



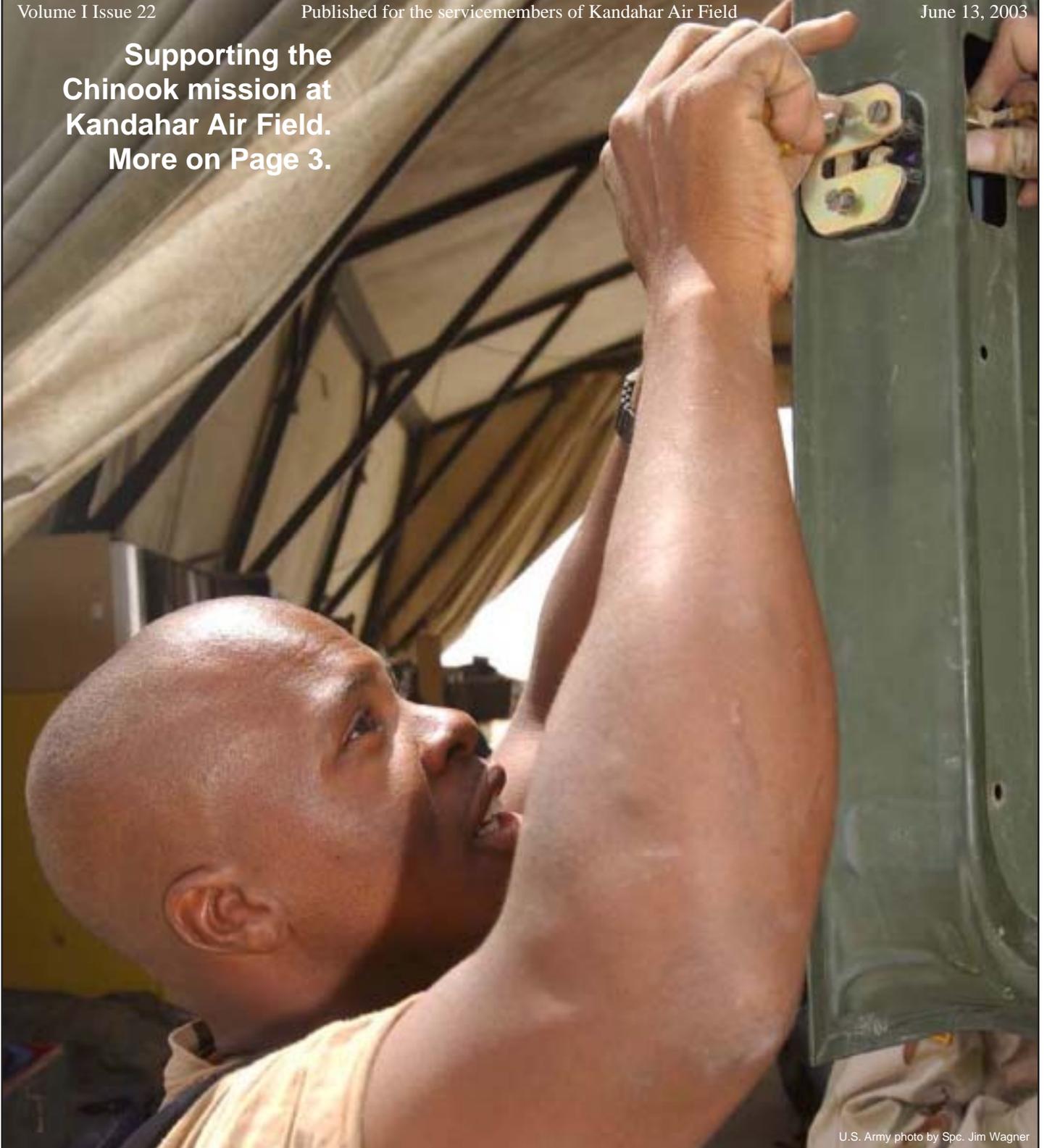
DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

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June 13, 2003

**Supporting the
Chinook mission at
Kandahar Air Field.
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U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jim Wagner

Devils Competent, Confident, Guided by Discipline

by Col. Patrick J. Donahue II
Coalition Task Force Devil Commander



During the recent task force change of command, Maj. Gen. John Vines talked about the 504th's Parachute Infantry Regiment's (PIR) remarkable history and achievements during World War II, and Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm.

