



# DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

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June 27, 2003

**EOD puts largest  
cache in KAF region  
up in smoke.  
More on Page 3.**



U.S. Army photos by Spc. Jim Wagner

# Don't Let Your Guard Down Now

by Sgt. Maj. Gary Kalinofski  
Task Force Devil Sergeant Major



## Devil Seven



I am extremely happy with the way our great team here has been doing with regards to Kandahar Airfield.

So many people here have come together to make Kandahar a better place to live. We have made tremendous strides with improving the quality of life and increasing the morale of everyone here.

A special note of thanks goes to the great Brown and Root team for always being there for the military 24 hours a day, 7

days a week.

Our engineers continue to surpass every goal we set for them and are doing great things for us like repairing the airfield, clearing land and building us a better camp. They are also busy at several firebases, making the quality of life better for soldiers every day.

A few days ago I visited one of our firebases that six months ago started with nothing; now our soldiers are living in hard buildings with everything they need to live comfortably. I am so proud of everyone here with Task Force Devil as you continue to impress me with how great all of you are.

You continue to do exactly what our country expects of you by closing with and destroying the bad people that occupy this country. We are making great progress with making this country a safer place to live.

I want you to be extra careful now more than ever and not allow yourself to become complacent. There are still a lot of bad people here that wish to do harm to coalition forces and, in particular, to Americans. Each of you is charged with ensuring we take care of one another and not allow complacency into our ranks.

That is why I am asking all of you to help me by enforcing

the standards. Leaders at every level should continue to enforce the standards here on Kandahar Air Field (KAF). We have rules here that may seem a little harsh at times to follow but are there for a very good reason.

One example is the speed limit here is 10 kph. Some would argue that they may be too slow but then one should ask — has anyone ever been hit by a vehicle here? The simple truth is NO. Another example is running on the runway is strictly prohibited and driving on it without permission from the tower is also prohibited.

Simply put, rules are here to keep our people alive. We have so many things we do on a daily basis here that are extremely dangerous and I am convinced that leader involvement is and has been the key to our success.

We now have more people coming in and going out and this is where accidents will occur if we let our guard down. I expect every newcomer on Kandahar to receive a briefing within the first 24 hours of arriving.

As a minimum, leaders will ensure newcomers understand and comply with the KAF standards. Thanks again for all the great work you do here at Kandahar and remember you are the reason why America is winning the global war on terrorism. You are the real heroes in my mind because of the sacrifices you make every day to make the world a safer place and I am proud to serve along side of each of you.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jim Wagner

**"Rules are here to keep our people alive," like the enforced speed limit of 10 kph on KAF roads.**

*Desert Devil Dispatch* falls under the supervision of Task Force Devil.



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Pfc. William Hamilton, 8th Ordnance Company ammunition handler, stacks 107 mm rockets prior to detonation.



An explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team empties a converted swimming pool of 107mm rockets, 120mm mortars and small arms ammunition Saturday. The cache held 1,801 107mm rockets and 85,640 small arms rounds - the largest such collection found in the Kandahar Air Field region.

## EOD Blasts Largest Cache in KAF Region

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

The largest cache of rockets, mortars and small arms ammunition in the local region here was destroyed June 20-21 by explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technicians.

It took EOD two days and five separate blasts to destroy the 25,000-pound cache found in the Tarnak Farm region, once the famous training site of Al-Qaida terrorists.

In all, members of the 731<sup>st</sup> and 704<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Companies (EOD) found 1,801 107mm rockets, 36 120mm mortars and 85,640 rounds of small arms (30mm or less) ammunition.

The munitions were located – following on a tip from the 313<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion – at the bottom of a swimming pool completely covered with dirt.

The process of destroying the muni-

tions took two days and five blast sites because of the size of the haul; each blast could contain only so many pounds of munitions in order to avoid destroying windows at nearby Kandahar Air Field (KAF).

As it was, EOD members had to haul the munitions away from the cache site in trailers to put some distance between the site and KAF. Despite the distance, one blast was still able to put a crack through the window at the air field's air traffic control tower, prompting an angry phone call to EOD.

"The mission went really well; it was a success," said Staff Sgt. Ernest Richter, EOD team leader. "We had a lot of people, trailers and had to move a lot of munitions."

Members of the two EOD companies, with help from U.S. Navy munitions experts and KAF personnel, awoke at 2:30 a.m. (local time) each day to beat the sun's sweltering heat while moving

the 1,801 rockets. At 10 a.m., the thermometer was already hitting 100 degrees and by the time EOD techs blew up the site in the early afternoon the temperature was hovering at 115 degrees.

Each 107mm rocket, popularly used as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and ground-mounted rockets to attack coalition fire bases, weighs approximately 41 pounds.

The crew of roughly 15 people first had to dig out and clear the munitions from the pool, load them into the trailers, transport them, unload them and finally stack them at the blast sites. Each trailer could hold between 40-80 rockets, making for many trips back and forth.

"Your arms are rubber by the end of the second day," said one volunteer helping with the cache recovery and destruction.

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# Ariana Flights From KAF Take Off

Story & photos by Cpl. Keith Kluwe  
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Ariana Airlines, the national air carrier of Afghanistan, reopened its route between Kandahar Air Field (KAF) and the nation's capitol in Kabul Wednesday morning.

The flight is a step towards making Kandahar International Airport, as the Afghans call it, the international hub for southern Afghanistan.

One hundred nine passengers boarded a Boeing 727 for the short flight leaving Kandahar. This is the first civilian flight allowed to fly to and from KAF since the flights taking Muslims to and from Mecca, Saudi Arabia, for the annual pilgrimage to the Hajj, said Lt. Col. R. Stephen Williams, KAF airfield commander.

It is not known when the air route will become routine, Williams said.

