
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Veterinary care helps build relations with nomadic tribe

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QALAT, Afghanistan (AFNS)—Airmen and Soldiers from the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team vaccinated hundreds of animals in preparation for the long, hard Afghan winter in October .

In a region where the average income is less than a dollar a day, the PRT's veterinary civil assistance patrol not only strengthened the herds, it strengthened relations with the tribesmen.

The PRT members met the Kuchis soon after arriving in Qalat near their forward operating base. After meeting and learning more about the tribe, they quickly realized their assistance was needed. For Afghanistan's nomadic Kuchi tribes, diseases spreading through livestock herds could have devastating effects on their livelihood.

"We identified them as 'at risk' people, and they are the poorest people in Afghanistan," said Army Spc. Don DeBardelaben, a PRT civil affairs specialist and Kuchi tribal coordinator.

The PRT soon began delivering humanitarian assistance to Mohammad Rasul, Kuchi line director, to begin building their



Air Force Staff Sgt. Don Elias deworms livestock during a veterinary medical outreach conducted by the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team. Sergeant Elias, a native of Buffalo, N.Y., is deployed from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

relationship with the tribe.

"I started talking with Mohammad and gave him humanitarian aid—a weekly drop of mainly winter stuff," said the native of Conroe, Texas. "The aid warmed people up (to the idea of working with the PRT), because it was an immediate result they could see."

The PRT commander, Lt. Col. Bryce Brakeman, said he had full confidence the young Soldier could handle such an importance task in building relations with the Kuchis.

"I have all kinds of confidence in him. I don't see much of a difference between some of our E-4s and our officers when it comes

to working with the Afghans," said the colonel deployed from Travis Air Force Base, Calif. "A lot of it has to do with being a good listener more than it does directing. They can listen to what the local's problems and issues are and come back with possible solutions; their rank does not matter."

In August, PRT members hosted a veterinarian and soon began helping the Kuchis by establishing a series of veterinarian civil assistance patrols to vaccinate the tribe's livestock.

At first, the Kuchis were hesitant to have their animals

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treated, Specialist DeBardelaben said.

“They were really scared,” he said. “They told us the coalition has not seen them in eight years.”

Tribe members eventually overcame their initial reluctance and took advantage of the free vaccinations. By the end of the VETCAP, more than 200 animals were treated.

Two months later, the PRT hosted a two-day VETCAP. The first day, Army Maj. (Dr.) Dana McDaniel, a cooperative medical assistance veterinarian, and her team vaccinated more than 200 animals. The team planned to set up operations at another location the second day, but director Rasul asked them to return to the same site.

“Mohammad said, ‘Word is spreading. You guys are popular now. Everyone saw what you did, and they went and told all of their friends. Hundreds of animals are going to come; you should stay in Qalat,’” Specialist DeBardelaben said. “We said, ‘OK, we will be at the same place tomorrow.’ We showed up, and there were literally a thousand sheep and goats in the streets waiting for us.”

Due to the overwhelming turnout, the veterinarians enlisted the aid of fellow servicemembers. Staff Sgt. Don Elias, the PRT force protection NCO in charge, stepped up to help wrangle and treat animals.

“Being a guy from a city who has never worked with livestock, this was quite interesting,” said the sergeant deployed from Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.



U.S. Air Force photos by Master Sgt. Keith Brown

Air Force Staff Sgt. Joe Montano provides security at the entrance of the Kuchi compound during a veterinary medical outreach conducted by the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team. Sergeant Montano is an F-15 crew chief deployed from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Don Elias deworms livestock during a veterinary medical outreach conducted by the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team.

“It was a great experience. Working with the PRT and the local population, I feel like I am part of something bigger.”

The sergeant said he feels working with locals has been the most rewarding part of his deployment.

“It’s a good opportunity, because it gives you a chance to look at the big picture,” said the native of Buffalo, N.Y. “To actually go out and see a world beyond the flightline is an experience like no other. To meet people and speak their language not only gives the people a sense of hope, but it makes a humbling experience. I really enjoyed this opportunity.”