I want to build upon his message and add a few of my thoughts about you, the current generation of U.S., Italian, and Romanian heroes adding another chapter to our unit's



Devil Six

history of service and sacrifice as we seek to preserve freedom.

I just came from Operation Iraqi Freedom and thought I would be prepared for what I would find here in Afghanistan. I was wrong. Operations here in Afghanistan remain unique from those we've fought in the past and are fighting just a few hours away.

The harsh environment, shapeless enemy, unique coalition task organization and expansive operational area test our skills as soldiers every day. However, we have more than met this challenge because of you – the soldiers of free nations serving in Afghanistan for no other reason than to rid the world of the threat of terrorism, a shining example of what the U.S. Army describes as selfless service.

But like World War II, we are fighting an enemy that wants to destroy us and our way of life. The Taliban and Al-Qaida we fight and defeat here are kept from planning, resourcing and executing terrorist attacks on our homes in the U.S., Italy, and Romania. By defeating them here in Organ-E, Shahi Khowt and Shkin, we keep them from

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KAF Medics Train Hard for the Real Deal

by Spc. Jonathan Lopez
307th Forward Surgical Battalion

[Editor's Note: Fifteen Afghanistan Military Forces (AMF) soldiers were involved in a two-car, head-on collision June 2 on Highway 4 just outside of Kandahar Air Field (KAF). One AMF soldier was pronounced dead on arrival, while the other 14 were treated for serious to minor injuries. The soldiers were treated by KAF's medical staff.]

On June 2 there was a mass casualty incident, and the clinic received about 15 patients. My role was the medic in the delayed section of the mass casualty. I remember that the day was done for me when the treatment platoon sergeant came into the tent and

woke me up.

As a medical company, we usually practice mass casualty exercises so we are ready for the real deal; however, today was a day that the practice turned into the real thing. All my training had come into place. As I waited for the first ambulance to drop off the first patients, sweat and anticipation was growing in my body, but I knew that I had to respond without hesitation.

The first person that I saw was a trauma to the nose, which was bleeding profusely. In shock — the whole event was still taking place — I acted more or less on instinct. As I said before, we train the same way we would fight. The idea behind this is to

make sure we are ready at all times. After stabilizing the bleeding on the first patient, I then moved to other casualties and assisted our doctors, who had their hands full.

I have never doubted my training in any way, but I was always curious to see how I would respond if put to the test. In field exercises we always practice mass casualties and how to operate during them. It is easier to practice on a patient without seeing what is really going on, but during this event I really saw the injuries that had taken place.

I had to react to what I saw, and saw how my interventions helped the

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Working Behind-the-Scenes To Keep C-47s Flying

Story & photos by Spc. Jim Wagner
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

For every successful mission conducted by C-47 air crews supporting Operation Enduring Freedom, scores of soldiers are working behind-the-scenes to keep the twin-rotor aircraft flying.

That the C-47 "Chinook" is a work horse in the Afghanistan area of responsibility (AOR) isn't in question. C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, Chinooks conduct more than 40 missions per month, transporting more than one-half million pounds of cargo and personnel in that time frame.

The majority of flight time comes from the "ring" flights, which run weekly from Kandahar to the many forward operations bases (FOBs) in Afghanistan. Green, yellow and purple ring flights are conducted on different days of the week delivering personnel, food, water, mail and other items to the FOBs.

Days before these weekly missions take off, C Company's operations staff are scheduling the manifest, a juggling process that distributes the cargo (human and otherwise) between the three aircraft on each ring flight.

Two days before the ring flight, operations officers and those who are requesting cargo support meet to finalize the manifest, making changes if necessary. Because of the operations tempo in Afghanistan, the amount of cargo going out to the FOBs hasn't decreased in the past six months.

