

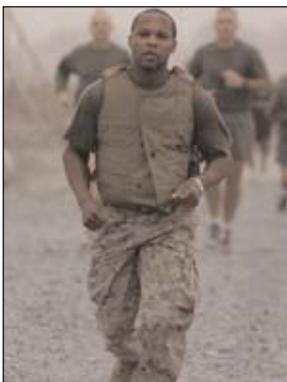
Inside



'America's Battalion'
takes over mission
Page 4



Wolfhounds honor
fallen comrade
Page 6



Salerno personnel
run 'Rocket Run'
Page 12



Cpl. Justin Schaeffer

Lt. Col. Mark Martinez, a veterinarian with the Task Force Victory Surgeon Cell, examines a goat during a Cooperative Medical Assistance mission Dec. 9 in Spera, Afghanistan.

Enemy threat doesn't stop medical assistance mission

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

SPERA, Afghanistan - The locations of Coalition humanitarian missions in Afghanistan often have an ulterior motive: to leave a footprint in enemy territory.

When the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team conducted a cooperative medical assistance mission in this village in southwestern Khost Province, it wasn't because those involved enjoy three-hour convoys, the last hour and a half of which was down a rocky, dried river bed.

Spera is located about seven kilometers from the Pakistan border, in a river valley that is an infiltration root for anti-Coalition militants coming into Afghanistan. Several nearby villages are known launching points for

ACM activity throughout the region.

Former NFL player and Army Ranger Cpl. Pat Tillman was killed near here during an operation in April.

By coming to villages like this, the Coalition can show that it cares for the Afghan people while at the same time showing the enemy it isn't scared to venture into their territory.

"It's important to show them that we can project the government of Afghanistan's power and our power down here, not only to interdict bad guys, but to help them out," said Lt. Col. Michael Lennon, a veterinarian and the operations officer for the Task Force Victory Surgeon Cell.

After convoying to Spera on Dec. 8, the Soldiers camped out for the night and began

See "Mission" page 3

Welcome to your newsletter

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

Welcome to the premier issue of the *Sentinel*.

This newsletter is published for you, the men and women of Regional Command East.

Whether you're serving at the Asadabad Provincial Reconstruction Team, at Waza Khwa, or anywhere in between, this newsletter is for you.

Whether you're an infantryman patrolling the mountains of Afghanistan, or you're a member of one of RC East's eight PRTs, we're here for you.

Our goal is to highlight all the great things you are doing to help win the Global War on Terrorism and put Afghanistan on the road to freedom and prosperity.

However, we only have three designated journalists in the region. There is no way one of the three of us will be able to get out to cover every good thing that happens.

That's where you come in. We need talented writers and photographers to send us stories and photos so we can highlight all the great things happening throughout RC East.

We don't expect Pulitzer Prize material and are prepared to do as little or as much editing that is required.

In case you haven't

Tips for submitting stories and photos

Stories

1. Always include a headline.
2. Always include the rank, first name, last name and unit of the author.
3. The dateline should be at the beginning of the first line of the story. This tells where and when the story took place. The name of the city is in all caps, followed by the country or state, then the date in parentheses [For example: KHOST, Afghanistan (Nov. 11, 2004) -].
4. The first sentence is known as the "lead." This is the most important part of the story, as it alone usually makes the readers decide whether or not they want to read the story. Make it informative and interesting.
5. To tell the story, answer the 5 W's and the H: who, what, when, why, where and how, putting the most important information at the top of the story.
6. Always include the rank, first name, last name, job title, unit and hometown of every person mentioned in the story.
7. Be objective; keep personal opinion out of the story.
8. Don't be part of the story. Avoid using words like I, you, we, our, us, etc.

9. Don't worry about trying to win a Pulitzer Prize. Just tell the story.

10. Stories will be edited before printed.

Photographs

1. Take action photos. Avoid posed shots and people looking into the camera. Definitely no "grip and grins" - people shaking hands and looking into the camera and smiling.

2. Photos should complement the story. They should show what the story talks about.

3. Include a caption for every photo. Caption should fully identify everyone in the photo (rank, first name, last name, job title, unit and hometown), provide a brief description of the action and include the place and date it was taken.

4. Always include the rank, first name, last name and unit of the photographer.

5. Do not attach photos to a Microsoft Word or Power Point document. Send them separately as JPGs, at the highest resolution possible.

E-mail all submissions to:
rhenb@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

noticed, though, internet and phone connections are sketchy, so please try to be as complete and accurate as possible so we don't have to worry about getting ahold of you to answer a question.

We also need your help to distribute the *Sentinel*. There are currently no plans to mass print the *Sentinel*, so we are relying primarily on e-mail.

We will e-mail it out to a wide variety of personnel and, hopefully they will, in

turn, e-mail it out to others. We ask everyone who receives the *Sentinel* by e-mail to pass it on, especially if someone you know is mentioned in a story or captured in a photograph.

Also, you will notice the pages are 8.5 by 11 inches - exactly the same as your standard printer paper. We ask that if it is possible, you print out a few copies and pass them around your units as well.

