, when you’re in your rocking chair down in Louisiana, that you didn’t just sit around during this fight.”

Snipers: Training helps shooters maintain proficiency

continued from Page 10

through his rifle scope. On a mission, this allows the spotter to track the same movement the sniper is seeing, and on a range it allows them to see the impact of the round.

“My spotter identifies the targets, makes necessary communications with others and watches my back,” said Corter. “A lot of responsibility comes with their job.”

Ideally, spotters are the most experienced members of a sniper team, which consists of a sniper and a spotter, said Henry.

But LRSD has had to modify this, relying on sniper school-qualified Soldiers to

not only fill the role of sniper, but also share their experience with their spotters.

“The spotters need to be just as good as the sniper,” said Henry. “If for some reason the sniper goes down, the spotter needs to be able to take that shot.”

This is a task the spotters embrace.

“I’m learning something new,” said Duffer. “It’s always good to have as much training under your belt as you can.”

At the range, the snipers and spotters took turns behind the M-24 sniper rifle, firing 10 rounds each at both targets. They performed this

task during the day, and once the sky darkened, switched to night-vision optics. The rain and overcast conditions pushed the capability of their night-vision equipment, but it was just one more part of the training – being ready for the toughest situation.

On a mission, a sniper team can’t choose the conditions under which they will have to acquire and accurately engage a target. The more training they do, the better they become at adapting to the conditions.

Additionally, training in poor weather conditions helps to prepare the snipers and spotters for missions that may require them to sit for

hours, even days, with minimal movement in poor conditions.

While the rain fell, and after a chill set in during the darkness, the teams fought against shivering, maintaining a calm composure as they lay on the cold ground, knowing how critical discipline is to their mission.

“The weather and patience are the hardest parts of our job,” said Corter. “We sometimes sit there for (who) knows how many days, staring at the same rock for our one shot.”

“These ranges make everything more accurate so we can get that one shot, one kill.”

Supplements promise results, pose risks

Safeguarding the Coalition

Story by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — The path to fitness, weight loss and nutrition requires discipline and hard work, but many are turning to supplements to find a faster route to these goals.

Easily purchased over the counter, many supplements promise an extra edge. But with their promises come potential long- and short-term side effects, along with the extra expense.

Still an under-regulated industry, supplements make certain claims that are in many ways unfounded, said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Brent Smith, 325th Combat Support Hospital, emergency room doctor.

"For many of these supplements there is still no scientific evidence they will perform as advertised," said Smith.

Along with making claims that aren't substantiated by science, supplements also lack study into the undesired side effects.

"Within the supplemental food and nutrition industry, many times you don't know what you're taking," said Smith. "There is still limited scientific study into the long- and short-term side effects (of) many over-the-counter supplements."

While there is little support for many of the positive claims of supplement companies, there are ample studies that reveal the negative effects of some.

Smith said many people think supplements are safe because companies call their products all-natural.

"All-natural does not imply safeness," said Smith. "There are many natural ingredients that can be very harmful to your health."

"We do know that long term overuse of



Spc. Cheryl Ransford

Marine Sgt. Donald Campbell (left) and Marine Staff Sgt. Matthew Yarberr, both of MALS-42, look at supplements in the main PX/BX at Bagram Air Base.

vitamin A causes kidney damage," said Smith. "Huge protein load can also cause kidney and liver damage," he said of some of the common contents of dietary supplements.

And while many Coalition members are turning to supplements to reach desired effects with their body, many of them are ignoring simple solutions.

"There is no replacement for a balanced diet," said Spc. Brian Messner, 325th CSH nutritionist. "If you need to lose weight or even build muscle, there are many ways to achieve these goals through diet."

Messner said he sees many Coalition members getting their nutrition advice from the wrong people.

"Just because you meet a guy in the gym who has (had) positive effects from taking a supplement, this doesn't mean it will have the same effects for you," said Messner. "Each person is different. Factors like age, gender, weight and even ethnic backgrounds can have different effects for the same supplement."

Both Smith and Messner recommend a person should consult a doctor if they insist on taking supplements, not a friend or gym buddy.

For some supplements, this is a requirement. Supplements containing the ingredient Androstenedione, which are currently available over-the-counter, will soon be available only by prescription. Effective Jan. 20, it will be illegal to possess any supplement containing

Androstenedione without a prescription from a doctor.

