

PRT, Gardez work together

By Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

GARDEZ, Afghanistan – Fostering better relations with the people of Gardez, the soldiers of the Provincial Reconstruction Team travel daily to their storefront, located in the heart of the city, to better communicate with them and assess their needs.

According to Maj. David Bernacki, civil affairs officer, PRT, 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, Webster, N. Y., the team has gone above and beyond the call of duty since the PRT's opening in January 2003.

"This PRT's storefront, which opened Feb. 2, was the first of the PRT's to open in Afghanistan," said Bernacki. "We meet with the governor of Gardez weekly to discuss plans and projects for the city and province."

By interacting with citizens and the governor on a weekly basis, the PRT has been able to quickly and effectively accomplish their primary mission.

"We were sent here to not only establish a PRT but to do a variety of assessments," said Bernacki. "Our main mission is to coordinate with the governors of the Paktia, Paktika, Ghazni and Khost provinces to prioritize what needs to be done in each province."

Due to the careful coordination with the governor and the assessments done by the PRT, several projects have been completed in the city of Gardez, with many more to come.

"In the Paktia Province, the civil affairs team has completed several school and well projects and are in the process of complet-

See **GARDEZ**, Page 4



Photo by Pfc. Christina Carde

Pleasant dreams...

A local Afghan girl, sleeps off a fever in the Gardez Civil Hospital. This child, just like many other children admitted to the hospital, suffers from malnutrition and other illnesses such as malaria. The hospital has recently implemented classes on hygiene and nutrition to try to eliminate some of these problems.

PX additions planned, awaiting approval

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

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Bagram continues to seem more and more like home, with extra amenities being added that aren't normally associated with combat zones.

Afghans are working on a covered walkway to protect soldiers against the elements while waiting in line. The walkway will be expanded to the end of the building.

Future projects include a concession mall with a gift shop, dry cleaning, alterations, a pizza parlor, a sub sandwich deli, a chicken restaurant, a coffee shop and possibly an ice cream parlor. A retail/commercial plaza is also planned as a soldiers' services plaza to include fi-

nance, retention and other personnel services.

The engineers plan to have the concession mall completed by the end of the fiscal year and the soldiers' plaza finished by the end of the calendar year.

The plan must be approved by the Community Master Planning board.

AAFES went to the engineers with a sketch for the concession mall, and the engineers then brainstormed an entire shopping center.

"This will do a lot for the soldiers. It will provide services and improve their quality of life, like what they are used to in the States. It will centralize services that are currently spread throughout the base," said Lt. Col. David Wilkins, base

See **PX**, Page 3

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



People stand amid rubble in Baghdad's Mansour neighborhood after a U.S. airstrike.

Airstrike targets Iraqi officials

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The U.S. military dropped a “large amount of ordnance” on a building in a residential neighborhood of Baghdad on Monday based on “time-sensitive intelligence” that some senior Iraqi officials, possibly including Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his two sons, were there, U.S. officials said early Tuesday.

U.S. Central Command said that at 3 p.m. [7 a.m. EDT], a B-1 bomber dropped four 2,000-pound bombs equipped with JDAM guidance systems on the target. The building was destroyed.

The building was in the Mansour neighborhood, U.S. Central Command said, where CNN sources said a blast killed nine people and wounded 13 others Monday. A restaurant and apartments were also reported destroyed.

U.S. officials said they don't know who they might have killed in the attack, but they said they believed the intelligence — which U.S. officials received Monday — was very good. Part of it was “human” intelligence, meaning from informants.

A senior administration official in Washington said the strike was “very much the same” as the initial “decapitation attack” that began the war and was aimed at Saddam, his two sons and other top government officials.

Possible chemical weapons agents found in Iraq

KARBALA, Iraq — U.S. troops were testing suspicious materials as possible chemical weapons agents at an agricultural complex in central Iraq, U.S. military officials said

Monday.

Samples of the materials are being studied, and no conclusive determination has been made, said Brig. Gen. Benjamin Freakly of the Army's 101st Airborne Division. The materials, stored in barrels and buried, had not been weaponized and might simply be pesticides, Freakly said.

On Friday, elements of the 101st Airborne Division visited two sites in an area south of Baghdad near Karbala.

