

Afghan women celebrate freedom, equality

Story and photos by
Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

GARDEZ, Afghanistan – “Happy 8th of March, the national correlation day for women all over the world,” read the sign in the Naswan Girls’ School commemorating the Gardez women’s day celebration.

About 100 women attended the celebration to listen to guest speakers, have tea and talk with friends about how far women in Afghanistan have come, and how far they have to go.

“We are very proud of the progress Paktika Province has made in the way of women’s rights,” said Halima Khazam, Naswan Girls school vice principal and director of the Paktika Province Women’s Movement. “We have many females who have taken an active role in medicine and



As a part of the Women's Day Celebration in Gardez, March 19, mothers, daughters and influential women of Paktika Province got together after the celebration to have tea and discuss the day's events.

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Military language manager humbled by position

By Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Soldiers are usually in charge of other soldiers, but one soldier here manages Afghans and U.S. citizens.

Capt. Thomas Anderson, an individual augmentee from Fort Bragg, N.C., is the language manager for all U.S. and Afghan interpreters in theater, to include Kandahar and K2.

“My job covers a broad spectrum. I find out where the interpreter is needed and coordinate with the civilian compa-

nies or choose an Afghan to be placed there. I manage the interpreters and perform various administrative duties,” said Anderson.

Anderson’s predecessor set up the current program. Previous to the program being set up, Anderson said the system was “rough around the edges” and there was little coordination.

Although he thinks his predecessor set up an excellent program, he said he has brought a little more organization to it, and hopes his successor will build on what’s established and keep the program running smoothly.

Anderson enjoys this position more than any other he has had in the Army.

“This is one of the most rewarding jobs I’ve had in the Army because I’ve had the chance to meet and work with (Afghans) who have led rough lives. I have met some of the finest people who are dedicated and loyal to us. They are great people,” said Anderson. “I’ve seen them earn their self-respect and pride. Knowing I’ve played a part in them getting that – that’s rewarding.”

The translators are the most important part of Anderson’s job.

“Without translators it would be difficult for soldiers to achieve their mission. I’m not as important as the translators. What is important is that units have their interpreters to go out on missions,” he said.

Anderson sees his job as rewarding, but it has also been humbling for him.

“Being in this position has been a humbling experience – growing up in America and then coming here and meeting these local interpreters,” said Anderson. “I see how much they do for us, how hard they work and how tough they are.”

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Flames rise over downtown Baghdad after coalition airstrikes overnight.

Air war stepped-up

NEAR IRAQ-KUWAIT BORDER —

With coalition ground forces poised 50 miles away from Baghdad, the round-the-clock bombardment of Iraqi regime targets continued Sunday night into Monday, senior military officials said.

The U.S. Air Force intensified its air runs over Iraq Sunday, making a total of about 1,800 sorties — 75 runs an hour — reported CNN Correspondent Bob Franken, embedded with the airmen in southern Iraq. The Air Force had been averaging 1,000 sorties a day.

More than half the airstrikes were directed at the Republican Guard, the Air Force said, confirming what Gen. Richard Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said earlier in the day.

But so far, the Air Force said, Baghdad has been the target of just 20 percent of the Air Force's strikes. The U.S.-led coalition is targeting points south of Baghdad to clear Iraqi troops from areas north of current coalition positions.

Red Cross can't visit POWs

WASHINGTON — Iraq still has not let the International Committee of the Red Cross visit U.S. prisoners of war, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Sunday.

"We would hope that the Iraqi regime would do the honorable and the right thing and allow the International Committee of the Red Cross in to visit these prisoners of war," Myers said on CNN's "Late Edition With Wolf Blitzer."

"That's their obligation. They said they were going to do it, and we just hope they follow through."

The United States has agreed to let the Red Cross visit more than 4,000 Iraqi POWs, Myers said.

He said the Red Cross wanted to wait until conditions are more secure. He said he did not know whether the visits had taken place yet.

"I think they have probably been inside," he said.

Myers said it is unclear how many Americans are POWs in Iraq. At least five soldiers were captured after an ambush near Nasiriya. More troops are reported as missing in action, he said.

Military operation 'on plan'

DOHA, Qatar — The effort to oust Saddam Hussein is "on plan," the leader of the U.S.-led military coalition said Sunday, adding that the entire Iraqi coastline has been secured, paving the way for humanitarian aid shipments.

