

Carpathian Lightning strikes largest cache



Romanian Infantrymen of the 812th Battalion watch the biggest unexploded ordnance explosion in Afghanistan during Operation Carpathian Lightning. Roughly 43,000 pounds of ammunition was detonated.

Story and photos by
Pvt. 2 Terri Rorke
11th Public Affairs Detachment

ZOBOL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The largest weapons cache in Afghanistan was found during the Romanian-led Operation Carpathian Lightning April 14.

The convoy of Romanian and U.S. soldiers and Afghans returned to Kandahar Air Field early Easter Sunday. Their success was shaped by the coordination and teamwork to complete the second part of the first Romanian-led operation, Operation Carpathian Thunder.

OCT was an operation similar to Operation Carpathian Lightning with the same objective. When the opportunity arose to lead both operations, the Romanians volunteered. This will show the world that the Romanians are prepared to join the United Nations, said one Romanian soldier.

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A labor of love powers future

Story and photo by
Sgt. Valerie Dey-Bolejck
109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — Before the Soviet occupation and subsequent iron rule of the Taliban, during the time considered the golden age of Afghanistan, Soviet officials helped the city of Jalalabad design and build a power plant.

During the reign of the Taliban, many of the country's power plants were destroyed, with many of its operators killed or dispersed. But engineers at the Darunta Hydroelectric Power Plant hung on through all the turmoil, some since the plant opened in 1963. The power plant is still the only source of electrical power for the city of Jalalabad, one of the largest cities in Afghanistan.

"They are making Herculean efforts to keep that plant going with what they have," said Maj. James Hawver, officer in charge of the Civil Affairs Team-Alpha in Jalalabad. The CAT-A there recently



The Darunta Hydroelectric Power Plant was built by the Soviets in 1963.

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Family spokeswoman Kim Petersen, left, Laci Peterson's mother Sharon Rocha, center, and step-father Ron Grantski address the media, Monday at the Modesto Police Department.

Scott Peterson pleads innocent to killing wife, unborn child

MODESTO, Calif. — Scott Peterson pleaded innocent Monday to two counts of murder in the deaths of his wife, Laci, and his unborn son, charges that could bring the death penalty.

When he was read the charges against him, Peterson, clean-shaven and wearing a prison orange jumpsuit, answered: "I am not guilty."

Peterson, 30, is charged with killing his wife "with malice aforethought" and their unborn son, who was due to be delivered February 10. Laci, 27, disappeared December 24.

The double homicide charge against Peterson means the district attorney could seek the death penalty. Stanislaus County District Attorney Jim Brazelton said his office has not decided what punishment to seek.

Peterson's next court appearance will be May 6 for a bail hearing, with pretrial proceedings set to begin May 19.

U.S. arrests senior official of Saddam's regime

DOHA, Qatar — Muhammad Hagmaz al-Zubaydi, No. 18 on the U.S. list of most-wanted Iraqi leaders, has been taken into custody in Iraq, U.S. Central Command said.

He is the most senior figure from Saddam Hussein's regime arrested so far and has a reputation as a ruthless and violent enforcer of the former regime's will. Al-Zubaydi is a former prime minister and deputy prime minister.

The Free Iraqi Forces — exiles who are trained to work with U.S. military units providing humanitarian aid — have a videotape of al-Zubaydi torturing and shooting prisoners in 1991 after the Shiite uprising in Nasiriya, Time Magazine reporter Brian Bennett told CNN.

He is believed to have led the violent suppression of that uprising, in which thousands were killed. He was shown in Iraqi news video kicking and beating captured Shiite dissidents.

Rumsfeld disputes report U.S. wants long-term access to bases

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Monday he and other senior administration officials have had "zero discussion" about the Pentagon maintaining access to four military bases in Iraq as part of a long-term military relationship with whatever new Iraqi government emerges in the post-Saddam era.

The defense secretary strongly disputed a newspaper story in The New York Times over the weekend, which said the Pentagon wanted use four bases in Iraq well into the future. Rumsfeld said those bases are being used now by coalition forces for humanitarian and stabilization efforts, but he said that was the extent of any plans for the bases.

"The impression that's left around the world is that we plan to occupy the country, we plan to use their bases over the long period of time, and it's flat false," Rumsfeld said at Monday's Pentagon briefing. "We went in there to change a regime, we went in there to find weapons of mass destruction, we went in there to stop them from threatening their neighbors, and we have said precisely what we're there for, and it's not what that article says."