Kandahar's Chinooks can carry 10,500 pounds each per flight, an amount determined by many safety factors.

"Our C-47s are pulling 2,000 pounds more per load than the last rotation," said Capt. Connie Lane, C Company operations officer. "The last rotation carried 8,500 pounds per flight, but they were carrying more internal fuel because the AOR was more hostile (then). Bagram's (C-47s) aren't pulling as much, but the altitude there affects how much you can carry."

Keeping the Chinooks in the air re-



Staff Sgt. Scott Flieger, C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, technical inspector, goes over the paperwork of a maintenance check on a C-47 "Chinook." quires nearly constant maintenance, supply and operations support. According to Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Alexander, production control non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC), every one hour

of flight time requires roughly 16 man-hours of maintenance.

After every flight mission, he said, whether it's an eight-hour Yellow Ring run or a one-hour orientation flight, flight crew and maintainers go through a checklist to see if there were any problems, troubleshooting those problems, and refueling and cleaning the Chinook.

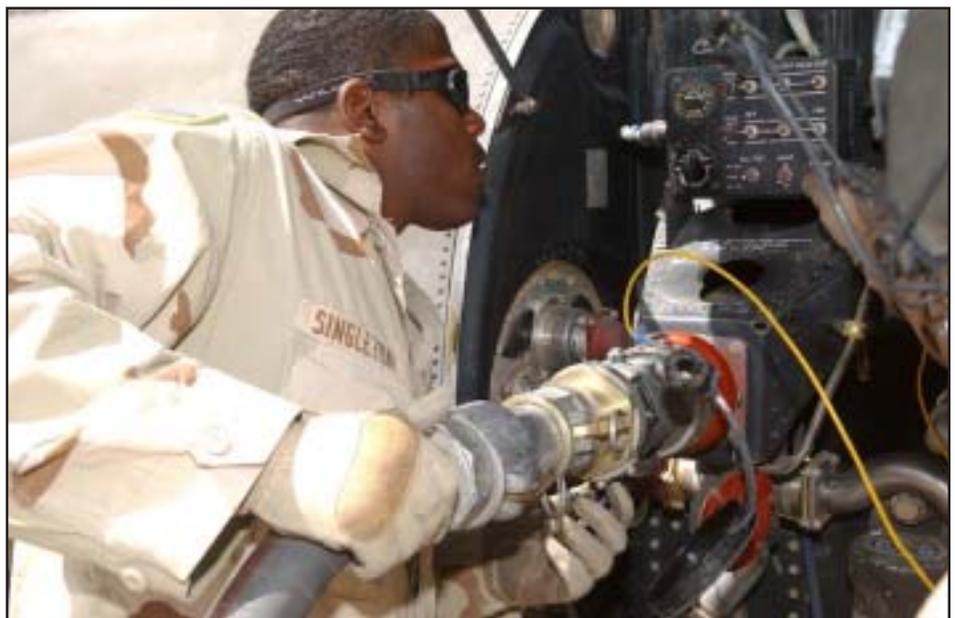
Making matters worse for Chinook maintainers is the environment in Afghanistan and constant updates to maintenance checklists.

"The environment puts a lot of stress on everything, especially the engines," said Sgt. Darrell Bradford, C Company squad team leader. "There's not a thing that isn't challenging about this job. The books are always changing, there's always different guidelines."

Also, the Chinooks used by C Company are D models, which came off the assembly line between 1982 and 1990. By way of comparison, automobiles are considered classics after 20 years, making the early C-47Ds a classic. As with automobiles, each Chinook has its own "quirks."

"Each airframe has its own personality — sometimes it's electrical, some-

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Pfc. Michael Singleton, C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment refueling specialist, fills up a C-47 "Chinook" after a flight.



TOP LEFT: Sgt. Darrell Bradford, C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, performs maintenance on one of the two rotors found on a C-47 "Chinook." TOP RIGHT: Spc. Levi Gydesen, C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, light wheel mechanic, changes the oil of a vehicle at Kandahar.