"Where we stand today is not only acceptable in my view, it is truly remarkable," said Gen. Tommy Franks, appearing before reporters at a U.S. Central Command briefing.

Franks also questioned Iraq's leadership capabilities. "I have not seen evidence" in past days "that this regime is being controlled from the top," Franks said. He said he does not know whether Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is "dead or alive."

Rumsfeld denies that he overruled military plan for larger force

WASHINGTON — U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Sunday dismissed "hyperventilating" critics of the war in Iraq and called reports that he vetoed plans by top officers for a larger invasion force "fiction."

Rumsfeld denied that U.S. forces have stopped their advance toward Baghdad, and he told ABC's "This Week" that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's situation "is not a happy one."

"We're within 49 miles of Baghdad,"

Rumsfeld said. "He's being closed on from the north, south, and there's so many people running around hyperventilating that things aren't going well. This plan is working."

A mostly U.S. and British force has advanced more than 200 miles toward Baghdad after invading Iraq on March 20. Critics have said the Bush administration did not anticipate the level of resistance from Iraqi forces and the lukewarm reception from Iraqi civilians.

Militants call Israel suicide bomb 'gift to Iraq'

NETANYA, Israel — A suicide bomb that injured dozens in northern Israel Sunday was "a gift to the Iraqi people," according to a Palestinian militant group that claimed responsibility for the attack.

The bombing, which took place at a busy cafe in the coastal town of Netanya, injured at least 49, five of them seriously, Israeli police and ambulance services said. Ten Israeli soldiers were among the injured.

An Israeli government official called the attack "another indication the Palestinian terror campaign against Israeli civilians continues."

In a leaflet, the Islamic Jihad said the attack was "a gift to the Iraqi people from Palestine."

Arnett: U.S. war plan has 'failed'

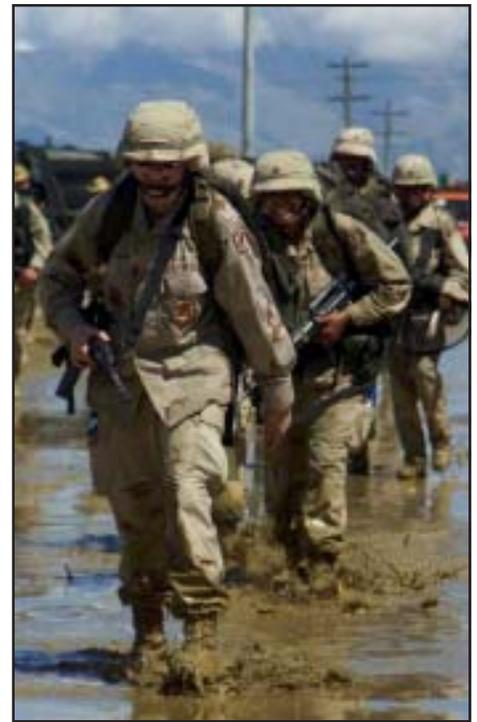
BAGHDAD, Iraq — The U.S. war plan has "failed," veteran war correspondent Peter Arnett told Iraqi TV in an interview that aired Sunday.

"The first war plan has failed because of Iraqi resistance. Now they are trying to write another war plan," Arnett said. "Clearly, the American war planners misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces."

Arnett — who is reporting for National Geographic Television and NBC News — also said Iraq has given him and other reporters a "degree of freedom which we appreciate," this despite the fact that Iraq has expelled several journalists, including CNN's Baghdad team, and apparently has imprisoned two journalists from the New York newspaper Newsday.



Women servicemembers exit a Chinook helicopter at the start point of the Women's History Month five-mile roadmarch Sunday.



Female servicemembers tromp through an unavoidable mud puddle during the Women's History Month roadmarch Sunday.



Spc. Sabrina Monn, 109th Public Affairs Detachment, waits for the Women's History Month roadmarch to begin Sunday.

Mud, rucks and march in March

Bagram women celebrate history month with roadmarch

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – It was a day of celebration for female servicemembers, their enthusiasm evident from their smiles and hollers of motivation.

In the late morning sun, 50 females loaded Chinooks and were dropped off at the start point for the five-mile Women's History Month roadmarch Sunday.