Despite our recycling

efforts, the CTF Thunder Public Affairs Office just does not have enough paper to print out a copy for everyone in the regions.

We hope you enjoy your newsletter. If you have any suggestions, please don't hesitate to send them. We look forward to hearing from you.

To contact us, call DSN 318-851-0040 or e-mail rhenb@cjtf76.centcom.mil or changj@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

Sentinel is an authorized newsletter for the personnel of Regional Command East, Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan. It is published in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.

Sentinel is published bi-

weekly by the Combined Task Force Thunder Public Affairs Office at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

Contents of the *Sentinel* are not necessarily the official view of the U.S. government, the Department of

Defense or the Department of the Army.

The CTF Thunder Public Affairs Office is located in the Tactical Operations Center at FOB Salerno. It can be reached at DSN 318-851-0040 or via e-mail at rhenb@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

Commander

Col. Gary H. Cheek

Public Affairs Officer

Capt. Juanita Chang

Editor

Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Mission from page 1

setting up early the next morning. Two military veterinarians set up on one side of the river bed, while about half a dozen Army medics and doctors operated out of a clinic on the other side.

Hundreds of locals lined up at the two clinics to receive health care or medicine for sick animals.

About two hours before the mission was scheduled to end, reports came in of enemy activity in the area, possibly directed at the mission. Within a half hour, the group had handed out the rest of the goods and were packed up and headed back out the valley.

Lennon, who served as a Special Forces surgeon in Afghanistan in early 2002, said it was unfortunate the mission had to be cut short, but once the information came in, they decided to not take any chances and left the area.

"Our CMA program has been so successful in gaining the trust of the local nationals, the bad guys decided they wanted to try to do something about it, so they apparently put a hit out on one of our columns, and we decided to get out of there before it got dark," Lennon said.

Despite the abrupt ending, the mission was successful. More than 200 patients were seen, including one goat, and countless doses of medication were doled out for people as well as animals.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Spc. Chony Seng, a medic with the Khost PRT, checks the blood pressure of an Afghan man during a cooperative medical assistance mission Dec. 9 in Spera, Afghanistan.

Additionally, young medics like Pfc. Luke Bauer, a medic for HHB, Combined Task Force Thunder, gained valuable experience while working alongside more seasoned doctors.

The Superior, Wisc., native said despite the danger, the mission was "awesome."

"It was cool that we got to go give the

locals a little bit of health care, even if it was only for a day, but it was better than what they usually get," he said.

He said the thought of going into enemy territory didn't bother him too much and thinks that should make the villagers like us that much more.

Bauer said that sends a loud message to the enemy: "That we don't give a damn about the enemy, and we're going to hook up their people whether they like it or not."

However, a downside to the mission is the fact that locals apparently still don't want their women interacting with outsiders. Only two of the patients seen were women.

Spc. Chony Seng, a medic with the Khost PRT, said she was disappointed at the number of females who showed up and would like to see more of them come out.

"They need to be educated and they need to be seen," Seng said.

Bauer agreed and said more women should have the opportunity to receive health care, especially since the mission included female medics specifically for that reason.

"There's no reason they should have to stay inside while all the men come over with their problems," Bauer said.

Regardless of enemy activity or the lack of equal rights among the locals, missions like this will continue. The Khost PRT already has two more CMAs scheduled for the upcoming months.



1st Lt. Mike Shepherd

A break from learning

Two students take a break from learning at a school in Zair Som, Afghanistan, one of three new schools in the Kahmard District of Bamian Province. The other two schools are in the towns of Do Ru and Madr. The three projects were funded by the Commander's Emergency Response Program, and the schools were constructed by Afghan construction companies. Each school has toilet facilities and a water well, and the classrooms have been furnished with wooden desks and chairs. The Bamian Provincial Reconstruction Team supplied the school with four stationery kits at its grand opening Oct. 25.

3/3 Marines take over mission from 3/6

'America's Battalion' replaces 'Teufelhunden' in CTF Thunder mission

By Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Third Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, "America's Battalion," formally took control of Area of Operations Trinity Nov. 25, relieving 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Rgt. in a transfer of authority ceremony here.

On the small basketball court turned parade deck, in front of Combined Task Force Thunder's commanders and guests, 3/6's colors were symbolically cased, and the red and gold of America's Battalion's colors were uncased and unfurled in a combat zone for the first time in over a decade.

Army Col. Gary H. Cheek, commander of CTF Thunder, spoke both to the professionalism and effectiveness of 3/6 and his high expectations for America's Battalion. Cheek lauded the Marines for their near-seamless integration into Task Force Thunder.

"I cannot tell you how honored I am to serve with all of you here today," said Cheek. "Never in my wildest dreams did I think that as a field artillery colonel in the United States Army I would serve alongside infantryman from the United States Marine Corps. I have been deeply touched by the great quality of your leaders and the great spirit of your men. No greater honor have I had in my entire career."

