

The Mountain Warrior





Brigade Commander and Command Sergeant Major's letter



**To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen,
Marines and Civilians of Task Force
Mountain Warrior:**

As we approach the start of our sixth month in Afghanistan, I continue to be amazed by your brilliant and courageous performances on the battlefield. We knew our fight would be tough. We also knew the enemy would quickly respect and fear the discipline, prowess and lethality we possess as Mountain Warriors. In the last 30 days you've combined to kill 6 high value insurgent leaders and over 300 of their misguided followers. The discipline and restraint you use to kill the enemy while doing "no harm" to the local population is remarkable. In many areas, this dynamic has brought local Afghans to come forward to seek and build a relationship with you and the Afghan government for the first time in many years. Your offensive spirit has proven to be the best way to allow the local Afghan leaders to move forward and build a stronger Afghanistan.

Our COP closures in Nuristan and Korengal are a great example of this offensive spirit and have already produced positive effects across our entire AO. The gains of these COP closures in terms of increased blade hours for our aircraft and the maneuverability of several more platoons are already allowing us to chase down and destroy insurgents that infect many of the capillary valleys within our AO. We are also now better postured to conduct combined action with our Afghan National Security Force partners as a result of realignment. Combined action is a difficult mission, but a strong and capable ANSF is critical to our success. We all need to come at this mission with the same aggressiveness we show against the enemy. I know the ANSF in this region are lucky to have such an incredible group of professionals by their side.

Our success as professional Warriors is firmly based upon being experts at the basics. I ask that each and every one of you continue to focus on the fundamentals that make you great. Mountain Warrior is known as a disciplined formation – our ranks are filled with leaders and Soldiers who always do the right thing regardless of how difficult that may be. Continue to be vigilant and maintain that standard. Look after your battle buddy to ensure he/she does the same. Maintain your high morals and stay positive – knowing that you will succeed will carry the day.

In spite of our successes, we suffered a great tragedy last month. 10 great Americans from our ranks made the ultimate sacrifice. We will never forget their friendship, their Love of Country or their bravery. Remember them and continue to keep their family and loved ones in your thoughts and prayers.

Please also make an extra effort to stay in contact with your family and loved ones. The holidays are approaching quickly, which can be a difficult time to be apart. By supporting each other and keeping in contact you can alleviate much of this stress and work to build a closer relationship while apart.

You're doing a great job out there, and I'm proud to serve with you on the Mountain Warrior Team. You are making a difference in one of the greatest international efforts of all time. Thank you for who you are and what you do. God bless you, your friends and family and the United States of America.

Led By Love of Country!

Colonel Randy A. George

To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians of Task Force Mountain Warrior:

As many of us come up on our halfway point and some of us prepare to re-deploy we reflect back on our time here. We can all be proud of everything that we have accomplished so far. Each and every one of you can and are making history with Task Force Mountain Warrior. We have made N2KL safer, worked to make our Afghan partners better, and improved our FOBs, COPs, and OPs significantly. We have had many valorous acts of heroism, stayed in front of all of our administrative and logistical requirements, and produced intelligence that has not only led to capturing or killing many insurgents and criminals but also saved coalition and Afghan lives. We have used lethal force when required and shown restraint when crucial. We have maintained our equipment to a high standard and our communications has stayed spot on. I could continue to go on and on but will wrap up this month's letter by saying that I am proud to be **YOUR** TF CSM. Led by Love of Country!

-CSM Charles V. Sasser, Jr.

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On the cover: 1st Lt. Gregory Sullivan kneels along the side of a road and surveys the area while on patrol in Dangaleek, Afghanistan, Oct. 02, 2009. Sullivan is a member of 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colo. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jennifer Cohen)

Chaplains Corner:

By Maj. Paul Madej

The generosity of the American people never ceases to amaze me. Not too long ago, we realized that Soldiers needed some civilian t-shirts to wear during convalescent periods following combat. I wanted neither official PT gear that they already had, nor did I want unit gear as I knew they would receive that in hospitals en-route back to Fort Carson. So I prayed for an angel. Within days, a man named Mike Pfalmer, General Manager, RMC Distributing Co. sent boxes of t-shirts and hospital scrubs that our Warriors could wear on their journey back home. I don't know the guy, but his generous spirit allows Soldiers a touch of home at a very difficult time. So, although I never met this angel, I am glad God sent him to the MOUNTAIN WARRIORS OF Operation Enduring Freedom X. In this time of thankfulness, let us be appreciative of all the support we receive from those at home, and never forget that they appreciate us as well.



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Meet the new Soldier of the Quarter

Story By Spc. Eugene H. Cushing, Task Force Mountain Warrior Public Affairs

U.S. Army Spc. Meirong Wang, a native of China's Fujian province, was about to finish her college degree and start teaching high school physics, when she got the opportunity to leave China and travel to the United States.

"When you see a different country, it's not about the country or the area, it's about the people," she said about her decision to leave China and the differences she has experienced.

She was not in America long before she volunteered to serve her new country.

"People are brave to stand up for

the things [they] want to fight for," she said about her fellow Soldiers.

Since then, Wang has strived to serve as an outstanding Soldier, and was recently selected as Soldier of the quarter for Task Force Mountain Warrior.

Wang said she is proud to be here, and cited the discipline required in the military as something that makes it different from any other career.

"As long as you maintain discipline, you want to do better," she said.

Wang, who works as a human resources specialist for the 4th Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Mountain Warrior, lives this belief, using her discipline to better herself every day.



Spc. Meirong Wang, the Soldier of the quarter for Task Force Mountain Warrior. Wang's unit worked as a team to prepare her for the competition, showing that it takes a team to win.

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The first 5 minutes: 2-77 Artillerymen make an impact

Story and Photos by U.S. Army Spc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th Public Affairs Detachment

It's a day like any other at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam. Soldiers are going about their routines. Some are off and are using their down time to call family and friends. Others are surfing the internet or playing video games to pass the time.

U.S. Army Sgt. Carlos Medina is relaxing in his room when his radio breaks the silence.

"Fire mission," Medina yells to the other artillerymen of 3rd Platoon, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, who live in the rooms adjacent to his quarters.

Word has spread throughout the FOB and each Soldier, known collectively as the misfits, hastens toward their more than 15,000 pound M198 155mm Howitzer Artillery Cannon, knowing that time is of the essence.

"It's a rush," said Medina, a Denver, Colo., native. "Once we get the call, we are ready to fire in about five minutes."

During those few transition minutes, the misfits don't know exactly what they'll be doing.

"There's an uneasy tension as you run down to the gun line," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Regan Tatford, fire direction officer and platoon leader for 3rd platoon. "The uncertainty of not knowing what the mission is for really gets your adrenaline pumping."

Pfc. James Billasano, of Needville, Texas, an artilleryman, agreed. "We drop whatever we're doing because when we get the call, it's game time. Someone really needs us, lives can be at stake."

The first few minutes may seem like a blur to some misfits, but they know those fleeting minutes can drag on for the guys calling for support.

"That initial three minutes seem like an eternity to the guys needing our support, because they desperately need it," said Tatford. "The faster we do our job, the faster they can do theirs."