Bush, administration figures to stump for deeper tax cuts

WASHINGTON — As President Bush mounts a public campaign for more tax cuts, senior administration officials said Monday the White House has not ruled out pushing for tax reductions that would exceed limits set by Congress.

One strategy under consideration by the White House: phasing in some of those cuts over several years.

Some negotiations and compromise appear inevitable. The House of Representatives has already scaled back Bush's original \$726 billion, 10-year plan to \$350 billion, while the Senate has approved a \$350 billion cap on new tax cuts.

Last week, Bush declared that tax cuts of "at least" \$550 billion are needed to stimulate the economy and promote jobs growth.

Justices will review Miranda

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court agreed Monday to revisit the principles laid out in the so-called Miranda warnings that police must give to potential suspects at the time of arrest or detention.

The justices will hear a case of whether evidence obtained at a crime scene can be used without the full warnings — which usually begin "you have the right to remain silent."

The case involves Samuel Patane, a Colorado man arrested in 2001 for allegedly violating a restraining order. Authorities claim Patane interrupted them while his rights were being read. After further questioning and a search of his home, federal agents found an illegal handgun.

A federal appeals court ruled that the pistol could not be used against Patane at trial. Police found the gun because they questioned Patane, and the questioning was done without Miranda warnings, the lower court found last year.

Officials fighting to stop SARS

ATLANTA, Ga. — Top North American infectious disease specialists said Monday that they face an uphill battle to stem the spread of SARS in their countries, and said they were considering tightening travel restrictions to countries where it has become entrenched.

The United States is in a better position than many other countries to stem the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome, but it is still not possible to predict how broadly the illness will extend, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

Working to win hearts and minds



An Afghan girl washes her hands while in the building behind her civil affairs soldiers meet with Asadabad Afghan militia representatives.

Story and photo by
Sgt. W. Cullen James
11th Public Affairs Detachment

ASADABAD FIRE BASE, Afghanistan — It has perhaps become cliché, but civil affairs troops throughout Afghanistan are working hard through various projects to win the trust of the Afghan people.

Winning hearts and minds is their mis-

sion and over the course of seven months the CA soldiers at Asadabad Fire Base have completed several projects to this end. These projects have included distribution of humanitarian aid items (clothes, schools supplies, etc.), digging a well at a boys school, an irrigation pipeline, concrete coverage for rock and mortar walls at a girls school, latrines for the same school and many others.

Although CA assists the Afghans in getting projects done, the work is done by the Afghans. They are empowered by CA through funding and supplies. “They’ve done a nice job,” said Maj. Timothy Connors, officer in charge, Civil Affairs Team-A Asadabad, 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, Syracuse, N.Y.

“We’re real happy with them, but the big thing is whether they’re happy — I think they’re pretty happy,” Connors said.

Once a project is started, CA checks in every week to assess the progress. The Caramal Girls School in Asadabad village is one place CA has focused work on. They’ve replaced all the windows, put down carpeting and had the school painted.

“It’s good to just check on the work and make sure the principal is happy,” Connors said. “They’re real happy with the improvements.”

In the areas surrounding Asadabad, there are many schools that can, and some that have, used CA’s assistance. Many are sound buildings that just need a little work to get them into shape, Connors explained.

“We’ve done a lot of projects like (Caramal). Where they have buildings but

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assessed the plant and passed on engineering advice. One piece of advice explained how the turbine collars, which were being repaired daily, could now be retooled every 20-25 days. The team also discovered that the batteries used to keep the control panels and the control systems operating had to be redone every other month, so the team arranged the purchase of new batteries to alleviate that problem.

Hawver also explained, the number one turbine was recently disassembled, to include all the electronics and generator parts, and then reassembled to make it functional again.

“They had to go to Sarowbi to get some parts made on a lathe because there are no lathes here in Jalalabad or Nangarhar Province that are capable of doing the work.”

The plant is operating on its backup compressor, which is slowly deteriorating. The compressor is only working at 50 atmospheres, sometimes 55. It needs to be at 60 atmospheres for the plant to work at its capacity but it has improved.

“The compressor itself is the single most important part of the

project — without the compressor the plant can not operate,” said Hawver.

The compressor and lack of machinery are not the only challenges the plant faces. Hawver said they also have to work with substandard materials for the gaskets.

