

Coalition operation attacks extremists near Kandahar

KABUL, Afghanistan, May 22, 2006 – Coalition forces conducted a significant operation early this morning in the Kandahar region near the village of Azizi that resulted in the deaths of up to 80 extremists, military officials here reported.

This was the third such operation in this area within a week in which coalition forces, in support of the Afghan government, have confronted and attacked anti-government forces. The purpose of the operation was to detain people suspected of terrorist and anti-Afghanistan activities, officials said, but coalition forces encountered organized armed opposition.

Ground and close-air support assets engaged the extremists, who were firing on coalition troops and endangering innocent civilians.

The coalition targeted only armed resistance and compounds and buildings known to harbor extremists, officials empha-

sized, but they added that coalition forces must retain their ability to defend against fire emanating from known enemy positions.

Initial assessments confirmed 20 extremists killed, with 60 additional extremists casualties possible but as yet unconfirmed, officials said.

Five extremists also have been detained and are being questioned regarding their participation in terrorist activities.

A military spokesman said reports of civilian casualties are under investigation.

“We have taken this fight directly to the extremists who threaten the future progress of the people of Afghanistan,” said Army Lt. Col. Paul Fitzpatrick, Combined Joint Task Force 76 spokesman. “Coalition forces are aware of media reports of civilian casualties and are continuing to review assessments from ground elements in the region.”

(From a Combined Forces Command Afghanistan news release.)



File photo by Maj. David Kurle

Capt. Thomas Kanewske, an A-10 pilot, performs a walk-around inspection of an A-10 Thunderbolt II.

Robotic vehicle on way here to help clear minefields

by Master Sgt.
Timothy P. Barela
Air Force Print News

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. (AFP) — Building roads and airfields in Afghanistan presents a unique challenge that stateside heavy equipment operators don't encounter ... minefields.

That is why members of the 823rd Red Horse — or Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers — here joined the Air Force Research Laboratory at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., to develop a robotic mine-area clearing vehicle.

“The mine-area clearing ve-

hicle is going to provide the Air Force — specifically Red Horse combat engineers — the opportunity to clear a known minefield or an unknown minefield to expand the air base or clear routes in a forward operating location,” said Chief Master Sgt. Mark Lewis, the squadron's chief of airfields.

Using the robotic vehicle helps ensure they will not get blown up in the process.

“There are so many minefields in Afghanistan because of the number of years that country was occupied by Russia and then the Taliban,” Chief

-- See “MINES,” Page 3



INSIDE:

455th Air Expeditionary Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant Frederick Ricker says Air Expeditionary Forces 1-2 are carrying on a legacy here.



Continuing the legacy...

Chief Master Sgt. Frederick Ricker
455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Command Chief Master Sergeant

As I watch the Airmen of Air Expeditionary Force 1 and 2 hit their stride, I can only think back to Airmen of the past who deployed to Afghanistan and set the foundation for you to build upon.

Many of these Airmen we know and work alongside back at home station. When they arrived, they were faced with a set of challenges they had to overcome. Your deployment is no different, and you'll encounter unique challenges along the way. Our wing enters our second AEF rotation with C-130s as an integral part of our wing, and we continue to provide unimpeded close air, search and rescue and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support for our U.S. and coalition partners.

Not to leave out the Airmen warriors at the tip of the spear helping rebuild Afghanistan as part of Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Embedded Training Teams, educating the Afghan National Army on logistics, or our young warriors guarding detainees. This is a pretty dynamic time in our wing's history and it's imperative that each of you know how you fit into this mission.

I once worked for a general who asked me every morning, "Sergeant Ricker, what are doing for your country?" At that time in my career I can honestly say I had no idea. As I got older (well, more mature) I began to gain a better understanding of

how all the pieces fit together — that no single specialty was totally independent from another and how other career fields contributed to our great mission.

Nothing galvanized my answer to that question more than the events of that fateful day in September 2001. Since then, I think we all have gained a greater appreciation for what we bring to the fight and what we do for our country.