The combined joint task force approach to warfighting has been

key to the successes of Coalition Forces operating in AO Trinity, according to the commanders of Thunder.

Cheek and others spoke glowingly of how the integrated forces have not only crushed enemy resistance, but done so in such a way that the people of Afghanistan have been given the opportunity to rebuild their country in the climate of free democracy.



Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Lt. Col. Norm Cooling, commander of 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt. (right), and Sgt. Maj. William Stables, the battalion sergeant major, uncased the battalion's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony Nov. 25.

"The real key is the population, the Afghan people who are out there," said Cheek. "It is our interaction with them that is going to win the war. It means the insurgents have no where to turn to for support. The people are not going to give them shelter or give them food."

The success that 3/6 was able to build included over 2,000 combat patrols, \$600,000 in commander's emergency relief funds spent for projects benefiting Afghans and the oversight of the first democratic presidential election in Afghanistan's history. Cheek said the 3/6 Marines could redeploy knowing that they made a real difference as an agent of history.

"As a battalion, we needed to be a part of this," said Lt. Col. Dale Alford, commander of 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Rgt. "It's been great working under an Army command, and we've accomplished the goals we set for ourselves."

The companies of America's Battalion control an area roughly the size of West Virginia, and with Afghanistan's parliamentary elections looming as the next

goal for his battalion, Lt. Col. Norm Cooling, 3/3 commander, spoke warmly of his Marines' abilities and spirits during a recent interview with Honolulu media.

"I think morale is sky high," said Cooling when asked about his Marines during the transition. "Our Marines and Sailors have been ready to stop training and start carrying out the mission."

As to working with the Army, Cooling said he was happy to be working with the 25th Infantry Division, based out of Schofield Barracks on Oahu.

"They're our Oahu Ohana. We just had to go to the other side of the world in order to work with them," said Cooling.

As the ceremony closed, the relief and pride of the 3/6 Marines was almost as palpable as the spirit on the faces of America's Battalion's Marines.

Cooling closed by speaking directly to his commanders in a message that couldn't have been clearer.

"We make one pledge - we're United States Marines," Cooling said with emotion. "We go where the fight is, and we win it. The fight here, we recognize, is not only against the Taliban and other anti-Afghan forces, but also a battle for the trust of the people."

"We're United States Marines. We go where the fight is, and we win it."

- Lt. Col. Norm Cooling,
commander, 3/3 Marines

Coalition responds to mullahs' demands

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

KHOST, Afghanistan - Coalition representatives provided responses to a list of 15 "Responsibilities of government and foreign relatives" during a mullah conference Dec. 6 at Khost University.

The list was signed by several mullahs - religious leaders - from Khost Province and was presented to Coalition representatives at a similar conference in Khost last month.

"Task Force Thunder took their concerns very seriously," said Maj. Carl Hollister, commander of the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team. "They addressed them in a very timely fashion, and we used this venue as the opportunity to answer them in a public setting."

Among other things, the list called for the Coalition to respect Afghans' national, cultural and religious values and customs; end night raids on homes; and carefully scrutinize information from informants to ensure it was not given as a means of retaliation to settle a grudge.

"The Coalition takes your points very seriously, and we have taken the time to answer them," Hollister told the mullahs.

Copies of the Coalition's responses were handed out to the mullahs at the conference for distribution among their communities.

More than 70 mullahs from around Khost Province attended the confer-



Cpl. Justin Schaeffer

Maj. Carl Hollister, commander of the Khost PRT, speaks at a mullah conference Dec. 6 at Khost University in Khost, Afghanistan.

ence. Hollister said the purpose of this meeting and others like it is to update local community about Coalition's efforts working with the government of Afghanistan.

Also at the meeting, Hollister told the mullahs that he knows they know about anti-Coalition activity, and it's time that they put an end to what they can control. He urged the mullahs to get militants to start focusing on reconciliation.

"[The mullahs] need to be telling their brothers to put down their arms and to come and get integrated into Afghan society," Hollister said.

Also discussed were the success of the first presidential election, and how that's going to lead into the parliamentary elections in the spring.

Mullahs are chosen to attend conferences like this because they are key communi-

cators in their communities, Hollister said.

"They have more influence than the police, they have more influence than the provincial ministers, and they have more influence than the governor does with the individual villagers," Hollister said.

In addition to establishing a dialogue with the religious leaders, these types of meeting have also made locals less apprehensive about talking to someone in a uniform.

"It's difficult when you're rolling down the road in a Humvee with a .50 cal and you come out with your hardhat looking like a 'stormtrooper,' and then you tell these people you're here to help," Hollister said.

At the meeting, Hollister delivered the keys to a car the Coalition donated to one of the province's ministries.

"Today's small gift of a vehicle is just recognizing the importance of that particular ministry," Hollister said. "What we from the West have to understand is that there is no separation of church and state in Afghanistan, so we need to be supporting the mosques, the madrasses and the ministers themselves."

There is another mullah conference in Khost scheduled for Jan. 6.