“Right now the gaskets they are using for the seals around the shafts and all the hydraulics are made with local materials that really aren’t designed to be used on a hydroelectric plant, with the high pressures and high temperatures that are created by the turbines,” said Hawver. “So what we have done, as part of the project, is obtain materials from a Russian manufacturer that produced the parts for the original plant. Now it’s being transported here so they can get hydroelectric plant gasket material. The seals can then last six months. That’s what the design life span of a proper seal should be.”

The parts purchased by the Army will allow the engineers to bring the power plant up to 95 percent of its design capacity, an achievement for a plant that is 40 years old. The power plant will allow the region to continue reconstruction and attract business to spur the local economy.

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The objective of the mission was to locate a suspected weapons cache and hand out humanitarian assistance to a handful of villages. The convoy was led by the Romanian Army 812th Infantry Battalion commander, Maj. Dorin Blaiu. Elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., followed. Together, they led their vehicles through the rough roads of Kandahar to Zabol Province.

The villages were visited by soldiers from the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), Riverdale, Md., who handed out humanitarian aid. While CA handed out assistance, members of the 731st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, collected unexploded ordnance from the first cache found.

The first weapons found were destroyed and more village team missions were carried out. The cache was exactly where it was expected to be. Located in the village of Hazar Khili, the villagers claimed the Taliban forced them to place the ammunition in crevices of the mountainside behind their home.

While the explosion was being rigged, members of the CA team talked with the village leader about his community over green and black tea.

“CA is always the first vehicle to enter the villages,” said Spc. Abram Mear, 450th.

CA works hand in hand with the soldiers



U.S. soldiers identify unexploded ordnance from the first findings of weapon cache during Operation Carpathian Lightning. Roughly 43,000 pounds of ammunition was found during the operation, which led to the largest explosion of UXOs in Afghanistan to date.

working on different aspects of the mission, said Mear.

“We sit down with the village leader to smooth everything over. While we are doing that, soldiers can focus on their job. They can’t perform without CA,” he added.

Throughout the mission, the team distributed a total of 1,000 humanitarian daily rations, shoes, clothes and other necessities to five different villages, including Hazar Khili.

“The people shouldn’t be scared. We are here to help. We are very grateful for everyone being cooperative of telling us where the weapons were,” said Capt. Kevin K. Parker, 450th.

While the villagers were being aided, a large explosion was heard in the distance.

“That was the largest explosion that our

unit has done,” said Staff Sgt. Baylin Oswald, 731st.

The once secret cache turned out to be the largest explosion of unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan to date, causing an EOD team to bring additional explosives from Kandahar Air Field.

Approximately 43,000 pounds consisting of rockets, mortars and small arms ammunition plus 1,440 pounds of explosives from both the Romanian and U.S. was detonated.

While the forces in Afghanistan continue to work on destroying caches and providing humanitarian assistance to the country, it remains up to the people to liberate themselves.

“Everything is in their hands. It depends on them. If they believe in our intentions, for sure they will have progress,” said Blaiu.



In honor...

Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley, Command Sgt. Maj. England, Combined Joint Task Force-180 sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Norvel Turner, Coalition Task Force-82 sergeant major, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Müller, Bagram Air Base sergeant major, helped dedicate a room in the Viper City dining facility in honor of Sgt. Steven Checo on Monday. A back room in the new facility has been named after the 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper, who died Dec. 21, 2002, from wounds he received during a firefight near the eastern Afghanistan town of Shkin. Tilley is in Afghanistan this week visiting troops. (Photo by Master Sgt. Pamela Smith, CJTF-180 PAO)

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they need some work,” Connor said. “Whether it be replacing a roof or windows, there’s plenty of work to do.”

“It can be frustrating at times, because the progress can be slow, but it is rewarding,” said Sgt. Mark Watson, CAT-A Asadabad team member, 403rd CABn.

Although all the Asadabad CA soldiers are happy with their efforts helping the Afghan people, Connors explained that there are some misunderstandings regarding the CA mission in Afghanistan.

“There’s a misconception among some people ... that we’re here to reconstruct the country. We’re not really capable of doing that. Our job is to support the maneuver forces here.

“The projects we do and the people we see, there’s some thought put into that,” Connors said. “And that thought is to try and work in the areas where there’ll be a payoff for the maneuver guys. Whether that payoff is in force protection or elsewhere ... we do a lot of work in villages around the base trying to win their support.”

“We also do work where (the maneuver forces) want to focus their operations,” said Connors. “The end result is to make it harder for bad guys to operate in certain areas.