In addition to consulting a doctor, people should do their own research into the specific supplement. Research should include reading and strictly following the label of each supplement.

"Taking twice the recommended dosage won't double the effect," said Messner. "In fact, overuse can be very dangerous."

Another important element in supplement use is proper hydration.

"In addition to taking proper dosage, hydration is one of the most important things when taking supplements," said Smith.

Smith reminds people that while proper diet and exercise will ultimately yield the best results for anybody trying to improve their health, there are some ways supplements can help.

Taking a multi-vitamin can help some people compensate for what they don't get from eating.

"A simple once-a-day vitamin makes empirical sense if you don't have a diverse diet," said Smith.

While the path to weight loss and the perfect body through supplements offers many benefits, it's important to pay attention to overall health.

"Many supplements help people achieve short-term goals," said Messner. "If you are really serious about your goals, supplements will only play a small part of your success."

Note to U.S. service members

As of Jan. 20, all products containing Androstenedione will be illegal without a prescription from a doctor. Personnel who currently have products containing this ingredient should ensure they have disposed of them prior to Jan. 20 to avoid legal repercussions.

Program brings parents to children on tape

Story and photo by
Lt. Col. Susan Meisner
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan — The letter began “Dear Reserve Master Sgt. (D. Keith) Johnson – Your post on anysoldier.com really touched my heart.

“You see, my father was deployed to Vietnam shortly after my birth in 1963 for two years. Upon his return home, everyone was so happy to see him – except me. I did not know who this person was . . . Had I had a video of him reading a story to watch, things might not have been so stressful for either of us.”

Thus read the letter from one of the many contributors to the “Read to your Kids” program at the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan. The program enables deployed military personnel to videotape themselves reading a story to their children, and then mail both the video and book to them.

Stateside readers of the anysoldier.com Web site have donated both the videos and books that make the program possible.

The program is Johnson’s pet project, and he devotes his one “off” day each week to its completion.

“While I was in Bosnia, I read an article in “Stars and Stripes” about a similar program on a Navy ship,” said Johnson. “I started

the program in Bosnia and completed over 100 tapings there. It was very popular.”

Johnson, OMC-A Public Affairs Office noncommissioned officer in charge, arrived in Kabul in October. He immediately established the program here, and has coordinated the recording of over 60 tapes between OMC – A and its subordinate unit, Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix.

Military members and their families have expressed their gratitude for, and enjoyment of, the program. Testimonials roll in.

Navy Cmdr. Kathy Schulz, a planner with Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan, received a message from her husband, Rob, about their eight-month-old daughter Jenna’s reaction to the tape.

“... she had been very fussy all day until I showed her your tape ... (and) you completely changed her mood!”



Marine Capt. Carlos Algarin, Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan, reads to his sons as part of the “Read to your Kids” program at the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan.

Lt. Cmdr. Theresa Thurlow, an engineering officer with OMC-A’s Defense Resource Sector, also received a good report from the home front.

“She (their daughter) loved watching the tape,” said Senior Chief Petty Officer Douglas Thurlow. “She even tried talking back to the TV once or twice . . . I think it’s a great program.”

See Reading, next page



Dari/Pashto phrase of the week

Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari

What time is it?

Sa-at chand ast
(Saw-awt chaund awst)

Pashto

What time is it?

So bajay da
(Soe bah-jay dah)

In Afghan culture, while it is normal for men to exchange handshakes and hugs, it is offensive to hug a woman or shake her hand. It is also offensive for a man to stare at a woman.

Essay: Integrity — ‘To possess it is to wear it for life’

This essay is the winner of the values essay contest for “Integrity.”

Integrity – If you could break it open and look inside, what would you see? There are many things that can be said about integrity. Depending on where you look and who you ask, integrity could mean several different things. The Soldiers Handbook says that integrity is doing “what’s right, legally and morally.” The Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines integrity as “adherence to a code of values.” So what then does integrity actually mean to us as individuals in our daily lives?

To me, integrity is an aspect of a person’s character. They either have that soundness of character which can only be defined as integrity, or they do not. Knowing that an individual has integrity is knowing that you can trust them implicitly. In a time when honesty is ridiculed and lying is seen as a way to get

ahead, integrity is a rare and valuable thing. To possess true integrity is to have earned the trust of all those who come in contact with you.

