

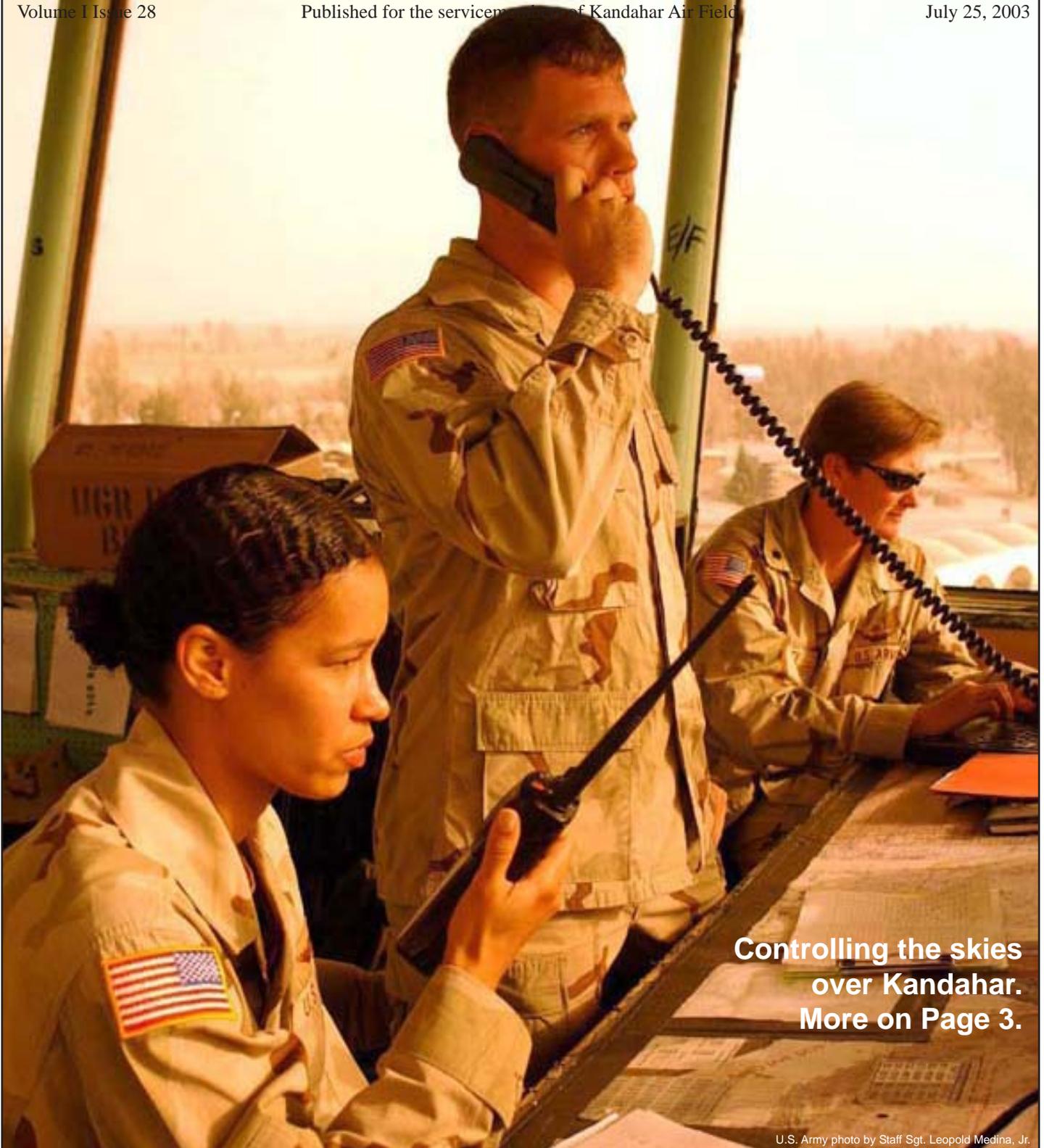


# DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

Volume I Issue 28

Published for the servicemembers of Kandahar Air Field

July 25, 2003



**Controlling the skies  
over Kandahar.  
More on Page 3.**

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Leopold Medina, Jr.