Your charge during this deployment is to take all the knowledge you have gained and apply it in the prosecution of this war. Not only are your co-workers depending on you — your nation depends on you. Whether you're a communicator, pilot, maintainer, civil engineer (or pick an AFSC) — if you're here you're an invaluable member of this great team and you are a key contributor in this righteous fight — the Global War on Terrorism.

Don't ever think that what you bring to the fight is of little value. When you have your moments during this deployment and wonder if what you're doing is really impacting the mission — think — think about A-10s strafing 30mm rounds to help our ground warriors in a troops-in-contact situation.

Think about the C-130 squadron delivering beans and bullets to our fellow Americans, or basic living necessities for young Afghan children in some of the most austere drop zones.

Think about the civil engineer on the flight line repairing spalls so the next sortie can launch, or our transporters ensuring



U.S. Air Force official photo

Chief Master Sgt. Frederick Ricker

cargo and warriors get to their final destination.

If you ever doubted what you do really matters ... rest assured it does. Your hard work is setting a course that will lay the foundation for an Afghanistan that's free from tyranny and terrorist safe-havens, and thereby making our nation a safer place.

I guarantee you; this will be a whirlwind four months. Take pride in the fact that you're on the front lines serving our country as an invaluable member of the world's greatest Air Force.

It's an honor and a privilege to be your deployed command chief and I look forward to helping you any way possible ensuring our wing continues its noble tradition of "Fighting Terror — Finding Peace."

Air Force leaders send Memorial Day message

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — *The following is a Memorial Day message from Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley.*

"To the men and women of the United States Air Force:

"In a time of peace and

prosperity, we remember those who gave their lives in service to our country. In a time of war, these memories are sharpened by the selfless service of those defending our freedoms daily.

"This Memorial Day, we pause to honor our fallen Airmen — Active, Guard, Reserve and civilian — who

answered the call and paid the ultimate price for our country. Remember also the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, patriots all, who displayed the resolute courage that has defined our country through the generations.

"Message," on Page 3

Bagram Bulletin
Editorial Staff, Disclaimer

Brig. Gen. Christopher D. Miller..... Commander, 455th AEW
Maj. Dave Kurle Chief, Public Affairs



This newspaper is an authorized publication for Airmen and Sailors deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Contents of the Bagram Bulletin are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs office.



Combat engineers can use robot to make airfields safer

-- "MINES" continued from Page 1

Lewis said. "It made it tough to expand air bases because of the minefield potential."

Air Force leaders decided to develop equipment that combat engineers could use to safely assist the Army and other services with the mine-clearing function, the chief said.

"The first Red Horse units were deployed with the Army in Afghanistan and there were definitely some safety concerns," he said. "It took two operators actually inside the cabin of the vehicle at first. However, the Air Force, in its quest for greater safety measures for the operators, decided to install robotics into our particular unit."

That's when the Air Force Research Laboratory got involved. Starting in August 2004, the lab, in conjunction with Red Horse troops, developed the system so it could be completely operated by robotics. Operators now use laptop software and a control box to guide the vehicle through a deadly minefield.

"It still takes two operators — one to steer and control the vehicle's functions and one to monitor the gauges and the cameras mounted on the outside to ensure the vehicle is going in the right direction," Chief Lewis said.

The big difference for operators is now they can be as far as a mile away from the vehicle — and the minefields — to operate it, he said.

It took a year and a half and more than \$2 million to develop and perfect this mine-clearing system, he said. Today, the first fully functional MACV (pronounced "Mack-V") is sitting at the squadron, ready to deploy between now and July.

"Soon after it's deployed, it will get the chance to do its first actual full operational testing," Chief Lewis said.