"The decision to continue the flights rests with the staff up at (Coalition Joint Task Force) 180," he said. "My brief is going to list the reasons why the flights are good for the country, how we should continue them, etc."

Williams is working with the Afghan government to rebuild their civil avia-



A ground crew member for Airana Airlines, the national air carrier of Afghanistan, signals to the pilot to start his engines Wednesday at Kandahar .

tion program in the Kandahar region.

Many different units were involved in successfully bringing the Ariana aircraft in and out of Kandahar. Civil affairs and psychological operations soldiers helped with the passengers in their waiting area and along the flight line. Military police provided security at both sites as well.

U.S. Army air traffic controllers

tracked the aircraft in and out of the local air space. As a safety precaution, a Pashtun-speaking air traffic controller was also in the tower.

"I've developed a transition plan, and part of that plan is training Ariana (employees) and the Afghan Ministry of

**ARIANA**, continued on page 6

## EOD, from page 3

Given how well the munitions were buried, it's hard for EOD officials to determine just how many more caches many be hidden throughout the Tarnak Farm region, and where they came from before finding a resting place. The munitions came from China, Yugoslavia and Pakistan.

It's also hard to determine just how long they have already been sitting there.

"There are lot numbers on each (rocket) but unless you know the numbering system used by the country who manufactured the munitions, you can't get a date," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class John Peters, 704<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Company (EOD) response sergeant.



A U.S. Navy munitions expert hauls a 41-pound 107mm rocket from an old swimming pool used to hide a mmunitions cache.

# Female MPs at Fire Bases ‘Just Another Joe’

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

CAMP HARRIMAN, Afghanistan — Paratroopers from the 82nd Military Police Company (Airborne) perform presence patrols, escort convoys and act as a quick reaction force (QRF) at fire bases along the Pakistani border in Afghanistan.

Among the diverse group of soldiers that make up the military police (MP) unit are two female soldiers, a rare sight to see in a fire base because of the concentration of combat assets.

The MP military occupational specialty (MOS) falls under combat support so females can hold the MOS, said Sgt. 1st Class Jim Alexander, 82nd MP Company platoon sergeant.

“We never have any problems working with our guys,” said Spc. Stephanie Pavliska. “Sometimes it’s awkward when we do missions with the infantry, not because they don’t want to work with women but because they aren’t use to it. After a little while things settle in.”

Afghans are offended if a male soldier searches a female Afghan, a Muslim tradition that creates a need for



An MP convoy approach an Afghan compound during a routine presence patrol near Fire Base Harriman, Orgun-E, Afghanistan



U.S. Army photos by Cpl. Keith Klueve

**Spc. Stephanie “SCUBA” Pavliska, a military police officer with the 82nd Military Police Company, 82nd Airborne Division, listens to a convoy briefing given at Fire Base Harriman near Orgun-E, Afghanistan. The 82nd Military Police perform routine presence patrols in the Patika Province.**

woman in combat operations.

Pavliska and Pfc. Anna Wear help to ensure security while in the field, while at the same time remaining sensitive to the Afghan people.

The soldiers may not be surprised to see women on combat operations but the locals find it interesting.

“Some of them are amazed, some of them don’t seem surprised and then there are some that seem indifferent,” Wear said. “We do get a lot of questions like, ‘Are you a woman?’ ‘Are you a soldier?’ ‘Are you married?’”

Both Wear and Pavliska agree the time they spend interacting with villagers is what they enjoy most about their job. Both soldiers save things that people send to them from home and enjoy giving them to children in the villages.

Not all their missions involve interaction with villagers. Sometimes the combat support role of a military police officer involves direct engagements with the enemy.

When the QRF went to a location where they expected to find the enemy — because rocket attacks had been launched there in the past — they made contact with the enemy.

“They started firing on us,” said Pavliska. “You could see all the flashes and (grenades) blowing up.”

During the contact two American soldiers were killed and six American and one Afghan Militia Force soldier were wounded.

Pavliska talked more about the actions of her fellow soldiers than she did herself.

“I can’t explain what its like,” she said. “Everything goes through your mind but at the same time you... you just do it.”

With the austere conditions of life on a fire base and the hazards they face performing their duties both soldiers agree that they are where they want to be.

They don’t seem intimidated by the fact there are few women at the fire base and are very proud to be part of the team.

“Everyone here joined for the same reason,” said Pavliska. “In a lot of ways were all the same.”

Wear agrees with that assessment, saying the missions they conduct are handled with the same professionalism as other paratroopers.

“We’re no different than anyone else,” said Wear. “We don’t want any special treatment. We’re just another Joe.”

**ARIANA**, from page 4

Civil Aviation (MCA) how to care for their equipment, maintenance programs, base operations programs for their aircraft and passenger procedures,” Williams said. “During the Taliban’s reign, I think a lot of time, anything went. They didn’t care if the aircraft were maintained. Planes would come in, load up and take off.”

Williams and other Army soldiers are trying to help Ariana and MCA achieve international aviation standards.

Williams received help with his plan for jump-starting Afghan civil aviation from contact with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

“Today’s flight went very well,” Williams said. “We still have to work with Ariana about their ticketing procedures and passenger security. I think it will only get better. They are improving all the time.”

If approval is given to continue commercial flights, Ariana’s improvements will open up new opportunities for more and more flights, Williams said.

Once passenger flights become fairly routine, we may allow them to start moving cargo, said Williams. This will involve more training because of the required customs inspections and tariffs.



**ABOVE and BELOW:** Passengers board an Ariana Airlines Boeing 727 Wednesday for a flight to Kabul from Kandahar.



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Spc. Tristan Turcotte, a military police K-9 handler from the 177th Military Police Detachment, Ft. Drum, N.Y., and her military working dog Rex, search luggage Wednesday at Kandahar

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