Cpl. Justin Schaeffer

More than 70 mullahs attended the mullah conference.

Wolfhounds remember fallen comrade

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan - Cpl. Isaac Diaz didn't have to be in the Humvee. In fact, he didn't even have to leave the base.

As an armorer, Diaz spent most of his days in the company's arms room ensuring all of the company's weapons were accounted for and maintained.

However, after expressing a desire to get "outside the wire," Diaz was switched to a turret gunner on a Humvee.

Diaz's enthusiasm eventually cost him his life.

The 26-year-old Rio Hondo, Texas, native was killed Nov. 30 when his Humvee rolled over during a routine patrol about 1 kilometer south of Sharana, Afghanistan.

The Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment remembered Diaz during a memorial service Dec. 5 at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, Afghanistan.

Diaz was born on July 3, 1978, and joined the Army in

August 1998. He was assigned to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, in August 2001 where he was a member of Company B, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt..

Spc. John Kelly, a friend of Diaz from Company B, said he got to know Diaz about a year and a half ago when his wife and Diaz's wife became close friends and decided the two Soldiers needed to become friends as well.

Kelly said he was apprehensive to hang out with Diaz at first, but the first night the two couples got together, they sat out on Kelly's back porch until 2 a.m. talking and playing cards.

The next time Kelly's wife said the Diazes were coming over for a barbecue, Kelly said he was excited.

"Isaac was a great guy to hang out with," Kelly said. "It became a regular occurrence - Isaac and his family were always at my house, and we always had a good time."

Kelly said his favorite memory of Diaz was after he had a few too many drinks, he turned on my wife's karaoke



Cpl. Isaac Diaz

machine and started singing Shania Twain's "I feel like a woman."

"He must have sang that song for two hours, recording himself and making us listen to it," Kelly said. "My friend was a great guy, but he couldn't sing."

Capt. John Sego, commander of Co. B, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., said Diaz possessed the qualities all Soldiers strive for, and he was always in a good mood and quick with a joke.

"Sometimes I would ask him to do something, and he would take off running to accomplish it before I had the

opportunity to finish explaining what needed to be done," Sego recalled.

Sego said during the first couple months in Afghanistan, Diaz was responsible for establishing the company arms room. Diaz never complained once, but Sego said he could tell Diaz was getting restless.

Someone told Sego that Diaz wanted to get outside the wire, so Sego made Diaz his gunner.

"Over the next few months he endured countless hours patrolling across the countryside on rough terrain in harsh weather and with the imminent threat of enemy attack," Sego said. "But his spirit never faltered, and the rest of us drew courage from him."

Spc. James Dufoe, another friend in the company, said he knew Diaz since he arrived in Hawaii and recalled Diaz as "a good friend who was always ready to crack a joke when you were down or upset."

Dufoe said Diaz took on the job of gunner in the commander's truck without complaining, and he stayed in the turret, often refusing to take breaks until the mission was complete.

"He was the first line of defense, keeping an eye out for any enemy and giving the commander the security he needed to run the company during ground movement," Dufoe said.

Dufoe said Diaz was fond of playing pranks on his friends, like dousing them with water when they weren't looking and taking all the furniture in the room and stacking it on one of their beds.

"Some of his jokes were only funny to him, but he would keep at it until he got a laugh out of us," Dufoe said.

Diaz is survived by his wife, Amber, and his son, Aaron.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Spc. John Kelly, Capt. John Sego, and Spc. James Dufoe, all of Co. B, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., salute during the playing of "Taps" at a memorial service for Cpl. Isaac Diaz Dec. 5 at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, Afghanistan.

Hawaii MPs train Afghan police

By Staff Sgt. Mark Turney
3rd Bn., 116th Inf. Rgt.

GHAZNI, Afghanistan - In a cramped, dimly-lit room 30 Afghan policemen recited aloud, in unison, the Police Code of Ethics under the watchful eyes of their instructors.

Military Police from Schofield Barracks' 25th MP Company have been providing much-needed training to Afghan National Police here for several months.

Sgt. Danielle Dolph, a 4-year veteran with the 25th MP Co., was teaching a group of Afghan Police for the second time. After welcoming back her students, she began by having the policemen read the Code of Ethics.

Haltingly at first and then slowly rising to a crescendo, the 30 men began to read aloud, in their native Pashtu.

"I am a police officer for the country of Afghanistan. I am of the people and for the people. I proudly recognize my obligation to perform my duty with integrity, loyalty and honesty..."

After the recitation, Dolph asked the men why the code is important to them.

"We are trying to follow all these rules now and it is difficult. We are trying to show the community through what we do," said Jafar Ali, a policeman from a neighboring community.

Dolph said police officers are the people that everyone looks up to in the towns and the provinces.

"Eventually if they see their relationships with us as useful, they will continue to progress and will become those people that everyone respects," she said.