The Air Force is in the process of add-



U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Timothy P. Barela

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Lewis shows off the Air Force's first robotic mine-clearing vehicle at Hurlburt Field, Fla., on May 23. Developed by the 823rd Red Horse at Hurlburt and the Air Force Research Laboratory at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., the vehicle is scheduled to be deployed to Afghanistan within the next two months to help clear minefields for airfield expansion and route clearing. Chief Lewis is the Red Horse's chief of airfields.

ing to its robotic fleet. The goal is to buy enough additional vehicles with the installed robotics so that every active-duty Red Horse unit will have two MACVs, the chief said.

Along with its robotics, another unique aspect of the MACV is that the operators aren't bomb experts; they are exclusively Red Horse heavy equipment operators.

"These guys aren't from (explosive ordnance disposal)," the chief said. "They are pavement and construction equipment operators."

In other words these guys typically build roads, not diffuse landmines.

"The MACV operators will work in conjunction with (explosive ordnance disposal) technicians when doing mine clearing," Chief

Lewis said. "After using the MACV, you still have to come in with mine detection dogs or other manual means, which means boots on the ground. The MACVs simply make it safer for everyone involved."

The MACV works by using spinning chains with heavy carbide steel "knuckles" on the end to flail the ground and hopefully detonate any anti-personnel or anti-tank mines. Basically, it's a rototiller on steroids, Chief Lewis said.

"Besides making the area safer for the work crews, it's a time savings for us," he said. "Manual mine clearing is a very slow and tedious process. So by having the robotic machine go in and flail the ground, that speeds up the initial clearing."

"Message," from Page 2

"We also remember the families of those who served so well but did not come home. We hope that these families draw strength from the fact that

their loved ones served a calling greater than their own self-interest. Likewise, we come together today to stand with the families of those who continue to serve, as their unconditional support is our

true source of strength.

"We remain a nation at war and an Air Force committed to upholding the charge presented in the Constitution to provide for the common defense. This Memorial Day,

we affirm our gratitude for those who fought and made the ultimate sacrifice so that others could live and enjoy freedom in abundance. We will never disappoint their legacy of service before self."



Airmen help rebuild a nation

by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.
455th AEW Public Affairs

MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan (AFPN) — After a six-day killing frenzy of local Afghans, the Taliban seized control of this city in 1998. In November 2001, with U.S. assistance, the Afghan Northern Alliance recaptured the city of 180,000 residents.

Today, Airmen continue to assist Afghanistan in its war against extremists by mentoring the military members of the Afghan National Army, created in 2002.

Helping a country

In January 2002, a Group of Eight conference — a meeting of the world's top leaders — in Japan spelled out America's role in re-building Afghanistan. With the World Trade Center attack still fresh on the minds of U.S. citizens, America focused on counterterrorism within Afghanistan. That meant taking on the task of building the Afghan National Army.

Since then, the United States, with help from France and the United Kingdom, has been training a new national army, which is growing every day — not only in numbers, but in experience.

"Afghanistan has been at war with terrorists for four years," said Maj. Sarbeland, an Afghan National Army operations leader. "We have been freed, not because of our achievements, but because of (United States) achievements. Four years ago we dreamed of having our own government, and it's a reality today because of (Airmen)."

The Airmen mentors here are known as embedded training teams. Approximately 20 teams, totaling about 150 Airmen, scattered throughout Afghanistan, instruct Afghan soldiers in communications, logistics, supply, medical, and training and education.

A little more than 20 team members at Camp Micheal Spann mentor the Afghan army in supply matters, such as storing and transporting. The trick is, they aren't teaching the ANA how supply is done the Air Force-way. Since the Airmen are filling Army shortfall positions, they must teach supply the way the Army does it. Although ETT teams fall administratively under the 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group stationed at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, they work alongside other NATO trainers to teach the Afghan army how to be self sufficient.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais)

Tech. Sgt. Roland Alexander teaches Afghan National Army soldiers how to test fuel. Airmen on this Embedded Training Team are training ANA troops about supply issues.

"The sooner we teach the Afghan military what it needs to know, the sooner we go home," said Col. Douglas Hine, the 755th's commander.