# Re-deploy defensively: A *physical* guide

by Sgt. Stephanie Hall  
4th Public Affairs Det.

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Troops preparing to re-deploy out of Afghanistan experience more than hassles of packing, the monotony of out-processing and the general elation of going home. They must realize the physical threats of returning home from a combat environment in a foreign land.

“Going back home, you have to re-adjust to everything you just got adjusted to,” said Spc. Monica Register, the 1469<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment.

The Bagram Air Base preventive medicine team helps smooth the transition by teaching personnel how to cope with the physical stress of returning home. Many service members receive a re-deployment medical threat briefing when they out-process, but the briefing can also be requested. The briefing covers the medical threats for this region and how it can still affect you once you get back home.

A lot of people may not realize that once they return home, they are still in danger of contracting many of the diseases and illnesses they were exposed to while here in Afghanistan, according to Register.

“If you (contract) malaria over here, then get back home, you may think, ‘oh I just have the flu’, because the symptoms are very similar,” said Register.

“With the briefings, ‘you already know that it’s a threat over here, so you know not to dismiss things; not to overlook the little things.’”

The three most commonly reported health problems for this region are upper respiratory illness, diarrhea and dermatological problems.

“We have to deal with upper respiratory problems because there is a lot of dust here,” said Register. “The stomach problems usually come because our bodies have to re-adjust to the food we were used to.”

Other threats to keep an eye out for are sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis and malaria. Malaria is an important one to watch out for, according to preventive medicine professionals.

It is critical to continue to take all anti-malaria medications exactly as prescribed, or you run the risk of still becoming infected. Malaria has an incubation period of eight to 14 days and the symptoms include chills, headaches, muscle aches and fatigue.

Some other threats included in this theatre are Rabies and the Foot and Mouth diseases. Rabies is 100 percent fatal unless treated.

The preventive medicine professionals here warn that wild dogs roaming troop areas in Afghanistan could be carrying rabies and say that if you’ve been bitten by a dog or any other animal to please see a

health care provider.

The preventive medicine teams here give these briefings to help soldiers stay healthy so they can enjoy being back home and not have to worry about becoming sick, said Register.

“When you’re leaving the country, and you get back home, the last thing you want to worry about is being sick,” said Register. “But we also don’t want you to overlook things that may be a problem.”

She said to just stay aware of these precautions so you can enjoy being back home.



**Mefloquine is an anti-malarial pill that needs to be taken four weeks after arriving at home . The incubation period for malaria lasts eight to 14 days.**

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



**Task Force Devil Commander:**

Col. Patrick J. Donahue II

**Task Force Devil Command Sgt. Maj:**

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel

**Romanian Public Affairs:**

Capt. Florin Agavriloaei

*Desert Devil Dispatch*, a U.S. Army newsletter, is produced by the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Pennsylvania Army National Guard at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan.