Oftentimes, the enemy is unaware of the artillery until it is too late



Soldiers with 3rd Platoon, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, fire an M198 155mm Howitzer at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, Oct. 3. The Fort Carson, Colo., based, 4th Infantry Division Artillerymen help support forward maneuvering elements.

Pfc. James Billasano, an artilleryman with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, takes a break after a fire mission at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, Oct. 3. Billasano is based out of Ft. Carson, Colo. He and his fellow artillerymen help support forward maneuvering elements.

for them and just in time for the forward Soldiers.

"The enemy could be engaging our guys with RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) or small arms," said Tatford. "If we're called up, they (the enemy) wouldn't know about us until the round impacts."

This quick strike capability is an asset to ground units and has the potential to save Soldiers.

According to Medina, the misfits are able to provide support up to 18 miles away, helping give the forward elements greater freedom to accomplish their missions.

The success they have had, since arriving in June, has given them confidence in their abilities.

"It takes about eight guys and everyone has to be in sync for everything to go smoothly," said Billasano.

"We trust each other's skills."



Although their cannon has silenced countless insurgents while saving the lives of their fellow Soldiers, the misfits remain humble.

"It's rewarding," said Tatford. "It is a great feeling to have someone come on the radio and say, 'thanks, you guys really helped us out.' But it's our job; it's what we signed up to do."

Sustaining the fight: 704th BSB in action

*Story and Photos
by U.S. Army
Spc. Eugene H.
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Force Mountain
Warrior Public
Affairs*

Headlights of vehicles light up the early morning darkness at a remote base in Afghanistan's Kunar province.

Soldiers stir, contemplating the difficult drive up a snake-like mountain road that connects Kunar to its outlying provinces.

This is the start to another day for the U.S. Army Soldiers of the 704th Brigade Support Battalion, who provide security for local Afghan drivers delivering supplies to remote military bases in eastern Afghanistan, serving under Task Force Mountain Warrior.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Chris B. Fisher, of Sugar Grove, Ill., leads one of the platoons tasked with escorting the local drivers.

"Our job is important because while not directly involved in the fight, we're allowing the maneuver battalions to do their job without having to worry about logistics," Fisher said.

Before their missions, units like Fisher's spend a majority of their time planning the mission, and figuring out the best way to protect the local drivers and their vehicles.

"Different trucks require different kinds of security," Fisher said.

Fisher, a former infantryman, went on to say that serving with the support battalion has really made him appreciate the logistical side of operations, and the importance of the battalion's mission.

"This is where all the training we did at Fort Carson is really paying off," he said.

The units continue this training in Afghanistan as well, conducting rehearsals and performing review training to keep them ready for when they conduct their next



U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Company A, 704th Brigade Support Battalion work to free a local truck after it ran off the road and became stuck in Afghanistan's Kunar province, Oct. 2. The Soldiers were providing security for local Afghan drivers hired to deliver supplies to remote military bases serving under Task Force Mountain Warrior in eastern Afghanistan.



U.S. Army Spc. Omar R. Angulo, a gunner assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 704th Brigade Support Battalion, checks his weapons after finishing a convoy mission in Afghanistan's Nuristan province, Sept. 29. U.S. Army Sgt. Patrick N. Stephens, also assigned to HHC, served as the truck commander for Angulo's truck.

mission.

According to U.S. Army Spc. Jalan K. Marshall, of Oakland, Calif., a gunner within the unit, it feels good to help fellow Soldiers directly involved in the fighting.

"We all appreciate what they're doing, and we're glad to be able to help them," he said.

While conducting these missions, the units also see their own fair share of the battle.

During these incidents, their training keeps the supplies moving

and has a positive impact on the entire brigade.

"It's not easy," Fisher said. "But it's rewarding."

U.S. Army Spc. Daniel C. Roodzant, of Victorville, Calif., a communications specialist assigned to Company A, also spoke about the hidden rewards of the unit's mission.

"You know you've helped your fellow Soldier out when you get here," he said, after finishing a mission. "It makes it worth it."

Show of force: 1-221 Troops stay flexible securing Laghman province

Story and Photos by Spc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th Public Affairs Detachment

It's 1:30 P.M. and the sun is high in the sky. Its rays beat down on the Soldiers of the Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry Regiment as they march toward their objective.

Laghman province, Afghanistan seems to have forgotten autumn. The heat makes the day seem more like early August, not mid-October. But the Soldiers known collectively as the Hustlers, press on knowing they are needed.

The day began with a simple objective--meet with local village elders to see how they are doing and if they need help with anything from security issues to possible provincial reconstruction team projects. But, things change and events force the Hustlers to abandon any notion of a peaceful presence patrol. Such is the life of a Soldier.

Another unit operating out of Combat Outpost Nagil has been ambushed and needs assistance. The Hustlers after receiving guidance from their leadership head back to COP Nagil. However, they weren't abandoning their comrades.

"The area is too rugged for our vehicles to get out there (to the conflict)," said Sgt. John Lopez, a forward observer for the Hustlers. "We knew they needed help, so we went on foot."

The terrain was rough and uneven and only got worse as they continued onward. The small hills eventually turned into sizeable challenges for the Soldiers as they moved with abandon toward their eventual position.

"It was rough," Lopez, a native of Riverside, Cal., said. "I would call them mini-mountains."

Sgt. John Stone, a squad leader for the Hustlers, also said the trek was tough.

"It was a smoker," said the Lincoln, Neb., native. "I'm pretty sure everyone was hurting, but we had a job to do and they (the

engaged unit) needed us."

According to Stone, the Hustler's new mission was to provide a safety net and prevent any hostiles from escaping, while aerial reinforcements engaged enemy forces.

Because of their position, Hustler was afforded a great show of coordination and force.

First came the mortars from COP Nagil which slammed into the mountainside. A few minutes later, an Air Force A-10 Warthog dropped a few bombs which echoed off of the mountain side. Finally, Kiowa helicopters arrived and loosed a few missiles forcing the enemies to retreat.

"It was great," said Lopez. "They (the aerial reinforcements) made sure our guys were safe."

"They (the aerial reinforcements in the area) are always willing to help out," said Stone, "and they do a great job. The coordination between all of us helped to ensure the bad guys were neutralized."

After the Kiowas cleared the area, the Hustlers moved toward the formerly engaged unit.

"We wanted to make sure they were ok," said Stone. "We wanted



Sgt. John Lopez, a forward observer for the Scout Platoon of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry Regiment, takes a rest as his platoon moves to support a unit engaged in a conflict. Lopez, a Riverside, Calif., native and his platoon provided extra security in a recent fire fight.

them to know that we were there for them."

Stone said no Coalition Forces were hurt which made for a good day at COP Nagil.

"Life can be hard here," said Stone, "but this is what we do. If we can neutralize the enemy and no one gets hurt, then it's a good day."

But Lopez put it more simply. "Chalk one up for the good guys,"

Sgt. John Stone, a squad leader for the Scout Platoon of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry Regiment, looks at the next ridgeline he and the other members of his platoon are moving toward.



Embedded Training Team: training under fire

By Sgt. Matthew Moeller, 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The sun has barely risen over the Korengal valley, Sept. 24, and service members with Embedded Training Team 7-5 are under fire.