“We work to provide a good relationship with the Afghan people so they’re willing to support our mission. We’re not going willy-nilly about the country doing work, we’re doing it for a reason,” he explained.

While explaining the method for their work, Connors added that although the end result of their work is to assist U.S. and coalition forces, it is good that they can help the Afghan people.

“I’m happy the people are getting back on their feet, but I am more satisfied when I see the beneficial results of our work with respect to our operation forces here. That’s what it’s all about — we’re here to make the job of the maneuver commander easier,” Connors said. “In the process we’re improving life for the people here and that’s good for America.”

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “The Gift.” A woman with extrasensory perception is asked to help find a young woman who has disappeared.

Tomorrow’s movie will be “Spy Game.”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>
Bagram:	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 75F L: 46F	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 79F L: 50F
Kandahar:	<i>Partly cloudy</i> H: 86F L: 54F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 90F L: 57F
Kabul:	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 75F L: 41F	<i>Haze</i> H: 79F L: 46F
Uzbekistan:	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 75F L: 50F	<i>Scattered showers</i> H: 70F L: 48F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)



Bill Self was all smiles on his first day as Kansas' new head coach.

Players disappointed by Self's departure

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Bill Self is back where his career began.

Self was introduced Monday as the new basketball coach at Kansas, which lost Roy Williams to North Carolina a week after losing the NCAA championship game.

Self talked about smoothing over the bitterness stirred by Williams' departure — and similar feelings at Illinois, where Self coached for three years.

"I stand before you with mixed emotions," he said. "There's been a lot of things said, a lot of feelings have been hurt, a lot of things happen in the last seven or eight days at two wonderful institutions. Nobody picks the timing."

His first college coaching job was as an assistant to Larry Brown at Kansas in 1985, and Self called his new post "the most prestigious act in all of college basketball."

About 300 people were at Hadl Auditorium on campus for the news conference, greeting Self and chancellor Robert Hemenway with a standing ovation as they entered.

Hemenway said his school's search focused only on Self, who won two Big Ten regular-season titles and one conference tournament championship with the Illini. His record there was 78-24, and he led the team to the NCAA Tournament each year, reaching the final eight in 2001.

"It pulls on your emotional strings to walk away from people who have been very good to you," Self said.

Self's hiring didn't go over well at Illinois.

"It's disappointing. When you make a commitment to get the job done, the right thing was for him to stay," athletic director Ron Guenther said. Illinois gave Self a five-year contract extension in December worth \$900,000 a season.

NBA draft early entries

ESPN — Here are the underclassmen who have officially declared for the 2003 NBA draft.

Mario Austin

College: Mississippi State

Class: Junior | **Position:** Forward | **Ht:** 6-9 | **Wt:** 260

2002-03 Stats: 15.8 ppg | 7.8 rpg

Draft Projection: Late lottery to mid-first round.

Ronald Blackshear

College: Marshall

Class: Junior | **Position:** Guard | **Ht:** 6-5 | **Wt:** 210

2002-03 Stats: 20.3 ppg | 3.6 rpg

Draft Projection: Second round to undrafted.

Carl English

College: Hawaii

Class: Junior | **Position:** Guard | **Ht:** 6-5 | **Wt:** 205

2002-03 Stats: 19.6 ppg | 5.4 rpg

Draft Projection: Late first to second round.

Marquis Estill

College: Kentucky

Class: Junior | **Position:** Forward | **Ht:** 6-9 | **Wt:** 236

2002-03 Stats: 11.6 ppg | 5.9 rpg

Draft Projection: Early second round.

Jarvis Hayes

College: Georgia

Class: Junior | **Position:** Guard | **Ht:** 6-7 | **Wt:** 220

2002-03 Stats: 18.3 ppg | 4.4 rpg

Draft Projection: Lottery.

Rick Rickert

College: Minnesota

Class: Sophomore | **Position:** Forward | **Ht:** 6-11 | **Wt:** 216

2002-03 Stats: 15.6 ppg | 6.2 rpg

Draft Projection: Late first to second round.

Luke Ridnour

College: Oregon

Class: Junior | **Position:** Guard | **Ht:** 6-2 | **Wt:** 175

2002-03 Stats: 19.7 ppg | 6.6 rpg

Draft Projection: Mid-first round, just outside the lottery.

Theron Smith

College: Ball State

Class: Senior | **Position:** Forward | **Ht:** 6-8 | **Wt:** 225

2001-02 Stats: 19.6 ppg | 10.9 rpg

Draft Projection: Second round.