**Commander:**

1st Lt. Cory Angell

**NCOIC:**

Staff Sgt. Kevin Askew

**Editor/Layout/Graphics:**

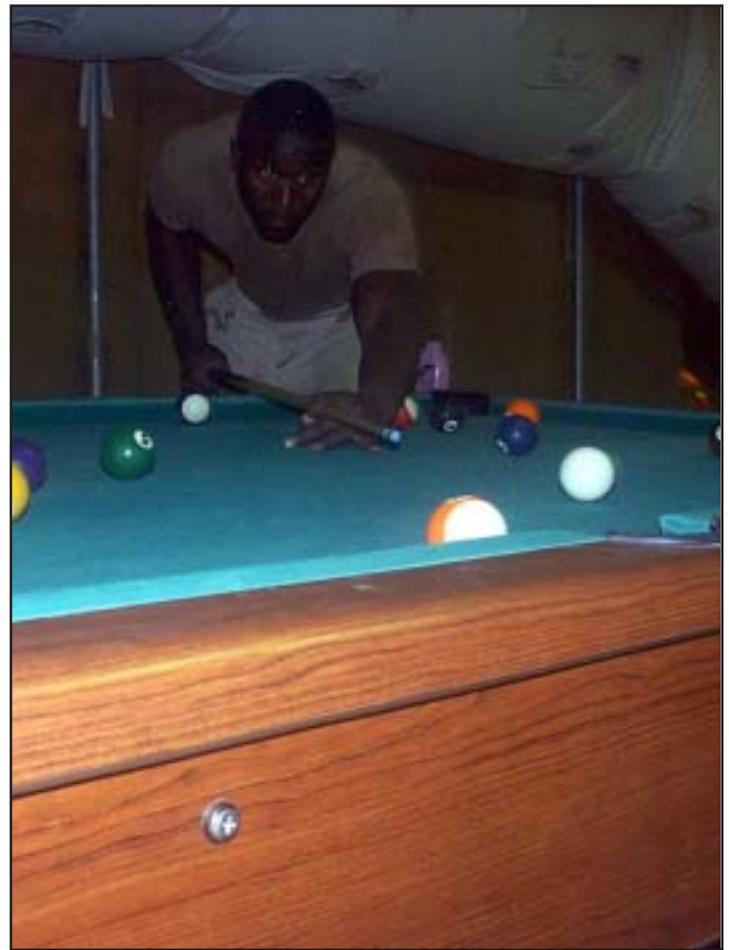
Spc. Jim Wagner

**Combat Correspondent:**

Cpl. Keith A. Kluwe

In accordance with AR 360-1, this newsletter is an authorized unofficial publication for members of the U.S. military. The contents of *Desert Devil Dispatch* are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army. All submissions are subject to editing for size and content.

If you would like to receive the Dispatch electronically, please send an email to [jim1wag@yahoo.com](mailto:jim1wag@yahoo.com)



U.S. Army photos by Spc. Jim Wagner

Clockwise from top left: Soldiers watch a movie on a wide-screen TV; Calvin Woods, MWR game room attendant, hands out a DVD to Sgt. Adam George, C Company, 2-504th PIR paratrooper; Spc. Elisha Starr, C Company, 527th ENG combat engineer, eyes up his next shot; Cpl. Steven Bishop, A Company, 41st ENG combat engineer, left, and Pfc. Heath Miner, A Company, 41st ENG combat engineer, play a game of pingpong; the book section contains hundreds of donated titles; Pvt. Paul Hinkle, C Company, 527th ENG de-mining specialist, left, and Sgt. Jeremy Lenard, C Company, 527th ENG carpenter/mason, compete on a PlayStation 2.

## Kicking Back at Kandahar AF

For military personnel at Kandahar Air Field, getting the chance to relax and take their minds off the stresses of life in a combat zone is all-important.

The morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) tent provides an outlet for Task Force Devil members to do just that with a variety of activities.

Most of the items in the MWR tent -- which is open 24 hours a day -- are donated by generous people back in the States.

# 82<sup>nd</sup> MPs Thrive on Everyday Challenges

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

Ever since the 82<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company arrived in Afghanistan in January they have faced the rugged conditions of living at fire bases along the Pakistani border and enemy fire. Despite the difficulties, these paratroopers continue to thrive in the face of the challenges they face everyday.

"We have to be prepared to react to anything," said Staff Sgt. Victor "Keith" Graf, a squad leader for the company deployed to Afghanistan.

When asked what the odds were that they may face enemy contact on any given day, Graf said, "The potential is there every time we go out. (Improvised explosive devices) are out there. This whole country is a possible ambush site."