"All of the women here are pioneers for the future," said Sgt. Maj. Antoinette Aila, 229th Aviation Regiment sergeant major, Fort Bragg, N.C. Aila was the principle planner for the event. She originally wanted to have an all-women airborne operation, but realized that not only was there no place to drop, but there are a number of women here who are not airborne qualified.

The march was motivating and a showing of strength for all of the women.

"It's important that all women represent themselves in the military," said Airman 1st Class Linnette Grote, 682nd Air Support Op-

erations Squadron, Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. "We are just as tough as the guys and we need to show them that they can count on us."

The five-mile march started at the airplane graveyard and ended at the Coalition Task Force-82 compound. "The goal was to start together and finish together," Aila said.

The pace was quick and Aila said she had to pull the reins back on the females in the front. "Everyone was so motivated. And I am wholeheartedly pleased with the turnout," she said.

At the end of the march, Maj. Gen. John Vines, CTF-82 commander, greeted the troops. He commended their efforts on the march and in the military. Speaking of a time when it was inconceivable for women to be in an area like Afghanistan, he said, "their purpose here is noble." He hopes that in more time, women will play a more significant role in the military.

"Today, you are writing history," Vines said to the group. "This is the kind of thing that is written about. You all are the real heroes."

School waits for some

Story and photo by

By Spc. Karlene Hemerly-Fluck

109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DEH RAWOOD, Afghanistan — School sessions have begun in some areas of the country, but are at a stand still in Deh Rawood.

The Liblan School in the center Bazaar of Deh Rawood waits for the ceremonial opening planned for early April.

The six-month project, lead by Spc. William E.J. Carter is in its final stage. The old school was torn down, and the new Liblan School was built from the ground up. Final touches to the building include having windows replaced, painting touched up and cleaning.

There are 12 teachers ready to be employed at the school. Classrooms will accommodate approximately 600 male and female students. Registration starts this week for the children.

Liblan School is the first school to open in Deh Rawood and will be dedicated to Spc. Marc Anderson, a Ranger who was killed last year in Operation Anaconda.

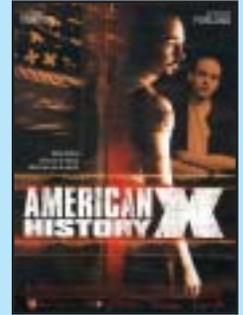
(Editor's note: Information provided by Staff Sgt. Roger C. Kersey 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), Riverdale, Md.)



The front gates of the Liblan School are still undergoing the final touches before the ceremonial opening.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "American History X." A former neo-nazi skinhead tries to prevent his younger brother from going down the same wrong path that he did.



Tomorrow's movie will be "Four Feathers."

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Bagram:	Scattered t-storms H: 64F L: 45F	Partly cloudy H: 63F L: 43F
Kandahar:	Mostly clear H: 82F L: 50F	Haze H: 82F L: 52F
Kabul:	Scattered t-storm H: 68F L: 45F	Fog H: 66F L: 41F
Uzbekistan:	Mostly clear H: 57F L: 35F	Partly cloudy H: 60F L: 38F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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education because they know these are two of the most important things for our young girls.”

Even with the opening of the girls school and the new improvements the Gardez Civil Hospital has made to women’s health care within the past year, Khazam said women are still experiencing a lot of problems.

“We understand that progress is necessary, but we still have to progress slowly because of our tradition and religion,” said Khazam. “Even with the progress we have made we are still forbidden to do certain things like have open meetings in other towns, choose our own husbands and remove our burqas.”

Along with the restrictions placed on dress and socialization, other problems continue to arise due to government and economic issues.

“Because of all of the years of war and poverty, our funds for school supplies, transportation and teachers’ salaries are very limited,” said Khazam. “The Gardez minister of education is responsible for our funding but unfortunately, the boys schools still takes priority. We depend on the assistance of the American and coalition forces for these things because without their help, we would have nothing.”

As the women of Gardez wait for the funding and support they need, Khazam uses her position in the Paktika Province Women’s Movement to encourage as many women as she can to take the next step in fighting for their rights.

“I hold meetings at the girls school here and in Kabul, and I broadcast my speeches Mondays and Thursdays on the radio,” said Khazam. “I tell women that education is the most important thing they can have for themselves and for their children. Without education we will not have the knowledge and the skills to effectively fight for our rights.”