The diversity amongst the students also made the class rewarding and challenging, said Mohammad Zaher, a student in the class who had



Staff Sgt. Mark Turney

Sgt. Danielle C. Dolph, a Military Policewoman with the 25th MP Co., leads a class on preparing for a patrol to members of the Afghan Police Force in Ghazni, Afghanistan.

been in the Afghan Army for 20 years.

"We have two kinds of officers here, academics and not academics (referring to those that have graduated from the police academy and those that have not.) Those that have been to the academy 25 or 30 years ago and after 25 years of fighting you tend to forget some things; some that have finished the academy recently and some that have not been to the academy yet," said Zaher.

Diversity was the key word for this class of 30. The youngest student was just 18 and the oldest was in his 60s. Zaher had 20 years of mili-

tary service and there were many with none. Several were Mujahadeen (former freedom fighters against the Russians) some had never touched a weapon.

"They put out lots of stories, going from accidental discharges to people getting killed by RPGs and IEDs," said fellow 25th MP Co. Sgt. Eduardo Cruz-Rivera. "We think we have gone through a lot, but it's shattering to think these guys have had years and years of war. That's practical experience I hope to never have."

Many of the lessons were hard learned ones, where people were wounded or

killed due to negligence or lack of training.

"They are absolutely using those hard learned lessons every day," said Dolph. We take the things that we see and try to build around that."

Dolph said the previous day she was teaching them weapons safety and one of them stood up and told a story about his friend who wasn't paying attention to what he was doing with his rifle and was resting his chin on the muzzle. The weapon went off and shot him in the head, killing him.

When the class took breaks, many of the men would stay behind talking with one another or copying everything that was written on the easel boards at the front of the classroom. The level of motivation was evidently high amongst the men.

"They always stayed after class during breaks and copied everything on the board," said Cruz-Rivera. "They were so motivated about what we had to teach that they always were asking us questions."

At times, the going was slow as some of the men are slow to understand some of the concepts. Everyone pitches in to assist, and Dolph notes that the lack of formal education of many of the men makes some of the lessons difficult but all that much more important.

"The quality of (academy) training may not be as good as it could be because of a lack of formal education level over here and there is a great rush that is put on them to create officers," said Dolph.

A quiet but thoughtful looking Neamatullah Azizi said lack of education is the single biggest problem in Afghanistan

"The people without edu-

See "Police" page 9

Governors conference focuses on future of region

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

GHAZNI, Afghanistan - Five Afghan provincial governors met here for a two-day conference Dec. 1 and 2 to discuss issues of concern for their region of the country.

The governors of Ghazni, Paktia, Khost, Logar and Wardak provinces attended the conference, which was held at the Ghazni governor's guest house. Among the topics of discussion were security, reconstruction, economic development and good governance.

The conference was the first of its type in this region and was modeled after similar conferences in the Kandahar region, where governors have met several times.

Coalition military personnel also attended the conference, including the commanders of Combined Task Force Thunder, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, and the Ghazni, Khost and Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Representatives from the U.S. State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development also attended.

In a country that has long lived by tribal laws and customs that often differ from region to region, the conference was a step toward building relationships among the governors, and subsequently, their provinces.

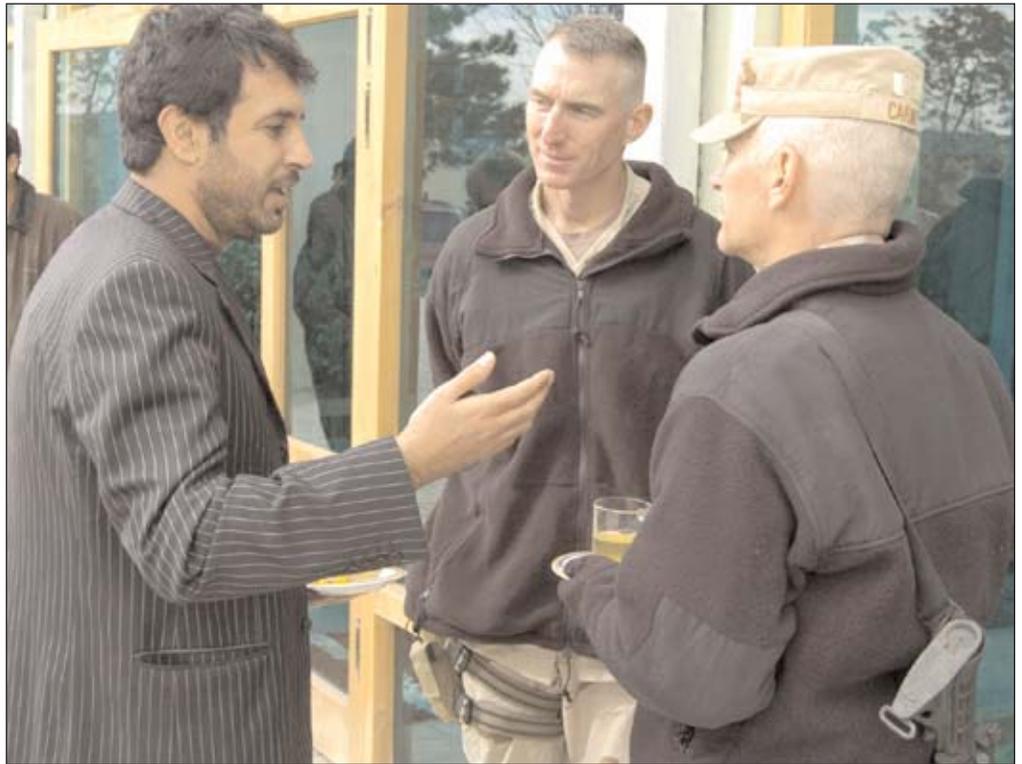
"We want to have good relations between all the governors and the provinces," said Asadullah Khalid, governor of Ghazni province.