Shanahan, a native of New Lenox, Ill., is the senior officer in charge of ETT 7-5, a small team tasked with training and mentoring the emerging Afghan soldiers serving in the volatile valley, today the training ends and the “practical exercise” begins.

Off to the side, an Afghan national army soldier fires his machine gun at the insurgents in the surrounding hillsides, his expelled cartridges litters the ground below. Above him, other ANA soldiers fire rocket propelled grenades and AK-47 rifles, with ETT service members firing alongside.

An ETT Marine shouts a series of expletives as an explosion rocks the area near him.

U.S. Navy corpsman, Petty Officer 3rd Class Timothy Price, a native of Independence, Mo., shows members of the Afghan national army how to properly hold an M-16 rifle while clearing a hallway of enemy forces during a instructional class on room-clearing procedures, hosted by U.S. service members with Embedded Training Team 7-5 at Kunar province, Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley, Sept. 22.

Embedded Training Teams across Afghanistan have been teaching their ANA counterparts on the proper use of NATO-style weapons, such as the U.S. military’s M-16 rifle, in order to transform the emerging army from a Soviet-style military, into a modern fighting force.



U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Charles Kim, a native of Springfield, Va., and member of Embedded Training Team 7-5, watches Afghan national army Soldiers practice hallway clearing procedures at Kunar province, Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley, Sept 22. ETTs across Afghanistan serve side by side with their Afghan national army counterparts, mentoring the emerging army into a military force capable of defending its own borders and people.

Fifteen minutes later, mortars fired from a nearby U.S. Army outpost, rain down on the insurgent positions, and the battle ends. The team and the ANA soldiers hike the mountain trail back home to the tiny Korengal Outpost, in Afghanistan’s Kunar province.

If all goes according to the International Security Assistance

Force’s plan, this team, and others like it, hold the future of Afghanistan.

With ISAF’s plan to eventually turn all security operations over to the emerging Afghan national army, ETTs across the country must transform their ANA counterparts from a rag-tag group of rebel fighters and farmers that

helped overthrow the Taliban in 2001, into a modern military force capable of protecting its own borders and people.

The day after being attacked, a group of ANA soldiers sit together in the dark, windowless room, at the Korengal Outpost watching a presentation on effectively firing a machine gun. Several Afghan soldiers had problems loading and firing their U.S. military M-249 squad automatic weapon, which are being used by a select few Afghan soldiers. Shanahan



and his troops want to make sure this doesn't happen again.

"Where does this guy shoot first?" Shanahan asks, motioning to the graphic projected on the wall.

The Afghans in the room look hesitant to respond. "None of you know the answer," Shanahan says, grinning.

Finally an Afghan soldier answers, and the ETTs in the room look impressed. "Let's take a 10-minute break and we'll go outside," Shanahan said.

Outside U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Charles Kim is waiting. Like all the ETTs serving in the Korengal, Kim, a rifleman, volunteered to come to Afghanistan to train the ANA. In the month he's been here, Kim has seen more action than most service members will see during their entire tour.

The Springfield, Va., native admits working with the ANA is "a lot different than patrolling with Marines or Soldiers." But he states he would "definitely fight with them any day."

Today he plans on testing the ANA on what they just learned in the class by taking them to the outpost's small weapons range to practice using the M-249 SAW, one of several NATO weapons ISAF hopes will eventually replace the ANA's Soviet-era weaponry.

With steady patience, Kim, a fellow ETT corpsman and Shanahan walk the Afghans through all the steps required to operate multiple machine guns as a team, using balloons as targets. "Overall they did pretty well considering it was their first time," Kim says. "There's some room for improvement, but that is to be expected."

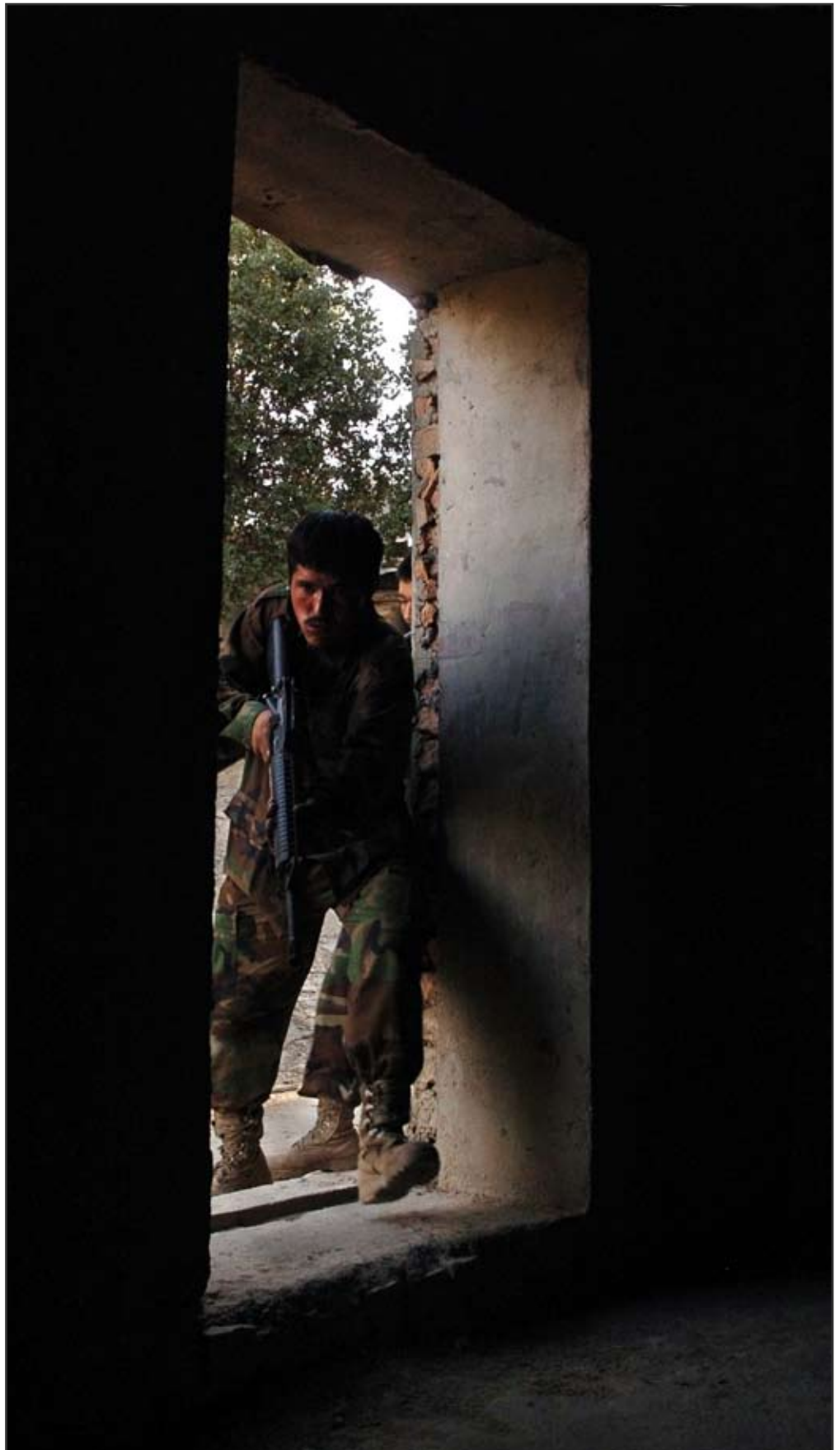
Training like this is why ISAF puts so much hope in the ETTs. Four days later the ANA along with their ETT counterparts are back in the village of Lanayal.