The units combat support role consists of many duties. Some of them fall under maneuver and mobility support operations (MMSO).

The MMSO includes presence patrols and route reconnaissance which gain information on the ability of vehicles of various types to negotiate the rugged terrain of Afghanistan.

Graf said that it was very important they generate accurate reports because future operations would rely on the information and it could make or break an operation from the outset.

The unit also establishes traffic control points and generally has the freedom to investigate anything they see while on patrol.

"We can go anywhere, anytime and are more flexible than many other units," Graf said.

The unit also sets up observation points and is part of the quick reaction force for the fire base they are operating at.

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jim Alexander and Graf said that while on a quick reaction force (QRF) team at Fire Base Shkin the unit was dispatched along with other elements to intercept enemy that were setting up a rocket attack on the fire base.

They made contact with the enemy



A military police officer assigned to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, mounts his M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon at Fire Base Harriman while preparing for a patrol in the vicinity of Orgun-E, Afghanistan. **BELOW:** A convoy of military police approach an Afghan compound during a routine presence patrol.

and in the firefight that followed two soldiers were killed and seven wounded; two of the wounded were 82<sup>nd</sup> MPs.

"Every last one of them stepped up," said Graf. "In no instance did anyone not take action."

Graf said that while part of their unit was in the engagement the soldiers in the second wave of QRF were anxious to get there and assist the others.

"Everyone knew what was going on and no one ever flinched, everybody was like 'lets go.'" said Graf.

Alexander and Graf talked about how many soldiers were required to jump in and perform the duties of others while under fire. They said that one of the first to get wounded was Staff Sgt. Michiru Brown, making it necessary for Cpl.



Gerald Snyder to immediately take over as squad leader.

Pfc. James Torbett was struck in his helmet with a round, knocking him unconscious for a short time, and as a result Spc. Mathew Meyers jumped behind the gun and continued to lay down suppressive fire.

A short time later Torbett regained consciousness and began firing his personal weapon until he and Meyers switched positions behind the gun again.

Alexander and Graf both described how everyone worked as a team in evacuating the wounded and continuing to react to the situation.

Despite the hazards and ruff living conditions Alexander said that the soldiers thrive in the environment.

"In general soldiers thrive on adversity," said Alexander. "They talk about how tough they have had it and you can hear them talk about things they have been through together."

"We just completed our one hundred and thirty-seventh patrol since we have been here," said Graf. "We have been to just about every fire base in this country and I don't think any other unit can say that."

# Controlling The Skies over Afghanistan

by Spc. Jim Wagner  
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

While it doesn't have the scenery of La Guardia International Airport, N. Y., or Los Angeles International Airport, Calif., the variety of aircraft and intensity of the aviation mission at Kandahar Army Airfield (KAF) is similar.

This makes life interesting for the air traffic control (ATC) soldiers of A Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 58th Aviation (AVN) Regiment — the Skymasters — that are deployed to Kandahar in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

According to Sergeant First Class Russell Lowrey, a 17-year veteran controller with A Company, the complexity of the air traffic control mission at Kandahar is not like any other airfield mission that he has experienced before.

"This is the most non-standard airport I've seen," he said. "The controlling they're doing here they'll never see again. Back at home station, you don't see the mix of aircraft that there is here."

In addition to the standard military cargo aircraft that arrive and depart every day, a blend of civilian commercial aircraft and helicopters, as well as certain Special Forces aircraft, provide a unique environment for the Army air traffic controllers.

"This is the first time I've been deployed," said Spc. Dawn Fairey, A Company, 1-58<sup>th</sup> AVN Regiment controller. "It's nice being able to do our job here."

Like Fairey, many of the controllers with the unit are getting their first real-world experience in ATC operations. According to Capt.