Fueling an Army

With few members of the ANA able to read or write training is difficult, especially in the supply world, where everything must be documented on forms.

That lack of documentation created a serious diesel-fuel accountability problem for the ANA, that is until Tech. Sgt. Roland Alexander arrived with the team in January.

Basically, the Afghan army didn't have a way to measure its fuel consumption, thus never knowing how much fuel was needed on a monthly basis.

With 18 years of Air Force experience in fuels, Sergeant Alexander is accustomed to solving problems in austere environments. He has deployed six times.

"When I first got here, the ANA couldn't account for 3,000 to 8,000 liters of fuel per month," Sergeant Alexander said.

The first thing Sergeant Alexander discovered was the fuel tank the ANA thought held 25,000 liters of fuel actually held only

22,000. Then, he emptied the tank and waited for the users to arrive, documenting every visit for a month. This gave him a baseline on monthly fuel consumption. It was during this time the sergeant witnessed Afghan ingenuity.

"The ANA bus that shuttled pilots to and from the airport was out of gas and the driver asked me if we had any gas," Sergeant Alexander said. "I said no, but while I was talking to the driver, the ANA had lowered a little man into the tank. He was using a bucket to scoop out the last of the gas and putting it in the bus."

Breaking down barriers

After solving the fuel accountability mystery, Sergeant Alexander began tackling his biggest challenge — trying to instill military discipline. His initial assessment of the ANA was that its members were unorganized and experience levels varied greatly.

"Some of them were in the previous Afghanistan army, some are young, others old, some can read and write while most can't," Sergeant Alexander said.

-- See "ETT," Page 5



U.S. Air Force courtesy photo by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais

Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Mahammad Wais receives fork lift training from Capt. Brian Garrido, 209th Forward Support Depot senior military advisor.

“ETT” continued from Page 3

To make it easy for the ANA, he made a checklist for them to follow, which contained everything from what time to report to work, to an entire day’s taskings. Then, three days a week, he taught the platoon sergeant, who could speak English, and another soldier how to operate a computer and fill out a spread sheet.

While off duty, he asked the camp’s interpreter to teach English, while he in turn learned their language.

“It all worked out pretty well,” Sergeant Alexander said.

Striving for military mindset

Sergeant Alexander and other Airmen also noticed that the Afghan culture didn’t fit the military mindset. They said it’s against Afghan customs to degrade a man in public, which they feel is happening when the soldiers are corrected for violating military standards. When a lower-ranking soldier broke the rules, officers and higher ranking NCOs would say nothing.

“It was difficult to explain to them that we weren’t trying to belittle the man. We were trying to have him conform to a military standard,” Sergeant Alexander said.

That military bearing was also lacking in their personal lives, said Master Sgt. Mitch Mitchell, the forward support depot superintendent.

“We went to visit the soldiers’ dorms and we found the place in a mess,” Sergeant Mitchell said.

“So we told them we were going to return in two days to inspect their barracks. When we came back for the inspection, the place was clean, and it still is today. The soldiers are on the bottom rung, and what we’ve tried to do is make life better for them,” the sergeant said.

“I’ll look back and I’m going to wonder about the frontline NCOs, the young future of Afghanistan and the challenges they’ll have to overcome,” Sergeant Alexander said.

Making history

“However, I will leave them with enough tools to make a difference. To help stand up a country is exciting,” Sergeant Alexander said.

When a bulk of the Airmen here were recently asked if they enjoyed mentoring the ANAs, they all raised their hands.

“We’re a part of history,” said Capt. Brian Garrido, 209th Forward Support Depot senior military advisor. “It feels good to know you made an impact in a short amount of time.”

Brief Bullets

Dress, appearance rules

While on Camp Cunningham, Airmen are required to conform to standards for both the desert battle dress and Air Force physical training uniforms. The most common uniform infractions include...