One site had been used for military training and the other as an agricultural compound.

At the military camp, tests found no conclusive evidence of chemical weapons being present. In fact, tests there indicated pesticides were likely present, Freakly said.

At the agricultural compound, the division found 10 25-gallon drums and three 55-gallon drums buried within bunkers 4 to 6 feet deep, Freakly said.

The 63rd Medical Company tested substances found in the drums to see whether chemical agents were present. Initial tests proved inconclusive, he said.

Plans for new Iraq unfolding

WASHINGTON — Casting Saddam Hussein as an increasingly irrelevant figure, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Monday the Iraqi leader “no longer runs much of Iraq” and that plans for a new Iraq are unfolding.

“As his regime collapses around him, the question is asked: Where is he? There are three possibilities: He's either dead or injured or not willing to show himself,” Rumsfeld said at a Pentagon news briefing.

With coalition forces moving throughout Baghdad — even, as one general put it, “visiting” two presidential palaces — Rumsfeld said the effort to put in place an interim Iraqi authority is moving ahead.

“Let me assure all Iraqis listening today that life without Saddam Hussein is not a distant dream,” Rumsfeld said.

U.S. plans call for a civilian administration, headed by retired Gen. Jay Garner, to help with the transition to a new Iraqi government.

Bush, Blair see U.N. advisor role

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair see an advisory role for the United Nations in a post-Saddam Iraq, a senior U.S. administration official has told CNN.

The two leaders will discuss details of their vision on Tuesday at a news conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Bush arrived in Northern Ireland Monday for talks with Blair on the future of postwar Iraq as well as how to jumpstart peace efforts in the Middle East.

Earlier, at the United Nations, Secretary-General Kofi Annan told reporters, “I do expect the U.N. to play an important role” in postwar Iraq.

“U.N. legitimacy is necessary for the country, for the region and for the peoples around the world,” he said.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, traveling with the President, told reporters aboard Air Force One that the Bush and Blair positions on the U.N.'s role are “not as nearly as far apart as has been reported.”

British military: Body of 'Chemical Ali' found

DOHA, Qatar — The notorious Iraqi general known as “Chemical Ali” — Saddam Hussein's cousin who allegedly ordered a deadly chemical weapons attack against Kurds in 1988 — was killed in a coalition airstrike on his home over the weekend, U.S.-led coalition officials said Monday.

Capt. Al Lockwood, a spokesman for the British military at U.S. Central Command, said the body of Gen. Ali Hassan al-Majeed had been found.

British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon said there were “indications that that is the case,” although he said he could not absolutely confirm it.

At the Pentagon, U.S. military authorities released video of the air assault on the home in the southern Iraqi city of Basra. It showed the first laser-guided bomb barely missing the target, and the second destroying it.

“We believe that the reign of terror of Chemical Ali has come to an end,” Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters.

Going home entails excitement, planning



Soldiers from the 503rd Maintenance Company, Fort Bragg, N.C. wait outside the Joint Processing and Readiness Center Monday for their flight home. "Enjoy your time here," said Sgt. Raymond Williams.

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

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – After completing a full tour of duty outside the continental U.S., soldiers are filled with anticipation and excitement to get back home to family, and friends.

This is exactly how soldiers from the 503rd Maintenance Company, Fort Bragg, N.C. are feeling. Due to current world events, the company stayed in Bagram an extra month, and 53 soldiers from the unit re-deployed Monday after spending seven months in country.

The deployment went fast, said Sgt. Ferdinando Gandy, operations non-commissioned officer in charge, 503rd Maintenance Company. Gandy attributed that to the seven-day work week.

But all the work will pay off. He said his reward for the time put in here will be traveling to a Nevada ranch.

As Gandy returns home to see his mother, baby girl and siblings in Fayetteville, N.C., he leaves behind advice to new servicemembers arriving at Bagram.

"Don't fret. It will be over before you

know it. Someone will replace you as someone replaced me."

Construction supervisor, Sgt. Raymond Williams, said he enjoyed his time here, which went fast. He said he wants to tell new soldiers to remember, "It's all in what you make of it."

"(This deployment) could be a good thing — could be a bad thing. It's whatever

you make it," said Staff Sgt. Robert Baker, 503rd Maintenance Company.