The village is empty of adult males.

The local elder is nervous, not wanting to talk and staying close to the wall while looking to the

mountains that surround the small gathering of homes.

To the Afghan and U.S. service members, it appears the "practical exercise" is about to begin again.



Afghan national army Soldiers, serving in Kunar province, Afghanistan's Korengal Valley, practice room clearing procedures under the advisement of U.S. Marine Corps-led Embedded Training Team 7-5 at the Korengal Outpost, Sept. 22.

Bullet points: News around the AO

Meat Processing Center opens in Dari Noor

*Story by Pfc. Beth Raney
TF Mountain Warrior Public
Affairs Office*

The inhabitants of the Dari Noor District of Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, and members of the Nangarhar Agribusiness Development Team, celebrated the

opening of a solar-powered meat processing center in the district, September 2.

The facility is entirely solar powered from the building's electricity to the well pump and water heater.

The facility will provide a centralized sanitary location for

butchers to process livestock and will greatly improve the public health of the district.

The ADT, which is comprised of Servicemembers from Missouri's Army and Air National Guard, helped fund the project.

The facility is the first of its kind in the province.

Laghman ADT Conducts Soils Testing Training

*Story by Pfc. Beth Raney, Task
Force Mountain Warrior Public
Affairs*

Servicemembers from the Laghman Agribusiness Development Team and the Afghan National Army conducted soil testing training with local students and farmers in the province at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, September 24.

Afghan interns with the Laghman Ministry of Agriculture spent their first day on the job working with local farmers on proper soil sampling and testing techniques.

These recent college graduates

spent a week in July training with ministry staff, which is supported by the ADT.

"It is rewarding to see students, whom you taught only months earlier, instructing the same subject matter to their peers and countrymen alike, promoting the concept of train-the-trainer and developing agricultural knowledge in Laghman province," U.S. Army Capt. Jeffrey Mann, a soil scientist from Manhattan, Kan., said.

These interns will work closely with farmers throughout Laghman Province teaching new techniques and procedures.

A local farmer, who attended

the training, said he was excited about the being given this type of opportunity.

"We are so excited about what you are doing, we have spread the word throughout all our villages," he said.

"This is the first time anyone has given the people the help we have needed."

Maj. Blaine Clowser, a native of Seward, Neb., and the ADT's agriculture team chief was very pleased with the training.

"Bottom line, this is what we are about, reaching the people who truly need our help," Clowser said.

ANA Delivers Water to Distraught Village

*Story by Pfc. Beth Raney, Task
Force Mountain Warrior Public
Affairs*

Afghan National Army Soldiers from Weapons Company, 3rd Kandak, delivered water to Danda

village in Kunar province, Sept. 30.

The village had been without water for three weeks following a dispute with a near-by village over a water pipe layout plan.

The two villages had conducted

a jirga, or meeting of local elders, to resolve the issue, but no solution was reached.

The ANA delivered water just as the village wells ran dry, preventing extreme dehydration in the people of the village.

ANA, construction company donate supplies to girls' school

*Story by Pfc. Beth Raney, Task
Force Mountain Warrior Public
Affairs*

Soldiers from the Afghan National Army's 201st Kandak, along with a Laghman province Marine Embedded Training Team, and local Afghan contractors from the Waheed Abdullah Construction Company, donated school supplies to local girls' schools, Oct. 5 and 6, in support of the educational goals in the province.

Donations such as these connect the people of Afghanistan to their government, and help separate

them from anti-Afghan forces.

The ANA donated to the Gul Pacha Olfat Girls School, hoping to send the message that the ANA cares about the future of Laghman's children and are there to protect the people.

More than 500 packages of school supplies were delivered, one for every girl in the school.

The contractors from the Waheed Abdullah Construction Company, who earlier constructed the Qhargayee Girls School wall, returned to donate supplies to the girls in order to assist them with their educational goals.

The school wall and the donation were both coordinated for the school through Qhargayee education officials.

Enough supplies were delivered to provide for every girl in the schools.

The recent completion of the Qhargayee school wall coupled with the supplies donation is expected to leave lasting good impressions with the children.

Projects like these show that the people of Afghanistan care about each other and are trying to rebuild their country and inspire their youth.

3-61 CAV Paralegal Receives CAB

Story by U.S. Army Pfc. Beth Raney, Task Force Mountain Warrior Public Affairs

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Romeo Belunta, a paralegal assistant and Tampa Bay, Fla. native, with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Mountain Warrior, became the first paralegal from the task force to receive a Combat Action Badge.

A Soldier earns a CAB by actively engaging or being engaged by enemy forces. Belunta, a former infantryman, earned the coveted badge while performing paralegal duties at Combat Outpost Keating, in Afghanistan's Nuristan province, near his home base of Forward Operating Base Bostick.

Belunta traveled to COP Keating in early July to offer legal assistance to the Soldiers there.

Belunta's intention was to stay for only two days, but after a series of attacks by anti-Afghan forces against the COP, aircraft could not safely retrieve him for more than a week. During the complex attacks, Belunta fought alongside his fellow combat arms Soldiers repealing insurgent advances against the isolated mountain outpost.

Speaking of the Soldiers he fought alongside with, Belunta said, "As part of a team, it's never about bravery or courage. It's about the Soldiers with me. My fear went out the window when I looked at



Staff Sgt. Romeo Belunta, from Tampa, Fla., a paralegal assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Mountain Warrior, pulls guard next to one of his fellow Soldiers on Forward Operating Base Bostick.

the faces of the Soldiers there with me."

U.S. Army Maj. Jeffrey Thurnher, the brigade's judge advocate, showed great pride in Belunta, "He helped them with much more than just legal work that week."

Belunta found pride in himself as well.

"The CAB is a rare and honorable award," he said. "I am very proud to be a member of the JAG Corps with a CAB."

Belunta also recalled the lesson

he learned during that fateful week.

"The incident was a true testament that the enemy can strike anytime and anywhere, and Soldiers must never drop their guard," Belunta said. "I am thankful to the Lord for keeping me safe and giving me strength for me to do my duties."

More than 14,000 U.S. Army Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom have been awarded the Combat Action Badge since combat operations began in late 2001.

ANSF, ISAF distribute supplies to Pakistani refugees

Story by Sgt. Matthew Moeller, 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Afghan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Force service members with Task Force Mountain Warrior, are providing humanitarian assistance to a recent wave of Pakistani refugees crossing the border into the Bar Sholtan District of Afghanistan's Kunar province. The displaced persons claim to be fleeing a recent outbreak of violence in the Federally Administrated

Tribal Area of Pakistan, following a recent offensive by Pakistan's military against insurgent forces operating in the area.

More than 40 families have already crossed the border into Kunar province in recent days, and ISAF estimates up to 3,000 may follow in the coming weeks.

"It's important for us to assist in the immediate response to meet the basic needs of the people," said U.S. Army Maj. Rodney Roquemore, a chief coordinator for the ongoing relief operations, for TF Mountain Warrior.