Khazam’s many travels and speeches to different women all over the country proved



Women of Paktika Province listen to guest speakers talk on women’s rights and equality.

effective March 19.

“I am very happy about the amount of women who attended the celebration,” said Khazam. “The celebration was supposed to take place March 8, but it was postponed twice due to security issues. I am very happy it finally happened.”

As part of the celebration, teachers from the girls school, female doctors and even the principal’s young daughter gave a speech. Other more influential leaders were also present such as the minister of education, American soldiers from the Provincial Reconstruction and Civil Affairs Teams and Sonya Bachmann, women’s affairs, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

“I commend all of the Afghan women for the progress they have made in moving forward and fighting for equality,” said Bachmann. “They have all been a great asset to Afghanistan’s reconstruction, education and progression.”

“I encourage all Afghan women to continue to move forward,” added Bachmann. “Together with their courage, UNAMA will continue to assist them in becoming more actively involved in their communities and their government.”

Even though the help received by UNAMA and U.S. forces is greatly needed and appreciated, Khazam said in the end, Afghan women will have to win this battle alone.

“This is our fight. No one can win it for us,” said Khazam. “We know that there are people in our government that have the power to liberate us, but it will not happen that way. The only people who can bring equality and freedom to an Afghan woman, is an Afghan woman herself.”



Halima Khazam, teacher and director of the Paktika Province Women’s Movement, hands out shawls and other gifts to women showing gratitude for their attendance at the Women’s Day Celebration in Gardez, March 19.



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)

Julio Caceres equalized for Paraguay from a free kick in the 53rd minute before Benett sealed the victory.

Portugal gets rare win against Brazil

OPORTO, Portugal — Deco Souza crowned a spectacular debut for Portugal with the winning goal in a 2-1 victory over his native Brazil on Saturday — its first over the south Americans since 1966. Substitute Deco converted a set piece in the 82nd minute after Brazil's Roberto Carlos was sent off for shoulder charging Israeli referee Alon Yefet in protest over the award of a free kick to Portugal.

It was also trainer Luiz Felipe Scolari's first win in charge of Portugal, and came against the team he fashioned into world champions for a record fifth time less than a year ago.

Portugal lost 1-0 away to Italy last month in Scolari's only other game in charge. As Euro 2004 hosts Portugal qualify automatically and have only friendlies to play before the tournament.

"This was not about me, but the fans, who haven't had a win over Brazil for 37 years," said Scolari.

"That's history, I want them to make history and to score. Moreover, I want them to have a big chance to be remembered in 2004, not just as (world youth champions) in 1991."

Scolari also praised Deco, who played in front of what was largely a home crowd at the Antas stadium, where his playmaking has done much to give his club Porto their overwhelming lead in the Portuguese premiership.

"He had to come on, and was going to come on. He even slotted into a position that wasn't his. But as Rui (Costa) was really inspired, Deco helped out," added Scolari, who was wary of starting the untried Deco alongside veteran Costa.

"He will help us out, on the wing, in the middle, wherever. That's the spirit I want in the team."

Diouf, Senegal fail to score

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Gambia held World Cup quarterfinalist Senegal to a goalless draw in its African Nations Cup qualifier on Sunday in a match of missed chances that will have embarrassed the star-studded Senegalese side.

The result proved to be the surprise of an action-packed weekend of qualifiers across the continent that was markedly short on goals and decisive form.

Senegal's front line, led by African Footballer of the Year El Hadji Diouf, battled against a spirited showing from its neighbor, which still lead in Group 8 but next travels to Dakar for the return game in June.

Lens forward Dagui Bakari, who for years spurned overtures to



Carlos Bocanegra, right, wins the ball with a hard challenge.

Donovan, Kirovski score in second half

SEATTLE — Homecoming weekend for Kasey Keller featured an efficient shutout.

The highlights for the United States were delivered by Jovan Kirovski and Landon Donovan, each scoring a spectacular goal as the Americans beat Venezuela 2-0 in an exhibition game Saturday.

Keller, from nearby Olympia, made only two saves but didn't need to be a star as he improved to 14-0-4 in his last 18 home games for the national team.

"It's always nice for a goalkeeper to come into a game and not concede a goal, especially in front of your friends and family and hometown crowd," said Keller, the starter for Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premier League.

He was among six Americans seeing their first international action since the 1-0 quarterfinal loss to Germany at last year's World Cup.