SUPPORT, from page 3

times it's hydraulic," Alexander said. "We keep a detailed history of each aircraft's maintenance, so you know to look for those problems."

After every 200 flight hours, the Chinook is brought in by maintainers who essentially strip it down and inspect and repair every square inch on the aircraft.

Phase maintenance generally takes 42 days back in the United States. At Kandahar that time is halved to 21-22 days "so we can keep doing missions," Alexander said. The quickest phase maintenance turnaround time, he said, was 15 days.

"You would think it would take longer, but there's a war going on here," Alexander said.

Getting the parts ordered and delivered was, until recently, the sole job of Pfc. Joyce Wang, the prescribed load list specialist for Task Force Devil. Another load list specialist has joined her, but before that she was handling both C Company's parts ordering as well as that of the entire task force – between 300-400 pieces of equipment in all, said Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Daggs, C Company and task force motor sergeant.

"If it's on hand, the part is ready the next day," Wang said. "If we have to



Pfc. Joyce Wang, C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, inputs a parts order.

order it, it'll take a couple weeks. It gets really bad on command maintenance days, when everyone comes in with replacement parts needed."

Wang works in the motor pool with 11 other soldiers who are charged with maintaining the equipment that supports the Chinook mission. Daggs, seven soldiers from C Company and four others service the automobiles and other equipment used at Kandahar.

Like the aircraft, the equipment used in Afghanistan doesn't stand up well to the extreme heat and dust found here. Daggs relates that the winds even play a role here: recently, they lost an entire tent after a sandstorm ripped it out of the ground and sent it into the desert.

Fuel is another important factor in the Chinook mission at Kandahar. Every

month, Chinooks go through an average of 200 – 250,000 gallons of fuel, said Staff Sgt. James Stafford, C Company platoon sergeant.

It's difficult to detail all the jobs involved in supporting the flight mission, because so many are necessary overall to accomplish the mission. The many soldiers needed, according to 1st Sgt. Jerry Wolanczyk, C Company first sergeant, is what makes it hard for others to recognize the importance of the service they provide.

"The people who support the Chinook mission don't get near the amount of credit they deserve for the job they do," he said. "When I was (on an air crew) I might not have recognized it, but after I became first sergeant I saw the other side of the mission. They do a great job."

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taking their fight to Philadelphia, Bucharest, and Turin.

When I arrived here at Kandahar and visited our firebases and outposts, I saw pride and teamwork everywhere.

I asked an TOW missile crewman in Shkin who had just fought through an ambush the night prior about what he thought about his duty here in Afghanistan. He responded quickly that he had the best job in the U.S. Army. After talking with him and his platoon and countless other Devils just like them, I knew I was going to command a great task force.

You know your duty and you know how to perform it well — you and your leaders are tactically competent. You trust yourself and you trust the paratrooper, soldier or airman next to you after sharing the sacrifices and the ordeals of combat while also knowing your limits — you are confident. Above all, you are disciplined and do what is right without being told. Competent, confident soldiers guided by discipline; this is what it means to be a Devil.

This new command marks my third tour with the 82nd Airborne Division and my second in the 504th PIR. I am honored to return and become your commander in combat. We are working hard now on the plan to re-deploy back to the U.S. As soon as we get dates locked in, we will share this with you and your families.

Finally, I want to thank once again Col. John F. Campbell, the 32nd commander of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. There is no finer infantryman in the U.S. Army today. I could have followed no finer paratrooper in command. I wish him and his wife, Ann, good luck and success in their next assignment in the Pentagon. I remain continually impressed by the superb achievements Devil soldiers make daily in executing the Global War on Terrorism. We are making a difference. I am proud to command the 'Devils In Baggy Pants.' Strike Hold...Airborne



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jim Wagner

Spc. Jonathan Lopez, 307th Forward Surgical Battalion combat medic, left, guides an 82nd Airborne Division soldier through the proper way to find a vein and draw blood during an IV therapy training course Wednesday.

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patients. That sad day proved to me that I am able and ready to do anything that was or is put in my direction.