- untucked shirts when not actually exercising,
- not wearing socks with the PT uniform,
- mixing and matching the PT uniform with civilian workout clothes,
- not carrying a weapon outside the confines of Camp Cunningham, when not exercising,
- and not wearing a reflective belt in DCUs at night.

New laundry rules

Don’t forget to use the new laundry forms available at Services. There is also a new schedule. You can drop off your laundry any time after 1300 on Monday through 0900 on Wednesday. After a four-hour waiting period, you can drop it off again from 1300 on Wednesday through 0900 on Friday, and again from 1300 on Friday to 0900 on Monday.

You can pick up your laundry on Thursdays, Saturdays and Tuesdays.

Services events

Today

Bingo, 1900L

Saturday

Texas Hold’em, 1900L

Sunday

Volleyball tournament, 1900L

Monday

Spades, 1900L

Tuesday

Movie Night, 1900L

Wednesday

Texas Hold’em, 1900L

Lost luggage?

If you arrive to your deployed location but your luggage doesn’t, and it can’t be located by Air Mobility Command officials in 24 hours of your arrival, your luggage is considered lost.

If that happens, you can file a claim with the legal office, or wait to see if your luggage will be found. You have up to two years from the date it was lost to file a claim for lost or damaged luggage.

For more information, call the base legal office at 231-3251.



(Left) The nomadic Kuchi people migrate through the Panjshir Valley. Known as a Medical Civic Action Program, Provincial Reconstruction Team members provided treatment for Kuchi families as they move their sheep, goats, donkeys, camels and cattle to the high country for the summer. (Below) Maj. Kurt Workmaster, Panjshir PRT physician assistant, checks a young Kuchi boy's eyes during an examine conducted as part of the MEDCAP May 18.



U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. John Cumper

Medics make house call for nomads

Docs treat Kuchi people as the nomads herd sheep, goats, donkeys, camels through valley

Capt. Joe Campbell
Panjshir PRT Public Affairs

PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Medics, interpreters and support personnel from the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team set up a short-notice medical outreach May 18 for the nomadic Kuchi people during their spring migration through the Panjshir Valley.

Known as a Medical Civic Action Program or MEDCAP, the event provided treatment for Kuchi families as they move their sheep, goats, donkeys, camels and cattle to the high country for the summer. The Kuchi are Afghan Pashtun who migrate among the lowlands and highlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan each year.

"We've seen the Kuchi families on the road the last week or so as they move their herds North and we wanted to meet them and learn from them," said Lt. Col. Neal Kringel, Panjshir PRT commander.

Mr. Fletcher Burton, Panjshir PRT director, and Colonel Kringel met with Mr. Abdul Qadeer, the Panjshir Chief of Traffic Police, to discuss a coordinated meeting with the Kuchi.

"We brought the impromptu meeting idea to Mr. Qadeer and he quickly agreed that we should do it," Mr. Burton said. "In fact, he led us out right then to meet some of the Kuchi who happened to be in the area."

The delegation met with a Kuchi family who were camped along the Panjshir River north of Bazarak. They received a warm welcome and learned more about the culture and history of the Kuchi people. In addition, Mr. Burton and Colonel Kringel discussed the mission and capabilities of the PRT.

"A few people had nagging medical issues, so we returned with our medics," said Colonel Kringel. "We need friends and allies all around and this was a chance to help people who are often left off to the side."

The medical needs ranged from a teenager with a recurring back injury to a baby with diarrhea and several adults with eye irritations.

"We've seen the Kuchi families on the road the last week or so as they move their herds North and we wanted to meet them and learn from them."

Lt. Col. Neal Kringel, Panjshir PRT commander

"What began as a house call of sorts turned into a mini sick call," said Maj. Kurt Workmaster, a reservist deployed from Duke Field at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida who is the Panjshir PRT physician assistant. "We saw ten patients ranging from an infant to the elders of the families."

This was the PRT's first MEDCAP since arriving in the valley earlier this month. The team learned a few lessons from this first event.