"It has been a long year," Keller said. "I played every game for Tottenham and it should have been an opportunity to stay at home and have this weekend off.

"But I was really excited to come back and train in Portland and then come back and play in the new Seahawks Stadium," he added.

Costa Rica unbeaten under Sampson

ALAJUELA, Costa Rica — Try Benett scored in the 89th minute to give Costa Rica a 2-1 win over Paraguay on Saturday and keep their unbeaten record under coach Steve Sampson.

Benett tapped in from close range to help Costa Rica to its fifth victory in six outings under Sampson, who coached his native United States at the 1998 World Cup in France.

The Ticos are also unbeaten in eight matches since last year's 5-2 defeat by Brazil at the World Cup.

Costa Rica took the lead when Lokomotiv Moscow striker Winston Parks broke the offside trap and slipped the ball past Paraguay goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert.

SPORTS, from Page 6

play for the Ivory Coast, became an instant hero for the Elephants with the only goal away to Burundi on Sunday.

The French-born Bakari, finally persuaded to embark on an international career by Ivorian coach Robert Nouzaret, scored the goal that pulled the Ivorians level on points with Group 11 leader South Africa, which had a bye at the weekend.

Nigeria is likely to become the first side to confirm its place in the finals from the qualifiers when the campaign resumes in June after its 1-0 win in Malawi on Saturday.

Nigeria's superior quality overwhelmed its plucky opponents but poor finishing denied them a bigger win in Group 1 after John Utaka's early goal.

Knife lands on pitch of Ireland match

LONDON — European soccer's governing body UEFA said on Sunday it would hold an inquiry into incidents at Saturday's Euro 2004 qualifier between Georgia and Ireland, when missiles, including a knife, were thrown onto the pitch.

The pen knife landed close to Ireland midfielder Kevin Kilbane during the match in Tbilisi, which Ireland won 2-1. Bottles and other missiles were also thrown onto the playing area at various times in the match.

"UEFA will open a disciplinary investigation into events at the match between Georgia and the Republic of Ireland," UEFA spokesman Mike Lee said on Sunday.

"We have already examined the referees' report, which does refer in particular to an incident involving a pen-knife.

"UEFA will refer this matter to our disciplinary body for further action to be considered."

The FA of Ireland president Milo Corcoran said on Sunday he was happy to leave the matter in the hands of UEFA.

"There was an independent observer present who will file a report with UEFA," he told the FAI website. "UEFA have procedures in place and we will let them run their course."

Kahn under pressure from local media

BERLIN — Germany captain Oliver Kahn says the furor surrounding his private life will not change his plans to stay in the international game until after the 2006 World Cup finals.

"I have no plans to retire," the goalkeeper told reporters on Friday at Germany's training camp for their Euro 2004 qualifier against Lithuania in Nuremberg on Saturday.

"I want to keep playing for the national team until the 2006 World Cup."

Kahn, who has been front-page news in Germany since he said earlier this month that he had betrayed his pregnant wife with a barmaid, remained vague when asked whether he would stay at Bayern Munich.

"I'll study the situation closely," he said.

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld has said he was worried his captain, who has a contract until 2006, might leave the German league leader if he continued to face pressure from the local media.

Salas injured his knee during training

ROME — Juventus striker Marcelo Salas could miss the remainder of the Serie A season after injuring his knee during training for this weekend's friendly between Chile and Peru, according to Friday's La Gazzetta dello Sport.

The Chilean international is expected to be out for two months. Salas has been dogged by injury since arriving at the Turin-based club in the summer of 2001.

A ruptured cruciate ligament ended his first season after just seven matches. This season he has made sporadic appearances for the Italian champions, scoring three goals in 19 games.

Inamoto's goal rescues Japan

TOKYO — Junichi Inamoto fired a 57th-minute equalizer to spare the blushes of goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi as Japan twice came from behind to salvage a 2-2 draw at home to Uruguay on Friday.

Uruguay had taken the lead in the 21st minute when Pablo Lima crossed from the left and Manchester United striker Diego Forlan glanced a header past a helpless Kawaguchi.

Japan, now without a win in three matches under Brazilian coach Zico, had been scheduled to meet Uruguay in San Diego in midweek but switched the venue due to the risk of terror attacks.

"Look on the bright side, this could count as swim qual."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support