You can expect panic and confusion in a setting like this; that is the dangerous part of my job. That was not the case here — we all responded the way we practice in a training environment. That is why this incident was handled so smoothly.

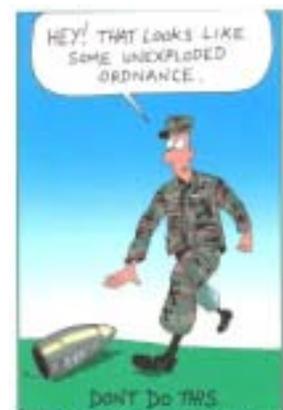
Patients rely on us to remain calm and make the situation better for them. I am glad that I am a combat medic, and I know that people trust me with their personal care. I am very confident in what I do because if I begin to second-guess myself, then I would be putting the patient in danger, and that is something that I will never do.

To me the day was nothing different — I have been ready for something like this to happen so it was no surprise when it did. I have learned, train hard and when it happens again, you will not have any worries.



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meaning of a 'Dog and
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Orgun-E: Fire bases, once austere sites where recreation was hard to come by, are getting a big upgrade

by 1st Lt. Cory Angell
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

FIRE BASE HARRIMAN, Afghanistan -- Under the hot sun men lift weights in a penned-in area to pass the time, an image often seen in movies depicting prison life.

However, this is not a prison yard but rather an average day in the life of a soldier at Fire Base Harriman in Orgun-E, Afghanistan, not far from the Pakistan border.

Capt. Lucien Campillo, a company commander with 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 82nd Airborne Division, has been here since Jan. 14 and says the fire base is in a key location for projecting combat power.

"We have had 60 to 70 rocket attacks since I have been here," said Campillo when asked about the threat level. "We are in a combat zone and every time these soldiers go outside the wire they go out with that mindset.

"For a long time, every soldier here was an infantryman," Campillo said. "If you were a cook you were out there pulling security.

"In a fire base," he added, "you don't have the flexibility of a larger base. You can't just say, only the infantrymen are going to do the patrolling and pull the security."

With continuing combat operations and security always a concern, the leadership are also thinking about the quality of life for the soldiers at the remote location.

"I lift most every day," said Pfc. David Sieb, a combat medic with the 82nd Military Police Company (Airborne). "As long as there is time between missions I'll come over and lift."

Life at the fire base is improving on a daily basis. Engineers can be seen working hard constructing new buildings on the base.

"The toughest thing about being here is just being away from home," said



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Keith Kluew

Pumpin' Iron

A paratrooper with 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, does a set of curls in "The Yard" at Fire Base Harriman near the Afghan city of Orgun-E near the Pakistan border. The yard is a popular place to be early in the morning and as the sun sets.

Sieb. "If you have seen one fire base you've seen them all."

As far as comfort, soldiers can turn in their laundry to the locals and usually get a two or three day turn around, and there is no complaining about the food.

"We have some good cooks here," said Sieb. "So the food's pretty good."

Even though no one complains about the food, Sieb said food in a care package from home is one thing that makes life for him at the fire base a little better, while Gil looks for other things in his mail.

"I like to get pictures from home," said Gil. "My wife is due in September and I like to see how she is doing."

The base does provide a Moral, Welfare and Recreation tent for the soldiers to use.

"We have one computer and three phones that we can use to call home on," said Sgt. Nelson Gil of Headquarters and Headquarters Company 3-504th PIR.

Campillo said the phones and com-

puter are among the most recent improvements and just arrived in the past week.

The fire base does not have a barber shop like the larger bases in Afghanistan so the soldiers learn fast how to make due.

"I got pretty good at cutting hair in just a couple of months," said Gil. "I cut the commander's hair all the time."

Both soldiers agreed that the improvements have made life a lot better.

"The Louisiana National Guard guys are life savers," Sieb said. "They made a lot of differences at (Fire Base) Shkin and here. There is nothing like coming back from a patrol and being able to take a hot shower."

Among the future improvements scheduled are panels to be built to shield the soldiers working out in the sun.

All the improvements may add to the soldiers comfort but they will never take away the gritty character of the fire base or the soldiers who live there.