After traveling up to 5 days by foot, many Pakistanis were amazed at the progress made in the eastern Afghanistan province. Insurgent forces operating in the FATA led many people to believe the situation in eastern Afghanistan was dire.

"I was told Afghanistan was in ruins... I visited Asadabad and I see roads, bridges and a large bazaar... I see now this is not true," said one refugee.

ANSF and ISAF will continue to supply the incoming persons with as many tents, food and medical supplies as needed.

Medics treat wounded from AAF attack

*Story and Photos
by U.S. Army Spc.
Eugene H. Cushing,
Task Force Mountain
Warrior Public Affairs*

The doors of Combat Outpost Monti's aid station flew open on the night of Oct. 1, as medics from the 704th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, rushed an Afghan truck driver to one of the waiting litters. The medics hurried to the injured man, trying to locate injuries under his blood-stained clothes.

An hour before, the man was driving his truck along a remote mountain road in a convoy escorted by Americans, in Afghanistan's Kunar province, when anti-Afghan forces rained down small-arms fire from the mountain.

U.S. Army Spc. Daniel J. Sigler, a medic attached to Company C, 704th Brigade Support Battalion, was first on the scene.

Sigler, of Houston, Texas, raced to the first of the trucks and found the driver, bleeding from several shrapnel wounds.

"He was just scared," Sigler said.

Sigler treated the man and rushed him to a nearby U.S. Army armored vehicle, and raced to the next truck.

The driver of the second truck was in bad shape.

"The first thing I did was look where he was bleeding from, but I couldn't tell," said Sigler.

Sigler grabbed the man and rushed him behind cover. Sigler began putting tourniquets on the man's legs to stop the bleeding, but the man had no pulse. He died on the side of the road, another casualty of AAF violence.

The aid station at COP Monti has seen these types of incidents before. According to U.S. Army Capt. Patrick L. Barker, a physician's



U.S. Army Spc. Daniel J. Sigler, of Houston, Texas, a medic attached to Company C, 704th Brigade Support Battalion, checks an Afghan truck driver's bandages on combat Out Post Monti, Oct. 2. Sigler was first to treat the driver after he was wounded in an AAF attack the night before.

assistant for 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, they treat "everything that comes through." As the convoy pulled up, they were ready.

At the aid station, the medics treated the first driver. He was in good condition.

Outside, Sigler thought back to the man he couldn't save, and asked himself, "What could I have done differently?"

Sigler was covered in blood, his uniform stained crimson from the two men he has just treated.

"He didn't even have a carotid pulse," he told himself. "I don't think there's anything I could do."

The medics in the aid station

helped the first driver to his feet. They finished treating him and let him leave to return to his friends in the truck yard.

The next morning Sigler was in the truck yard checking on his patient. He smiled as Sigler checked his bandages, happy to be alive.

Sigler felt a little angry, partly about not being able to save the other man, and partly at the insurgents who killed him.

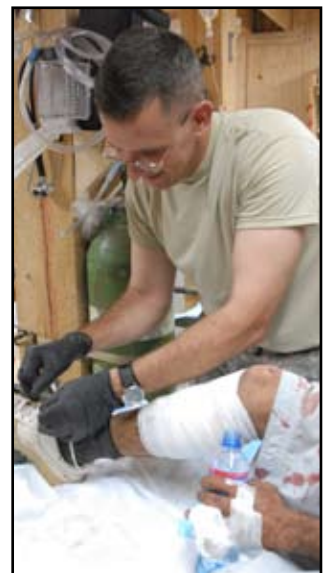
"It seems like everybody is angry at us for killing civilians accidentally," he said. "But no one seems to be angry at the Taliban, and they're actually aiming at their own people."



U.S. Army Sgt. Casey J. Potts and U.S. Army Sgt. Nicholas A. Sousa, medics assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, treat a wounded Afghan truck driver at the aid station on Combat Out Post Monti, Oct. 1. The driver was returning from Nuristan when insurgents opened fire on his convoy, killing one of his fellow drivers. Potts, of Dayton, Ohio, is the senior line medic for Company C, and Sousa, of Vinegrove, Ky., is a treatment medic.



U.S. Army Pfc. Stephen R. Dechant, of Tallahassee, Fla., a medic assigned to 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, treats a wounded Afghan truck driver at the aid station on Combat Out Post Monti, Oct. 1. The driver was returning from Afghanistan's remote Nuristan province when anti-Afghan forces attacked his convoy, killing one of his fellow drivers.



Spc. Wang: TF Mountain Warrior's Soldier of the quarter

Cont. from page 4

"Spc. Wang makes my job easy," said Sgt. 1st class Jason A. Coulter, Wang's non-commissioned officer in charge. "Her work ethic, attention to detail and the willingness to take on responsibilities [make] the type of Soldier leaders want and the Army needs."

Wang's discipline and desire to do better drives her every day, but she still faces some challenges as she develops as a Soldier.

Coulter said that the language barrier is one thing he sees that bothers Wang.

"Spc. Wang has identified that as a weakness and has improved her English tremendously," he said. "As leaders, we identify our weaknesses and seek self improvement. Wang has many characteristics of a leader and that is just one of them."

Wang attributes much of her success to her fellow Soldiers and leaders.

"I really appreciate my unit," she said.

To win Soldier of the quarter, Wang had to face many challenges that her unit helped her to prepare for.

Even though the competition was an individual event, it still took a team effort for her to win.

"So many people stood behind me and supported me," Wang said, adding that her leaders want her to be a good leader as well.

"They also tell my comrades we need to support each other to be good leaders," she said.

"Spc. Wang and her co-workers pulled together as a team; they went to the gym together, woke up early and did PT; and the team drilled her with board questions

daily," Coulter said.

"Supporting each other is really the most important part of teamwork," Wang said.

The support paid off and through training and teamwork Wang came out on top and was selected as the Soldier of the quarter.

"There's no way I could win this board without everyone here," Wang said.

Coulter said it was typical of Wang to give credit to her leadership and fellow Soldiers.

"She is an unselfish Soldier [who] exemplifies selfless service," he said.

Wang said she felt her unit has helped her outside of the Soldier of the quarter competition as well, working to shape her into a leader.

"I'm so lucky to have good leadership," she said. "I've learned so much from them."

The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club

Four Mountain Warriors inducted into the prestigious club

The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club is comprised of the top 2% of the Noncommissioned Officers in the Army. They are selected to the club based on demonstrated leadership, professionalism, and overall general military knowledge.

These NCOs demonstrate their excellence on a daily basis. Each sergeant is responsible for the training and welfare of the soldiers in their care. These distinguished NCOs directly influence each person who works under them.

Each member constantly displays a positive attitude at work and is an upstanding citizen in the community.

It is a prestigious honor to be a member of this elite club.



Rule of Law Conference in Nangarhar

Story and photos by U.S. Army Pfc. Beth Raney, Task Force Mountain Warrior Public Affairs

Members of the Afghan Legal Rights Departments and Afghan Police from Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman provinces came together for a rule of law conference at the Nangarhar governor's palace in Jalalabad, Oct. 11.

The intent of the conference was to discuss the strategy for improving the legal system in the region.