"Our current bags are set up for mass trauma situations," said Technical Sgt. Charles Campbell, deployed from Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. He is the Non Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Panjshir PRT medics.

"We need to set up a bag geared more toward family medicine versus emergency medicine," he said.



ENDURING FAITH CHAPEL

Weekly services:

Muslim

Fridays 1800L (1330Z)

Jewish

Fridays 1900L (1430Z)

Seventh Day Adventist

Saturdays 0930L (0500Z)

Roman Catholic

Saturdays 1945L (1515Z)

Liturgical Protestant

Sundays 0830L (0400Z)

Protestant

Sundays 1130L (0700Z)

Latter Day Saints

Sundays 1300L (0830Z)



FOR PRAYER
Call
231-4755

Church of Christ

Sundays 1400L (0930Z)

Korean Protestant

Sundays 1545L (1115Z)

Gospel

Sundays 1730L (1300Z)

DFAC hours

Breakfast

0530 to 0900L

Lunch

1130 to 1330L

Dinner

1630 to 2100L

Midnight

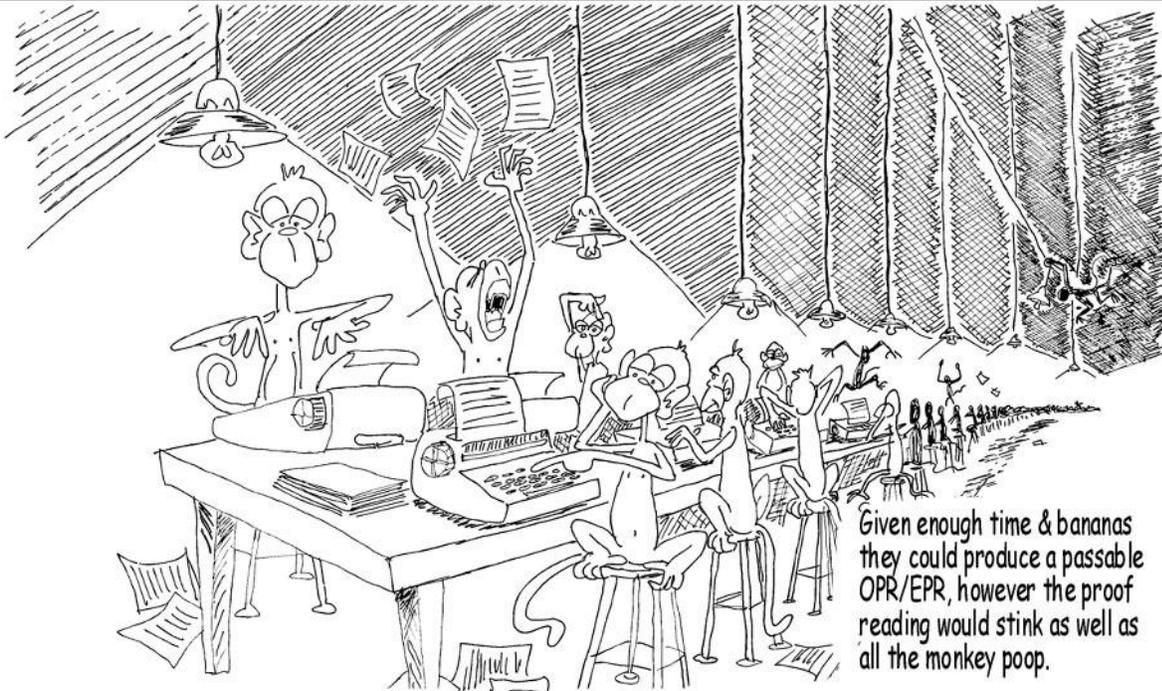
2330 to 0100L

DCUs and Air Force physical training uniforms are mandatory when dining at any of the facilities here.

No bags, purses or backpacks are allowed in any of the dining facilities.

Plausible Denial

By Jurgi



Given enough time & bananas they could produce a passable OPR/EPR, however the proof reading would stink as well as all the monkey poop.