Integrity is an individual’s most critical asset, and in certain cases it becomes essential to maintain healthy communications. When split-second decisions need to be made and time is running out, knowing that you can rely on a person’s integrity to steer you in the right direction is an invaluable asset. In times of crisis and war, where tempers flare up and patience is in short supply, communications can become strained. Knowing that an individual possesses integrity can keep the vital lines of communication open, no matter the levels of stress. Integrity will ensure communications will be made with utter sincerity and candor, never wanting for honesty. This is crucially important in such troubled times. There is no need to question or double check,

everything said is at face value.

This is integrity. It is built over a lifetime, cultivated and groomed. It is unwavering. The value of a person’s integrity is only equal to how firmly they adhere to their conviction of it. Integrity is not something that can be turned off and on at will. It is either there or it is not. The foundation must be established and maintained throughout your life, day by day, to truly claim that you possess this rare value of character. If it’s there, there will be no need to make claims or blow whistles, your pure integrity will shine out to everyone privileged enough to make your acquaintance. If you crack open integrity and see inside, you would see a firm conviction and a soundness of character that cannot be impersonated. This is integrity, and to possess it is to wear it for life.

Spc. Aaron Sorensen
HHC, 1st Bn., 211th Avn. Rgt.

Reading: Troops read to their children through video

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Letting children know deployed parents are thinking of them is main point of the program.

“I thought this would be a unique way to show my youngest daughter I was thinking of her and doing well,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Porter, deployed from Fort Monroe, Va., to work on standing up

Afghanistan’s National Military Academy.

For many this is their first experience with a program of this kind.

“I’ve never done this before, and I’ve been deployed almost two-and-a-half years over the last four,” said Marine Capt. Carlos Algarin. “It’s a wonderful program—your kids can see you. My wife is looking forward to receiving the tape and playing

it for our children.”

“It’s been a great morale boost for almost everyone I’ve talked to. Without the help from people at home sending us supplies, none of this would have been possible,” said Johnson.

“Maintaining contact with loved ones during deployment is important. Nothing will replace Mom or Dad being home,” he said. “But the kids getting to see them on TV at

least gives them a face to see. And that’s really important for the little ones.”

(Editor’s note: To participate in the “Read to your Kids” program or start a program at your location, contact Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson at Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan Public Affairs at DSN 312-237-1616 or Staff Sgt. Jared Myers at Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix Public Affairs at DSN 312-237-2063.)

Letters to the Editor

The *Freedom Watch* would like to publish your opinions on topics of importance and interest to those serving in OEF.

Please send your thoughts in letter form to the editor. All letters e-mailed must include full name, unit, address and, when possible, telephone number. We will not print anonymous letters. Please limit all letters to 200 words or less.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, clarity and decorum.

Please avoid implying criticism of U.S. or DoD policies and programs, advocating or disputing specific political, diplomatic or legislative matters, or implying criticism of host nation or host nation sensitivities.

Please send your letters to:
stumpc@baf.afgn.army.mil

We look forward to hearing from you!

OEF “Values” Essay Contest

Personnel in Afghanistan are invited to participate in the Operation Enduring Freedom bi-monthly “Values” Essay Contest sponsored by CJTF-76.

The current value is “**Respect.**”

Rules

- ☐ Essays should include the definition of the featured value and your own experience(s) that reinforce this value
- ☐ Essays will be at least one and no more than two pages (typed/neatly printed and double-spaced)
- ☐ Please include a cover page with Title, Author’s Name, Supervisor’s Name, Unit/Organization, Phone Number and e-mail address if available
- ☐ Do not put name directly on essay
- ☐ Submit essays to EO Adviser nearest your location, via e-mail or hard copy by Jan. 10.

The winning essay writer will receive a CJTF-76 Commanding General’s Certificate of Achievement and other prizes to be announced. The essay will also be published in a future issue of the *Freedom Watch*, and in the bi-monthly EO Update.

EO is also looking for E-7s and above to help review essay submissions and select the winning essay.

Call the Bagram EO Senior Adviser at DSN 318-231-3021 for more information.

Compassion

A photograph of a U.S. Army medical professional, likely a nurse or doctor, wearing a tan uniform with a "U.S. ARMY" patch on the sleeve. He is holding a young child, possibly a toddler, in his arms. The child is wearing a patterned shirt and blue socks. The medical professional is looking down at the child, and a stethoscope is visible around his neck. The background shows a shelf with several bottles of medicine or supplies.

Freedom Watch

January 2, 2005