The morning was filled with briefings and presentations made by U.S. and Afghan agencies and non-government organizations operating in eastern Afghanistan including representatives from the U.S. State Department, the Supreme Court of Afghanistan, and the Afghan Justice Sector Support Program.

"The conference succeeded in bringing all of these key players together into one room," U.S. Army Maj. Jeffrey Thurnher, Task Force Mountain Warrior's legal officer, from Woodbridge, Va., said. "This was the first time all of these police and judicial leaders have gathered together for a regional conference."

After lunch, the attendees reconvened and divided into three groups. One group discussed building ties between the formal and informal legal systems. In many remote areas of Afghanistan, local elders and shura members resolve disputes and pass judgement outside the formal system of law.

The second group discussed improving public awareness of legal rights, and the third worked on improving cooperation between prosecutors, police and courts in order to reduce arbitrary detentions.

"The hope was to develop two or three suggestions for how to handle each of those problems and to challenge the group to begin implementing them," Thurnher said. "They discussed ways to tackle some of the most challenging problems facing the legal systems of their provinces."

According to U.S. Army Capt. Craig Scrogam, a native of Richmond

Hill, Ga., and Task Force Mountain Warrior's rule of law attorney, the attendees also discussed a pilot program used in Kabul to track cases more effectively. Scrogam hopes the program will be available in the area soon.

"The timing couldn't have been more perfect because all the ministries joined together in Kabul the week after the conference and signed into law the use of this case-tracking system," Scrogam said.

"Although we certainly did not develop a comprehensive strategy with just one meeting, we took a great step toward increasing cooperation between the groups and developed some great ideas for making changes," Thurnher said.

"We have done training for Rule of Law before, but we have never brought all of these groups together for a session before," Scrogam said.

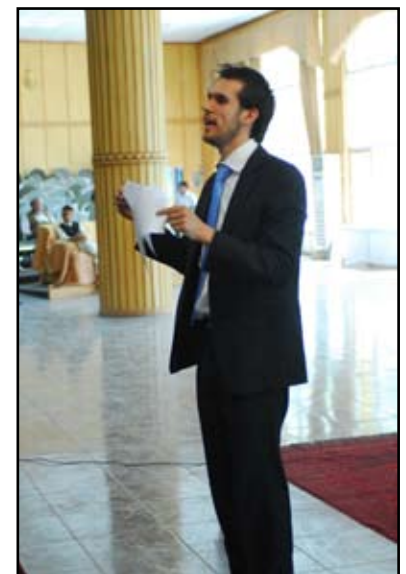
"Training normally has been specific to police or to prosecutors or to Huqooq Department officials. Being able to talk to everyone at once was one of the primary benefits of this session."



Ziaulhaq Dinarkhel, the Chief Judge of Nangarhar province, gives his welcoming remarks at a rule of law conference at the Nangarhar governor's compound, Oct. 11.



U.S. Army Col. Randy A. George, commander of Task Force Mountain Warrior, and Alden, Iowa native, speaks with Ziaulhaq Dinarkhel, the Chief Judge of Nangarhar province at a rule of law conference at the Nangarhar governor's compound, Oct. 11. The conference brought lawmakers, police, non-government organizations, and other agencies from Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman provinces together to discuss the future of law in Afghanistan.



Sanzar Kakar, the executive advisor of the Afghan Justice Sector Support Program, speaks about the national case tracking system at a rule of law conference at the Nangarhar governor's compound, Oct. 11.

Kirk doesn't feel like a hero: says he was doing his job

Story by Kristen Vasas, *The Morning Journal*

U.S. Army Cpl. Heath Kirk remembers every detail about the night he lost his right leg. The 21-year-old Lorain, Ohio, native was driving his unit back to their home in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, on Sept. 24 when a rocket exploded against the side of their Hummer.

Even though he knew he was injured, Kirk continued to drive the team's vehicle until he was able to slow down and stop. If he would have lost control of the Hummer, Kirk said he could have injured, or even killed the three other members of his unit from the 704th Brigade Support Battalion. "It came through my door and I knew I had to pull over and stop because that was what I had to do," Kirk said yesterday during a phone call from the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio where he is being treated. "I knew everything I had to do, and I did it. It was just another day for me.

It might have been the day I lost my leg, but I look back on it now, and it was just another day." After realizing he couldn't open the driver's side door of the Hummer, Kirk pulled himself across the Hummer and fell out the passenger-side door. He crawled roughly 5 feet away from the Hummer before specialist Orlando Bell discovered him and dragged him away from the danger, Kirk said.

A medic from Kirk's unit, specialist Helen Ruhl, started working on Kirk as soon as she got the opportunity. Tourniquets were placed on both of Kirk's legs, one of which was missing the skin near his thigh after shrapnel from the rocket blew it away.

"I stayed conscious and calm. I didn't freak out or anything," Kirk said. "The only thing that was in my head was what I was taught. I was taught everything I needed to know that night. It was nothing. I did what I had to and I got out."

Kirk was put inside a transport truck, which was driven to a nearby hospital by Bell. From there, Kirk was flown to another hospital in Afghanistan where he underwent two different surgeries: one to

amputate below his right knee, the other to amputate above the right knee.

"My unit stayed with me while I was asleep and going through surgeries in Afghanistan," Kirk said. "They told me they loved me and would see me soon. I couldn't open my eyes, but they told me I pointed at myself and drew a heart and pointed around the room."

When Kirk woke up, he found himself being treated at a Landstuhl, Germany, hospital. He said one of the first things he asked was whether he had kept his legs. A nurse told him he had lost his right leg.

"I didn't realize until I looked down on that first surgical table that my leg was gone," Kirk said. "I didn't know my leg was gone. I thought it was just hurt." While Kirk was being treated at the German hospital, doctors began having trouble treating infections from first-degree burns on his hands, face and arms. He was kept overseas until doctors were able

Looking back on the ordeal, Kirk said he knew the area he was patrolling was getting bad before his Hummer was attacked. He called both his parents, Gidget Roark and Tim Kirk, before his mission and told them what was going on, but for Kirk, it was just another day in the Army.

"It wasn't anything special for me. It was just another day driving in that truck, another day we made it to where we were supposed to go and we were on our way home," Kirk said. "I don't feel like I'm the big hero. I don't feel like I'm the pity story."

Although Kirk's family members were planning on having a welcome home ceremony for him when he finishes rehab, Kirk said he doesn't want a party. Kirk, who joined the Army in November 2007, said he did what he had to in order to survive and does not want anyone making him into something he isn't.

"I know what I did, my team knows what I did and that's

"I didn't know my leg was gone. I thought it was just hurt."

-U.S. Army Cpl. Heath Kirk

to break his fever, and was flown to the San Antonio Brooke Army Medical Center on Sept. 29.

Kirk was placed in the San Antonio hospital's burn unit for two days until his skin scabbed over and healed.

The scabs on his hands from shrapnel that had embedded itself during the explosion were also treated before Kirk was put in a step-down unit, where he is currently. All of his surgeries are complete, but Kirk is still waiting to be fitted for his prosthetic leg so he can begin training with it. Right now, he said he is walking with a crutch.

"I am walking, using a walker and able to get into wheelchairs and do a lot of things on my own," Kirk said. "Once I learn how to walk with my prosthetic, I'll be out of here. I'm just waiting to learn how to walk."

enough," Kirk said. "I don't need a million people out there giving me pity. I served for my country, for my team, for us."