Khalid, who hosted the conference, said in the past, if someone, including the Taliban, did something illegal in one province, they could go to another province, and it was like going to another country.

With security concerns like that, he said, reconstruction and economic development were almost impossible.

"We were looking for the governors to come together as a region, and as a region they might be able to come up with some plans that might contribute to the growth of the region overall instead of just looking at their individual provinces," said Col. Gary H. Cheek, commander of CTF Thunder.

The conference provided a forum for the governors to exchange ideas and



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Asadullah Khalid, governor of Ghazni province (left), has a conversation with Col. Gary H. Cheek, commander of CTF Thunder (center), and Lt. Col. Christopher Carney, CTF Thunder director of civil-military operations, during a break in the governors conference Dec. 2 in Ghazni, Afghanistan.

things they're doing in their provinces that might be beneficial in other provinces, Cheek said.

"It's a good forum to build friendships and relationships so that as they have issues that cross provincial boundaries, it gives them a foundation on which they can talk to each other and work out the problem or assist each other in taking care of an issue," he said.

But there are many challenges the governors face on the road to prosperity. Unlike state governors in America, Afghan governors are appointed, and sometimes they don't even live in the provinces they're appointed to.

The governors also can't levy taxes to raise funds; they have to wait for a budget to come down from the national government in Kabul.

"So how are they going to tackle what their most pressing problems are?" asked Lt. Col. Gerald Timoney, commander of the Ghazni PRT.

Timoney, who helped organize the conference, said that was one of the topics the conference was designed to address. If nothing else, he said the

governors can realize what the problems are and set priorities and goals.

"That's why at this particular time, the reconstruction efforts are helping the governors get it together to the point where they can start generating income," Timoney said.

Merajudin Patan, governor of Khost province, had never been to a conference like this before and wanted to learn about the plans for the region, and not just focus on his province.

"We're trying to be part of one nation, that's Afghanistan," he said. "In order to bring unity, it's very important to work together."

Khalid said he attended a conference with four governors about a year and a half ago, but said it's rare for governors to get together. However, he hopes there are more conferences like this one and they help the governors become friends as well as colleagues.

All involved said they planned to make the conference a regular occurrence, perhaps as often as every three months. Future conference might also involve more provincial governors from the region.

Joint Chiefs vice chairman visits Afghanistan

By Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly

3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Amid the whirlwind first weeks of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment's deployment to Afghanistan, the Marines and Sailors of the battalion were welcomed here Nov. 21 by one of the highest-ranking Marines in their chain of command.

Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Gen. Peter Pace, visited FOB Salerno to personally give the joint task force operations here his seal of approval, as well as insure that America's Battalion was ready to take the fight.

During a command and staff meeting, Pace was briefed on the specifics of 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Regiment's activity over the last seven months in Afghanistan.

While operating in Afghanistan, 3/6 logged more than 2,000 combat patrols and countless humanitarian assistance projects exceeding 600 thousand dollars.

With the help of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and their dedication to security and support operations, 3/6 was able to contin-



Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (right), talks with Master Sgt. Joseph Crandall, of HHB, CTF Thunder, Nov. 21.

ue the Coalition's campaign to stabilize Afghanistan and promote the first presidential election in the nation's history.

"You should be leaving here with a feeling of enormous pride," Pace said to 3/6's command.

Pace expressed his firm belief that 3/3 would continue the positive trend and be instrumental in the success of the upcoming Afghan parliamentary elections.

Pace continued, saying he was envious of the Marines on the ground during this war. He expressed how pleased he was by their effectiveness in dealing with a dif-

ficult enemy in Afghanistan's tactically challenging environment and how much better he could understand their situation after seeing it firsthand.

"I really appreciate the opportunity to get out here and see what you're doing," said Pace, while meeting with the command and staff of the battalions. "I wish I could be a platoon or company commander during this fight, but it makes a world of difference to be able to sit in front of congress and say, 'I was there last week.'"

Pace spent the afternoon visiting with Marines, Sailors and Soldiers around the base,

praising their hard work and dedication.

Meanwhile, the Marines of America's Battalion were already standing post with their 3/6 counterparts in a "left seat, right seat" routine designed to familiarize 3/3 Marines with the operational environment they will soon take formal charge of.