Remember the old adage about 500 monkeys and 500 typewriters?

Camp Cunningham residents who have rights to the shared drive can access other Plausible Denial cartoons at S:/SHARED FILES/PLAUSIBLE DENIAL.



Air Force medic treats Afghan boy

Capt. Joe Campbell
Panjshir PRT Public Affairs

PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – After a chance meeting on a street with a boy in the mountainous village of Rokha, an Air Force physician assistant was brought in to treat the youngster the very next day.

Fletcher Burton, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team director, met 6-year-old Idris when he and a team were in the area performing inspections May 7. The following day, PRT members were again performing inspections near Rokha when they met Idris' father, who happened to be a government official.

"We were inspecting several projects, including 30 bee hives that we funded, when we met Mr. Thahir, the Government of Afghanistan Panjshir Representative for the Environmental

Ministry," Mr. Burton said.

Mr. Thahir met the team with great interest. When he learned that the PRT had medical experts, he asked if a medic could treat his only son, who was ill. He explained that his son had been seen by a local provider several

days earlier, but the symptoms persisted.

"After we arrived, we all sat down on a blanket to talk to the elders and the young boy came and sat right in front of me and calmly waited for me to examine him," said Maj. Kurt Workmas-

ter, physician assistant for the Panjshir PRT. "I performed the exam, prescribed fluids and provided medication for his ailment. I expect him to make a full recovery."

As Rokha is not always a friendly environment for the PRT to operate in, this was a chance to provide community outreach, and it was the right thing to do, Mr. Burton said.

"This situation provided an excellent opportunity for us to go into the village, secure our presence there and work with the local people," Mr. Burton said. "It was also a great use of our medical experts and resources, as well as being the humane thing to do. We have a very capable team of medics and Idris was in need of medical attention."

This encounter is typical of most meetings in the region.



U.S. Air Force photo by Shahla Hammond

Kurt Workmaster, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team physician assistant, examines 6-year-old Idris as his father and members of the PRT watch May 8.

Airman aids Afghanistan youngster injured by bus

Capt. Joe Campbell
Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Whether the young Afghan boy was hit by a bus or slipped and fell from it May 11 is unknown. What is known is that an Airman was soon there to render aid.

Thirteen-year-old Mohammad Yousuf, son of Amir Shah, from the village of Obdurah, was treated at Rokha Emergency Hospital for multiple cuts and bruises after his encounter with a bus near a safe house where members of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team live.

"I was on the front porch relaxing and studying the Dari language with several of our guards, when I noticed them all stand up and look out toward the road," said Senior Airman Den-



SrA. Dennis Martinez

nis Martinez, a communications technician deployed from Tinker Air Force Base near Oklahoma City. "I saw a boy, crouched in the fetal position crying and screaming on the road."

It only took Airman Martinez a few seconds to react. As he ran the nearly 100 yards to the scene, he assessed the situation and made sure the scene was safe as he and the guards responded. At least

seven people were standing around, but not helping the injured boy, he said.

"I guess the bus must have started moving and he lost his grip while climbing aboard. I noticed the bus had stopped, but no one was doing anything," Airman Martinez said.

Mohammad's face was completely covered with blood by the time the guards and Airman Martinez arrived with a first aid kit. He quickly examined the boy and made the decision to transport him to the hospital.

"We loaded Mohammad in the back seat of our vehicle and I heard him say the town name 'Rokha,' then one of the guards said in broken English, to take the boy to the hospital in Rokha," Airman Martinez said.

As the four departed, Airman Martinez said he again noticed all the people standing around and watching. "I don't

believe they knew what to think. I heard some of the onlookers saying 'American' or something of that nature and I think they were trying to thank me, but my only concern was about getting to a hospital," he said.

When they reached the hospital in Rokha, they were met by medical personnel who spoke some English. They thanked the three for bringing Mohammad in, treated his injuries and then transferred him to Anaba Hospital where he was kept over night for observation. The young man was released the next day.