Instead of a party, Kirk said he hopes people think about joining the Army when they read his story. He has been awarded a Combat Action Badge as well as a Purple Heart, but Kirk said his real reward was being able to grow into a man during his time with the Army.

"People don't understand how much training I went through, how much heartache I went through, but all that I went through saved my life in the end," Kirk said. "If one person sees my story and is inspired and joins the Army because of it, that's one more person who will grow to be a man or grow to be a woman. That's what the Army does. It takes who you are and forces you to grow into a better person."

Soldiers continue to assist Pakistani Refugees

By U.S. Army Sgt. Matthew C. Moeller, 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



A U.S. Army Soldier with Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, unloads tents with the help of Afghan government officials working in Kunar province. The tents will be distributed by the government to Pakistani refugees who have been moving across the border into Kunar province as the Pakistani military continues operations against insurgent forces in their country.

International Security Assistance Force servicemembers continue to donate medicine, food and basic living essentials to the thousands of refugees in the eastern Afghanistan province.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Aaron Malcolm, a native of Lake Charles, La., and platoon leader with Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, speaks with a Pakistani refugee who, like thousands more, fled across the border into Kunar province Afghanistan in recent days to escape continued fighting as Pakistani military forces continue a major military operation against insurgent groups in their country.



A Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, Soldier hands medical supplies to an Afghan government official working in Kunar province, to be distributed to Pakistani refugees, who have fled across the border into Kunar province in recent days to escape the fighting by Pakistani government troops and insurgent forces.



U.S. Army Sgt. Sterling Newton, a native of Sacramento, Calif., checks the vital signs of a Pakistani refugee outside an International Committee of the Red Crescent medical clinic in Afghanistan's Kunar province, Oct. 23.

Newton is a combat medic assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division. To address the needs of the thousands of refugees flooding across the border, International Security Assistance Force servicemembers have been working closely with Afghan government and security officials as well as international aid organizations. So far, ISAF has donated medicine, food, tents and basic living essentials.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Aaron Malcolm, a native of Lake Charles, La., and platoon leader with Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, speaks with a Pakistani refugee who, like thousands more, fled across the border into Kunar province Afghanistan in recent days to escape continued fighting as Pakistani military forces continue a major military operation against insurgent groups in their country.

Regional GMIC Set to Give N2KL Communication Capabilities

Story and photos by Maj. T.G. Taylor, Task Force Mountain Warrior Public Affairs

Leaders from the Government Media Information Center and the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team met with Nangarhar leaders in Jalalabad to discuss and assess the feasibility of a Regional GMIC in Nangarhar province, Oct. 10.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the capabilities of the current media center at the governor's palace and identify improvements that need to be made to upgrade it to a RGMIC.

The GMIC is a ministry level office whose purpose is to operate as the official communication department of the central government, said Hakim Asher, director of the national GMIC.

An RGMIC is designed to close the gap between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the community by communicating through media in the region.

"[Modern] communication in Afghanistan is a new experience," said Amin Shafiee, deputy director of the national GMIC. "Our job at the GMIC is to coordinate and connect GIRA to the people through the free and independent media."

Shafiee explained that the GMIC has a signed agreement with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, an organization dedicated to strengthening local governance, to establish RGMICs in Jalalabad and Kandahar before the end of the year.

"This is our first trip to Jalalabad and we are here to see what we can do to establish the office here," said Sediq Sediqi, head of the media relations and coordination department of the GMIC in Kabul. "The RGMIC will establish strategies for the [Nangarhar] government to communicate" with its people.

Establishing a functioning facility here will require some technical improvements to facilities in Nangarhar, said Shafiee.

"It requires us to have modern facilities here; it's essential that we share information between



Marine Capt. Staci Reidinger of Morgan Hill, La., the U.S. Forces—Afghanistan liaison to the Government Media Information Center in Kabul, explains the role of the Regional GMIC in building training the free and independent media during an assessment of the future RGMIC site in Jalalabad on Oct. 10. The RGMIC will help to coordinate and build communication capacity amongst the government and civilian media. The objective of the project is to connect the people with the government through better communication.

the region and Kabul by the internet, and video teleconference," said Shafiee. The Nangarhar PRT and IDLG will assist with those technical aspects of a facility.

"The Nangarhar PRT is willing to also assist with the technical capabilities of the RGMIC anyway we can," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Melissa Milner of

Forrest Hill, La., information operations officer for the Nangarhar PRT. "We can also help develop training programs for the future employees and local media."

Shafiee went on to explain the other assistance the GMIC would provide to help open the Jalalabad office.

"According to our strategy we will deploy six officers here—a director plus a staff of professionals," said Shafiee. "We will see the gaps and fill those gaps in terms of salaries and equipment."

The RGMIC will also have the task of training communication professionals in the region including



Masood Ahmad Azimi, chief of staff for Nangarhar province, explains Nangarhar's current media relations capabilities during an assessment of the future Regional Government Media Information Center in Jalalabad on Oct. 10.

civilian media, said Marine Capt. Staci Reidinger of Morgan City, La., the U.S. Forces—Afghanistan liaison to the GMIC.

"One of the most important things we do is build capacity," Reidinger said. "It's essential that we identify what training is needed and then provide that training."

Everyone at the meeting was in agreement that communication was essential to connecting the people to their government.

"The public has a right to know what the government is doing," Sediqi said. "That's why we are here today, to see how we can do this better."

TF Lethal, ANA Conduct Joint TCP

Story by Pfc. Beth Raney, Task Force Mountain Warrior Public Affairs

Afghan National Army soldiers from 2nd Company, 3rd Kandak, and Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Lethal, conducted a joint traffic control point to interdict the movement of weapons and high-value targets along Route Rhode Island in the Pech River valley, Sept. 14.

This joint effort is part of an ongoing mission to strengthen the ANA's ability to conduct patrols on their own and to gain the trust of the locals in different villages around D Co.'s area of operations.

Successful joint missions like this pave the road for the ANA to operate autonomously.



Soldiers from 2nd platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Lethal, and Afghan National Army soldiers from 2nd Company, 3rd Kandak, conduct a joint traffic control point in the Tantil village in Kunar province, Sept. 14.

Weapons Turn-in Program Successful in Nangalam



The Afghan man who provided information leading to the discovery of nine mines, unloads them at the Manogai District center, Sept. 16.



U.S. Army Capt. Kevin W. Hutcheson, commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Lethal, and Manogai sub-governor Rahman stand together at the Manogai District center, September 16, after nine mines were turned in under the Department of Defense weapons turn-in rewards program.

Story by Pfc. Beth Raney, Task Force Mountain Warrior Public Affairs

Rahman, the Manogai District sub-governor, acted as a middle man for information leading to the turn in of six TC-6 anti-tank mines and three MK-7 mines, September 16.

Rahman led Soldiers from Company A, 2nd

Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Lethal, to find the mines after he had an Afghan from Sarkani District transport the mines into the vicinity of Nangalam. This is seen as a positive step forward for both governance and security of the people of the Pech River valley.

The 2-12 Inf. hopes that with continued cooperation with the sub-governor, the people will find trust in a system that is responsible for their welfare and security, resulting in more turn-ins of these dangerous items.