Sergeant of the Guard, Kirk Pusey of Kingston, Jamaica, expressed how imperative it was for him that America's Battalion starts off on a positive note.

"It's important to be prepared and ready for this transfer of authority," explained Pusey from his vantage point on the back of an up-armored vehicle during a tour of Salerno's guard posts. "We're the first people [Afghans] see when they come to this base, and we have to properly represent who we are and why we're here."

Pusey, usually a food service specialist at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, talked excitedly of getting the opportunity to make a difference for his family and for his country.

"I'm happy to be here and to be doing this," he said, breaking into an easy smile. "We're going to give the people of Afghanistan the opportunities they deserve, and we're going to destroy our enemies."

Police

from page 7

cation don't understand the laws and want to grow opium and other drugs to survive," he said. "Under the Russians and the Taliban many of our educated people left for other countries and became exiles."

The training went deep into the day and the relationships continued to grow as the MPs and Afghans talked and shared experiences in an effort to create a lasting, potentially life saving bond.

The training is designed in the hopes that each of these senior officers will bring back to his station the information

taught and teach his subordinates.

The ultimate goal is to teach one another how the other works so that on future joint patrols they will work as a team.

"They see and understand that the relationship is getting closer. As we help them out, they help us out. It's really a 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'," said Dolph. "They help us locate caches and provide us with information. I think they understand as well as we do that that relationships we are forming is important to both of us."

At the end of the day, the reasons for being there are different but all have a similar tone.

"Too many times, people say that all these people are bad and they are wrong. Most of these people are kind and genuinely good people and I have seen that personally," said Dolph. "If these classes save just one life then I have done my job. That is really what's most important to me here."

"In the last 20 or 25 years we have had fighting and wars and other disturbances. It was difficult to maintain laws so training like this will teach us again how to be better police officers," said Abdul Malek, a police officer from a neighboring district. "We would like to take this training, save lives and use it to keep peace."

Live-fire exercise nets multiple results

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING
BASE SALERNO,
Afghanistan - One exercise,
three results.

To the Soldiers of Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, the live-fire exercise held here Nov. 20 was a chance for them to hone their skills as artillerymen.

For the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, it was a chance to learn the ins and outs of calling for fire from Army artillery. The battalion is currently conducting a relief-in-place with their predecessors from 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Rgt. as 3/6 prepares to redeploy to Camp Lejeune, N.C.

And for everyone in the immediate vicinity of the base, including any enemy forces, the exercise was a show of force not soon to be forgotten.

With six M198 155mm howitzers standing ready at all times, Btry. F, 7th FA Rgt. is capable of accurately firing on targets well over 10 kilometers away.

First Lt. David O'Leary, a platoon leader for Btry. F,



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Spc. Chris Horn, a cannoneer for Btry. F, 7th Field Artillery Rgt., pulls the lanyard on a 155mm howitzer and sends a round down-range during a live-fire exercise Nov. 20 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

said the exercise was an opportunity for the artillerymen to maintain their skills and keep from getting complacent.

Just by the nature of the exercise, he added, it is a show of force. Anyone who's ever been near a 155mm howitzer when it fires knows what O'Leary is talking

about.

"It demonstrates to the local populace what we can provide and gives them a little bit of security, and I think for the enemy, it's going to make them think twice about attacking the base," O'Leary said.

For the Soldiers of Btry. F manning the guns, the mission was pretty cut and dry: wait for the coordinates to come in from the fire control center and rain steel down on the target.

"This is what these guys are trained to do. It's a pretty standard shoot, and nothing these guys haven't done before," O'Leary said.

The addition of the guns along with the trajectory-tracking radar have succeeded in reducing the number of rocket attacks on the base, according to Marine Gunnery Sgt. Daniel Jackson, an artillery liaison for 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Rgt.

Jackson said prior to July 25, the base averaged three

or four rocket attacks a month. That was before Btry. F, with the help of the radar, started firing back at the origin of the rockets.

Since the battery started returning fire, the number of rocket attacks on the base has dwindled, and there hadn't been an attack between Oct. 9 and the date of the exercise.

In addition, Jackson said several of the people who fired rockets at the base have been confirmed killed by the battery's fire.

"It's not a good situation for them (the enemy)," he said.

Jackson said this exercise gave the fires section from 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines a chance to actually do a live fire shoot with Btry. F, while he and others from 3rd Bn., 6th Marines watched over their shoulders.

"Everybody's got to practice what they do so when they need it, it works," Jackson said.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

A 155mm howitzer from Btry. F, 7th Field Artillery Rgt. sends a round down-range during a live-fire exercise Nov. 20 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

USARPAC commander, CSM spend Thanksgiving in Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - The commander and top enlisted Soldier from U.S. Army Pacific traveled to the other side of the world Nov. 25 to spend Thanksgiving with their Army family.

Lt. Gen. John Brown III and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Farley visited Soldiers, Marines and civilian employees deployed here from Hawaii and shared Thanksgiving dinner with them at the base dining facility.