**Spc. Troy Spriggs, A Company, 1-58th AVN Regiment controller, guides an aircraft to Kandahar Air Field's runway. KAF airspace extends 30 miles outside the air field, though the controllers can "see" aircraft as far as 80 miles out.**



U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Leopold Medina, Jr.  
**Kandahar International Airport's air traffic control tower hosts the soldiers of A Company, 1st Brigade, 58th Aviation Regiment out of Fort Bragg, N.C.**

Katina Maddox, A Company commander, 85 percent of the air traffic controllers were fresh out of Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and were not rated before arriving to KAF in January.

Since that time, everyone but a small percentage is now a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rated controller.

FAA certification is a lengthy process and can take up to seven months depending on the facility — whether it's in the ATC tower, Ground Control Approach (GCA) radar, or Tactical Terminal Control System (TTCS). All controller training is conducted in-house by certified controllers and examiners from A Company.

Since arriving, in Afghanistan, A Company, 1-58<sup>th</sup> AVN Regiment has handled 33,000 aircraft movement (arrivals and departures), or roughly 10-30 movements per day at Kandahar and other forward operating bases like FOB Solerno.

"The soldiers have done a great job, all other airfields will seem like a piece of cake after this," SFC Lowrey said.

In Afghanistan, A Company, 1-58 AVN Regiment controllers are broken into three areas, Tower, GCA (radar), and TAC Team. The 12 tower controllers use the existing Kandahar International Airport tower, though a mobile tactical ATC tower sits on the runway if needed.

**TOWER**, continued on Page 6



**TOWER**, from Page 6

GCA is located on the airfield, and the TAC Team operates at certain FOBs.

The GCA radars can spot aircraft from as far out as 80 miles, but does not enter the GCA's airspace until it reaches 30 nautical miles from the airfield.

Heat and adverse weather conditions conspire to affect the 1960s-era radar's performance. The one-dimensional, though very stable, radar is in near-constant motion and with the amount of sand and dirt in the environment, maintenance is a full-time job. Despite the harsh

weather conditions of sand and heat, the radar has only been down five hours; in the past, radars were down for as much as two weeks.

"This is a testament of the professionalism of the unit's ATC control systems repairers," Maddox said.

At 10-15 miles, GCA controllers "pass" off the aircraft to ATC controllers, who direct the aircraft. Up in the tower, ground/local approach controllers and flight data controllers take down the necessary information and guide the aircraft to the correct parking spot.

In bad weather, it's the controller's job to prevent a bad situation from becoming worse. During these storms, the pilot's visibility is minimal to non-existent and the radar is the only instrument

able to give altitude and bearing corrections relative to the runway.

"When they see bad weather, they have to trust us to bring them in and get on the ground," said Pfc. Devin Glover, a GCA controller.

Whether by the GCA radar, KAF tower or the TAC Team at Forward Operating Bases, the Skymasters mission is to make the flight environment as safe as possible for all aviation users.

"After seven months in extreme environmental conditions in a hostile theater, the Skymaster have conducted more than 33,000 aircraft movements without accident or incident," Maddox said. "They have done their mission and done it well. They look forward to returning to Fort Bragg and seeing their families."



U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Leopold Medina, Jr.

**Spc. Jamal Barnes, A Company, 1-58th AVN Regiment controller, communicates with the airfield manager.**



**A ground approach radar monitors the landing of a C-130 at Kandahar Air Field.**

## A Sweet Homecoming for 2-504th PIR

Spc. Frank Flick, infantryman, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, kisses his 9-month-old daughter, Jersy, July 10 after returning from his deployment in Afghanistan.

About 200 paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division's Task Force Devil returned to Fort Bragg July 10 from their eight-month deployment as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Although the switch back into home life in the states may be hard, the troops will make the adjustment with much more appreciation for the little things they have. "(The people of Afghanistan) have a hard life," said Pfc. Jason King, infantryman, 2nd Bn., 504th PIR. "Many of them don't have running water, power or even air conditioning. We should be very thankful and proud that we live in the United States." (Information courtesy Paraglide Online.)