"Senior Airman Martinez's quick response is testament to his concern for people," said Lt. Col. Neal Kringel, Panjshir PRT commander. "He quickly took charge of the situation, relying on his training and the people and resources he had. He helped a scared and injured boy get back to doing the things he loves."



Transient alert Airmen provide Bagram Airfield its staying power

By Maj. David Kurle
455 AEW Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—Imagine parking hundreds of cars and trucks in a convenience store parking lot.

It would take ingenuity and creativity, kind of like stuffing people into a phone booth.

Now, imagine parking those cars if they were the size of a C-17 and the task of the transient alert team at the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing here becomes a little clearer.

“It’s kind of like a giant puzzle, you’ve got to make it all fit,” said Staff Sgt. Gordon Torrey, deployed from Pope Air Force Base, N.C., he is one of six transient alert Airmen in the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron.

Their job is to find parking places for an average of 650 transient aircraft each month, which bring cargo, passengers and distinguished visitors to this joint base, currently the hub of activity for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Parking problem

The problem for transient alert is the small amount of space for aircraft that land here but are not assigned here permanently, hence the term, transient. The 455th AEW boasts a joint flying mission, managing A-10s, multiple versions of C-130 operations and even some Navy EA-6 Prowler aircraft. All of this while sharing a ramp with the Army for its aviation operations in Afghanistan.

“We have about four spots left, so parking is real hard on this base,” Sergeant Torrey said. “If we don’t have room to park an aircraft, we have to turn them away, and we don’t want that.”

More than 9,500 military members from all branches, as well as civilians, equates to a lot of aircraft landing here serving as the base’s lifeline for supplies. This means transient alert, or TA as its known, must find creative solutions to overcome the lack of aircraft parking on Bagram’s ramp.

TA works very closely with the 455th’s command post, the two agencies stay in constant communication via radio, according to Tech. Sgt. Michael Leach, the TA day-shift supervisor, deployed from Tinker Air Force



U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. David Kurle

As seen through the rearview mirror of a “follow me” truck, a C-17 follows Tech. Sgt. Michael Leach and Staff Sgt. Gordon Torrey, to its parking spot here. The two sergeants are crew chiefs assigned to the Transient Alert section of the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron at Bagram Air Field Afghanistan.

Base, Okla. Aircraft must have prior permission to land and pilots radio the command post with their landing times, which then get passed on to TA. Then, TA has to make sure there is a place to park the aircraft, based on its size, cargo and whether it’s carrying distinguished visitors.

Valet parking for DVs

“When a plane has a DV, we try to put them on Spot-1, the closest to the passenger terminal,” Sergeant Leach said. “That’s another reason command post is great, because they tell us about DVs coming in, otherwise we’d just park the plane anywhere we had space.”

“We coordinate with TA on all the parking spots,” said Master Sgt. Mark Geffre, command post superintendent deployed from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D. “Without these guys helping me and rotating parking spots we wouldn’t be able to move cargo and passengers efficiently. They’re our eyes and ears on the flight line.”

Sergeants Leach and Torrey start out their day with a plan to park all the aircraft

arriving during their 12-hour shift. However, like any contingency operation, the plan must be flexible and allow for unforeseen circumstances throughout the day.

“We try to figure it out in the morning,” Sergeant Torrey said. “We work out a plan, but what happens is the planes miss their scheduled time, or they’re on the ground longer than they’re supposed to be.”

No overnight parking

“The ones who try to stay overnight are a real problem because we don’t have any overnight parking, that’s when you have to get creative,” he said.

“We do whatever we can, but if it’s real big, like engines or a major bird strike, we just park them and try to get them maintenance,” Sergeant Leach said.

“Our leadership supports us,” Sergeant Leach added. “They listen to us.”

“These guys are working hard,” said Chief Master Sgt. Brian Hornback, the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group’s superintendent. “They’re making amazing things happen with the equipment and the limited ramp space we have here.”