As he awaited his turn to go through the chow line, Brown said he wanted to visit Soldiers and civilians, thank them for what they're doing, and wish them a happy Thanksgiving.

"All of us from U.S. Army Pacific take great pride in what's going on here," he said.

The general said Army Thanksgivings, whether they take place in a dining facility, while deployed or in the field, are a very special time.

"I had the opportunity, and I wanted to take it to



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Lt. Gen. John M. Brown III, commander of U.S. Army Pacific, talks with Soldiers of Logistics Task Force 524 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan, Nov. 25.

come say happy Thanksgiving to all these great Soldiers," he said.

While on the ground, Brown visited with Soldiers from the 125th Signal Battalion; Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment; Logistics Task Force 524 and Combined Task Force Thunder Headquarters. He said he was very impressed and said all the Soldiers he met were "magnificent."

"I've been able to track the great work done by Soldiers and Marines in this theater to help the Afghans pull off their election - just tremen-

dous work there," he said. "And what I see today is focused on beyond the election and what needs to be done to keep this momentum going."

Farley said the visit had several purposes. In addition to spending the holiday with the Soldiers, he and Brown wanted to make sure the Soldiers are doing well and they have everything they need, and thank them for what they're doing and for serving the country.

"There's a lot of great work going on, and they really made the election successful

and I think they put the government on the right track," Farley said.

Farley said since he isn't eating Thanksgiving dinner with his own family, the only other people he'd want to eat with are Soldiers.

"If you can't eat Thanksgiving dinner with your true loved ones - your family, parents and kids - there's no better alternative than eating it with your Army family," he said. "I ate Thanksgiving dinner with the Army for the last 20 years, and I don't plan on stopping now."

Although he is the commander of all Army units in the Pacific, Brown said the fact there are Marines from Hawaii deployed to FOB Salerno makes the holiday an even bigger family affair. He noted that earlier in the day, Marines from Hawaii took over part of the mission in Combined Task Force Thunder during a transfer of authority ceremony.

"Soldiers and Marines have an awful lot in common, and they certainly have a common mission here, so it's great to see them working side by side," Brown said.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Sharana PRT opens new compound

Afghan children from a nearby school sing the Afghan National Anthem Nov. 21 at the grand opening of the Sharana Provincial Reconstruction Team's new compound. The compound, located near Sharana, the capital of Paktika Province, is named Camp Kearney for Spc. James Kearney, a member of the Sharana PRT who died Nov. 1 from injuries he sustained when his convoy was attacked by enemy forces.



photos by Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Runners sprint out to a fast start to the Rocket Run Nov. 25 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

Left - Staff Sgt. Freddie Scott, from Headquarters and Service Co., 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt., runs the Rocket Run in his body armor.

'Rocket Run' kicks off Thanksgiving at Salerno

By Lance Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Service members and civilians began their Thanksgiving here by kicking up some dust during the Thanksgiving Day 10k Rocket Run.

Runners wound their way around the heavily-barricaded perimeter of FOB Salerno, some in five-person teams, some running in formation with their units and others running solo.

The competitors were vying for certificates of achievement, unit coins and other prizes. To a casual observer, however, what was really on the line were bragging rights among the units and services participating.

"It's been a while since I've run in a race like this, but I don't like people passing me," said Lance Cpl. Eric Funk a radio operator with Headquarters and Service Co., 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. "I'm just going to go out and run as hard as I can."

The idea for the task-force level run came up after organizers realized that

the run would be a good way to get everyone in the joint-forces environment participating in a "just for fun" event.

"About a month ago we realized we hadn't sponsored a morale run for quite a while, and the start of the holiday season seemed like the perfect time," said Sgt. Maj. Eugene Brewer, CTF Thunder operations sergeant major, who helped plan the event. "You see a lot of pats on the back, and even though we're competitive out here, it's all about esprit de corps and teamwork."

In fact, everyone's spirits were high as runners passed each checkpoint, dousing themselves with cups of water and cheering each other on.

"I think it's a good morale booster," continued Brewer, who finished fourth in his age group. "We're all in this together, regardless of what branch of service you're in. We're all away from home on a special day, and something like this run really brings us together."

Other runners agreed, happy to share the morning with their fellow service members.

"The run was a great sign of cama-

raderie," said Capt. Dave McCombs, commander of Headquarters and Service Co., 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt. "We can come out here and built friendships under the auspices of the joint forces environment."

McCombs posted one of the fastest times of the day, just behind the winning runner, Cpl. Aubrie Solomon of 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Rgt.

The elevation left many of the newly-arrived runners a little more winded than they thought they would be, breathing heavily through the hazy morning.

"It felt a lot longer than 6.2 miles," said Lance Cpl. Jason Stenzel, from a tactical network specialist with 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

The Rocket Run earned its name from the now waning insurgent rocket attacks on FOB Salerno. In recent months, the presence of the Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment's "big guns" and the positive effects of service members' presence in the local community has deeply eroded support for insurgency against the Afghan government and coalition forces.

Another run is scheduled for the upcoming holiday season.