Eye in the sky: Little UAV ideal for Afghanistan

Story and Photos by Spc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th Public Affairs Detachment

In Norse mythology, the all-father, Odin was a warrior god who ancient warriors beseeched for victory and protection in battle.

It was said Odin had ravens that would fly over the earth each day. The ravens brought tidings of events from all corners of the earth.

Today, Soldiers in Laghman province are also using Ravens to gather information like Odin. Though these Ravens in essence do the same tasks as Odin's informants; they aren't even birds. They are unmanned aerial vehicles.

The Raven is a portable UAV that provides Soldiers a live video feed in day or night. They also have tracking and still image capabilities.

"If we need to get eyes on something we'll use the Raven," said Staff Sgt.

Tyrone Baird, the master trainer for 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry Regiment. "The Raven has a couple of cameras--the first is the normal day camera, but when it gets dark we switch to the thermal camera."

Baird said, the Raven also has Global Positioning Satellite tracking capabilities.

Such tools make the Raven a valuable asset in gathering information, Baird said.

Spc. Mitchell Matney, a Raven operator for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-221 CAV., agrees with Baird's assertion and explains the Raven's usefulness.

"The Raven allows us to gather intelligence," said Matney. "We can track targets, gather intel and scout ahead with it (the Raven)."

The Raven is renowned for its small size which allows Soldiers to carry it into the field without encumbering its bearers.

According to Matney, the total system weighs about 40 lbs. with the UAV proper weighing about 4 lbs.

"It's modular," the Las Vegas native said. "You can distribute the system throughout the squad



Staff Sgt. Tyrone Baird, master trainer for 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry Regiment and a Pahrump, Nev., native, assembles the Raven unmanned aerial vehicle at Combat Outpost Nagil, Laghman province, Oct. 13. The Raven is able to provide real time video feeds once in the air.

which minimizes the amount of weight each Joe has to carry."

Such modularity makes the Raven ideally suited for Afghanistan's more rugged areas, Baird said.

"If there are Taliban up in the mountains, we can use the Raven to fly ahead to determine where they are (hiding)," the Pahrump, Nev., native said. "It really helps out because our guys have a lot of gear on. The Raven allows us to see where Taliban are suspected to be instead of sending guys up the mountain only to find nothing and be exhausted (from hiking in full gear)."

Another advantage of the Raven's diminutive size is its stealth capabilities. The Raven is pretty small, doesn't make much noise and its coloring make it difficult to find in flight, Baird said.

"It sounds like a loud pair of (hair) clippers," Baird said. "When it is up in the air, it is hard even for us (the operators) to see," he said.

Getting the drop on enemies helps save lives, Matney said.

Baird agrees and has even witnessed first-hand the Ravens capability to save lives.

"The last time I was in Iraq," Baird said, "My FOB (Forward Operating Base) was receiving mortar fire and we sent the Raven out to find their position. The Raven found where they were. We sent out some guys. They ended capturing twelve guys and stopping them from hurting anyone."

Being such an important tool for Soldiers in Afghanistan, the Raven still maintains a hobbyist type enthusiasm from its operators.

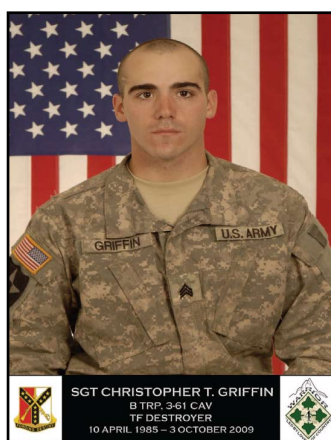
"The Raven is really fun to operate," said Matney. "Flying it is kind of like playing a video game."

Baird agrees and takes pride in making an impact while enjoying the simplicity of the Raven.

"It is definitely fun to fly," said Baird, "but the more important thing is knowing that I am contributing many different ways with the Raven. I am proud to be able to serve my country."

With its small size, light weight and advanced technology, the Raven is proving to be a valuable asset in the fight to secure freedom and prosperity for Afghanistan one unassuming swoop at a time.

Fallen Heroes- September 5 through October 7



"Let me not mourn for the men who have died fighting, but rather let me be glad that such heroes have lived."

- Gen. George S. Patton

Awards and reenlistments



Daniels' Dilemmas

By Pfc. Jeremy Sprague
2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment





Retention NCO's Letter:

By Master Sgt. James L. Pugsley
Senior Career Counselor

The FY10 Task Force Mountain Warrior Retention program

The program will be managed in accordance with HQDA directives as follows:

-Reenlistment Options are available to all Soldiers who have a contractual ETS date on or before 31 March 2012 (Soldiers with service remaining requirements can reenlist regardless of the reenlistment window).

-Deployed Soldiers must reenlist prior to surpassing their contractual ETS date. All others must reenlist prior to falling within 90 days of their contractual ETS date.

-Initial and Mid-Career Soldiers serving in over strength (N/Y) MOS' are limited to the Army Training Reenlistment Option.

-Deployed Soldiers serving in balanced (N/N) or shortage (Y/N) MOS' are authorized to reenlist for 2 years and receive 1 to 6 months

stabilization from Stop Move end date.

-The Indefinite Reenlistment Program for SSG and above with at least 10-years of service remains in effect.

-Immediate Reenlistment Prohibition (ERUP) Codes will be updated as often as necessary to ensure the correct code is applied to each Soldier.

-Retention Control Points (RCP) remain the same. Contrary to the rumors, there have been no changes to RCP's.

-The maximum age for enlisted Soldiers is 62.

-U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for reenlistment. Soldiers can complete a 20-year career without becoming U.S. citizens; however, certain MOS's or assignments may require U.S. citizenship.

-Soldiers may elect to cash

in accrued leave in conjunction with reenlistment, up to 60-days throughout a career.

-Soldiers with a conviction under the Lautenberg Amendment are not allowed to reenlist.

-All reenlistment bonuses will be paid on a flat rate via a lump sum.

-All honorably separating Soldiers (other than retirees) must attend a pre-separation briefing upon redeployment.

-All Soldiers not serving on an indefinite status will be counseled on the benefits of remaining on Active duty or transitioning into the Reserves.

Led By Love of Country!

JAMES L. PUGSLEY
MSG, USA

Senior Career Counselor

CAREER COUNSELOR DIRECTORY

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MSG Pugsley	4th IBCT, 4th ID	FOB Fenty	831-6051	james.l.pugsley@afghan.swa.army.mil
SFC Davis	1-12 IN	FOB Ramrod	841-6011	edward.davis@afghan.swa.army.mil
SFC Cabana	2-12 IN	FOB Blessing	481-2155	stephen.m.cabana@afghan.swa.army.mil
SSG Gutierrez	2-77 FA	Bagram	431-5102	luis.a.gutierrez@afghan.swa.army.mil
SSG Herron	3-61 CAV	FOB Fenty	831-6058	carmen.herron@afghan.swa.army.mil
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SSG Holman	7-17 CAV	Jalalabad	831-6152/6153	shaun.holman@afghan.swa.army.mil



**Hey There!
Want to see your pictures in the
Mountain Warrior? Shoot us an
e-mail or send your photos to:
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swa.mil and we'll make sure
they get in the next issue!**