Major McDaniel also recognizes her job allows her to do more than treat animals — it helps build relationships.

“In this particular situation, with the Kuchis, it is important to build trust,” said the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine graduate. “They tend to keep to themselves, and this is a good opportunity for them to see that there are others here to help them. We can keep the Kuchi from needing support from the Taliban.”

The veterinarian team trained a handful of Kuchis the procedures to vaccinate their animals before the VETCAP came to an end. They left them with medicine to treat another 1,000 animals.

“Everyone was happy,” Specialist DeBardelaben said. “Kuchi men I would see before who did not want to shake my hand or talk to me, are now coming up and shaking my hand saying ‘Thank you.’ This is going to open the door for future operations.”

CAC login gives users access to Reserve personnel site

DENVER (AFNS) — Air Reserve Personnel Center officials launched a new enhancement Oct. 30 allowing Airmen to log into the virtual Personnel Center-Guard and Reserve using their Common Access Card.

This enhancement gives Airmen the option to associate their vPC-GR account with their CAC, eliminating the need to remember another password.

Before Airmen can log into the

vPC-GR using only their CAC, they must associate it by a logging in with their existing account and then clicking on the “Associate CAC” button. For those who do not have an account, they must create an account and then associate it with their CAC.

Although the CAC option is available, it is not required. Airmen still have the option, whether their account is associated or not, to use their username and

password.

“We wanted to give our customers the flexibility to easily log in with their CAC as well as maintaining the username and password option for those who may be without a CAC reader,” said Lt. Col. Doug Ottinger, ARPC’s future operations and integration director.

Citizen Airmen can contact their unit for CAC-reader availability.

News Briefs

A.C.E. MEETINGS

Airmen Committed To Excellence meets Fridays at 1700L/1230Z in front of Town Hall. Meetings are open to all Airmen in the rank of E-1 to E-4.

ATTENTION ALL JUNIOR NCOS

The Bagram AF Route 5/6 meets Thursdays at 1800L/1330Z at Camp Cunningham’s Town Hall. The meetings are open to all staff sergeant selects, staff sergeants and tech sergeants.

AFSA MEETINGS

Air Force Sergeants Association Expeditory Chapter 1657 is holding meetings bi-weekly on Saturdays, with alternating times. The next meeting is Nov. 8 at 0800, followed by the next meeting Nov. 22 at 1700.

NEWCOMERS INPROCESSING

All Air Force members are required to inprocess with PERSCO. The inprocessing will start your combat pay entitlements. If you have been in the AOR for at least 30 days and you are not receiving combat pay, please stop by Finance located in the tower on Camp Cunningham. If you know for a fact that you did not inprocess with PERSCO, then please visit PERSCO located in the Pax terminal. Please call PERSCO 431-2070 with any questions.

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

For any volunteers interested in being a part of the Native American Heritage Month Observance

Committee, the first meeting will be held on Nov. 3, at The Newman-Meister Center, BLDG # 810, Room 202 at 1000L.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Are your immunizations up to date? Active duty members are required to stay current on all immunizations during their deployment. Most frequently due vaccines are Hepatitis B, Influenza, Anthrax, Smallpox and Typhoid. Report to your nearest medical treatment facility. Check your status and get vaccinated! For questions, contact TF Med Public Health.

COMBAT O

Combat Orientation is Thursday at 0930Z/1400L at the Enduring Freedom Chapel. This is a mandatory briefing for all Air Force personnel assigned to Bagram Air Field. Newcomers must attend the briefing within two week of their arrival. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the 1st Sergeants.

COMBAT PUSH

Combat Push times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L/0430Z to 1000L/0530Z. Services, Comm and PERSCO will be available to sign outprocessing checklists. Personnel must complete your Post Deployment Health Questionnaire on-line and pick up your medical records at Flight Medicine/Public Health before coming to Combat Push. For more information call 431-4409.