Michael Sweetney

College: Georgetown

Class: Senior | **Position:** Forward | **Ht:** 6-8 | **Wt:** 260

2002-03 Stats: 22.8 ppg | 10.4 rpg

Draft Projection: Late lottery.

Doug Wrenn

College: Washington

Class: Senior | **Position:** Forward | **Ht:** 6-6 | **Wt:** 215

2002-03 Stats: 12.4 ppg | 5.8 rpg

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Draft Projection: Late second round to undrafted

Look who's back in Iowa: Davis hired at Drake

DES MOINES, Iowa — Four years after being let go as basketball coach at Iowa, Tom Davis was hired Monday to rebuild the downtrodden program at Drake.

The university called a news conference Tuesday to introduce him.

Drake hasn't had a winning season since going 17-14 in 1986-87. The Bulldogs last played in the NCAA Tournament in 1971.

The 64-year-old Davis had the most victories at Iowa, compiling a 269-140 record in 13 seasons. But he was told before the 1998-99 season that his contract would not be renewed at its end.

He has been out of coaching since.

"Drake is a terrific school, and if I didn't think I could win here, I wouldn't have taken the job," Davis said. "I've always enjoyed teaching and coaching and I had missed being out of the profession."

He was hired 10 days after Kurt Kanaskie resigned for personal reasons. Kanaskie had a 62-136 record in seven years with the Bulldogs, including 10-20 last season.

Guard disciplined after guilty plea

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Missouri point guard Ricky Clemons, accused of choking a woman and holding her against her will at his apartment, pleaded guilty Monday to a pair of lesser counts and was suspended from the team for one year.

The 20-year-old Clemons, who faced trial April 29 on an original charge of felony second-degree domestic assault, pleaded guilty to misdemeanor counts of third-degree assault and false imprisonment.

Prosecutor Kevin Crane plans to recommend at a sentencing hearing June 23 that Clemons receive two years' probation and a suspended one-year jail term on the assault charge, and 90 days behind bars on the false-imprisonment count.

Later Monday, Missouri suspended Clemons from competition for the 2003-04 season. Mike Alden, Missouri's athletic director, said in a statement that the school would honor Clemons' scholarship, "provided he continues to progress toward his degree and meets his academic and social responsibilities."

In the statement, Tigers coach Quin Snyder said, "As we have maintained all along, we would await the outcome of the judicial process until taking further action in this situation."

Sam Fleury, a spokesman for the program, said Monday's suspension would not end Clemons' association with the team because he would still have a year of eligibility remaining after sitting out next season.

"There's still time on his clock," Fleury said.

Kentucky signs coach to extension

ESPN — Tubby Smith signed an eight-year contract extension Friday that would pay him \$20.25 million if he coaches Kentucky through the 2010-11 season.

Smith's base salary will be \$200,000 a year, but bonuses, apparel endorsement and television and radio deals add millions. And if the Wildcats reach the Final Four during the rest of his tenure, the contract will be extended by two years at an additional \$5 million.

Smith led Kentucky to the 1998 NCAA championship.

"I just signed an eight-year deal and I look forward to being a part of this university for some time," Smith said. "I feel quite lucky that my name is on that contract."

"We wanted to stay in the forefront and stay ahead in college basketball. We have the No. 1 program in college basketball, and we want to keep it that way."

Kentucky athletics director Mitch Barnhart told ESPN.com that he is optimistic Smith will remain as coach through the life of the contract.

"Tubby has more integrity and honesty and class than any person I've found in this business," Barnhart said. "I feel very confident and how he honors his word and thrilled to have here for the next eight years."

Daniels joins Pac-10 as Howland assistant

LOS ANGELES — Donny Daniels, the head coach at Cal State-Fullerton the past three seasons, was hired Friday as an assistant coach at UCLA.

Daniels becomes the second assistant hired by Ben Howland, who succeeded the fired Steve Lavin last month as coach of the Bruins. Ernie Ziegler, an assistant under Howland at Pittsburgh the last two years, was hired earlier in the week. One more assistant will be brought in.

Daniels was an assistant under Rick Majerus in Utah for 11 years before becoming the head coach at Cal State Fullerton, where his teams were 20-64, including 10-19 last season.

The 48-year-old Daniels played on Fullerton's first two Division I teams in 1974-75 and 1975-76 under Coach Bobby Dye.

"For medevac, press one. For close air support, press two. For naval gunfire, press three ..."



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