When Baker returns home he said he plans to retire after serving his country for 20 years and will go home to fish, hunt and watch NASCAR races in North Carolina.

Departing soldiers have some advice for those getting ready to return home.

Individual soldiers should remember a couple things, said Spc. Kevin Christensen, Army Reserve 531st Movement Control Team, Manhattan, Kansas.

"We can't forecast any flights until a day in advance. It's a first come, first serve basis. You must have your orders (to fly)."

Christensen said he wants people to understand that the MCT is just a liaison and what they tell to people is just a relay of information.

"Don't kill the messenger," said Christensen.

But if a whole unit is re-deploying, it can fill out a Joint Movement Control request form that enables a unit to use an entire aircraft. But it is still a first come, first serve basis, said Christensen.

Precedence for flights is always taken in the following order: aero medical, emergencies, re-deploying and finally missions, said Christensen.

PX, from Page 1

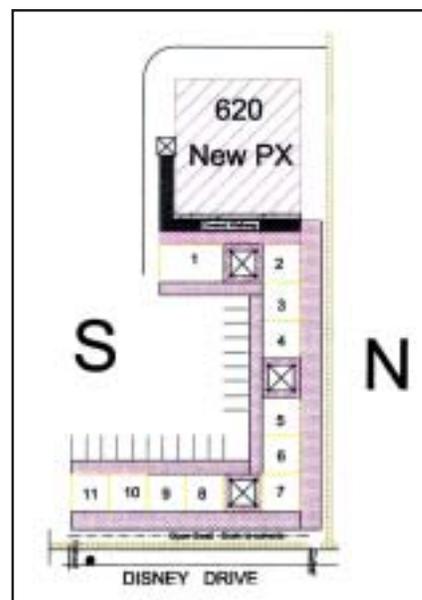
engineer and Bagram Directorate of Public Works, Army Facility Engineer Group, San Francisco Engineer Team 20.

This project is planned to improve conditions for soldiers here.

"Our mission is to continuously improve the base and further develop the facilities – to improve the quality of life," said Wilkins.

"We are doing these things to develop the base, to change this from a contingency operation to a garrison environment," he said.

Right: The proposed design of the Post Exchange additions.



GARDEZ, from Page 1

ing a few more, and have about 19 up for bid by contractors,” said Bernacki.

“These projects are being funded by the Overseas Humanitarian Civil Assistance Fund and will cost several hundred thousand dollars in the Paktika Province alone,” he said.

As it is with any work in progress, the PRT has encountered some hurdles in the accomplishment of their mission.

“Communication has been a big problem out here,” said Bernacki. “Due to the lack of communication devices, we have experienced numerous problems with logistical support.”

Another problem that arises is local resistance.

“Even though many of the people here are grateful and accepting, not everyone is,” said Bernacki. “This was one of the areas that had the highest concentration of Taliban and al-Qaida camps, so about 25 to 30 percent of the local population still give us trouble.”

However, for the most part, the people of Paktia Province have been hospitable and friendly.

“There are a lot of people who want us here and try to help us to help them,” said Bernacki.

“Most of the people we meet with try to bond with us outside of business agreements. We get a lot of dinner and tea invitations,” he added.

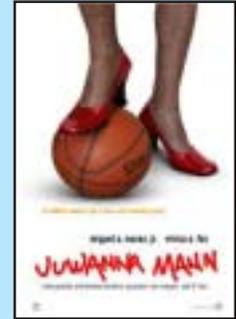
Even though the PRT continues to do great things in Paktia and the surrounding provinces, Bernacki said they still have a long way to go.

“I would also like to see support from at least 90 percent of the local populous,” said Bernacki. “Once they see the good things that are happening in their towns as a result of our intervention, we will see less resistance.”

“I would also like to see these people become more self-sufficient,” Bernacki added. “We are trying to support the central government by empowering the governors appointed by President (Hamid) Karzai. They are the ones that will lead their provinces into the future.”

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “Juwanna Mann.” A basketball star is booted out of the NBA when his on-court antics go too far, so he poses as a woman and joins the WNBA.



Tomorrow’s movie will be “Enemy at the Gates.”

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
Bagram:	Haze H: 77F L: 49F	Dusty H: 68F L: 43F
Kandahar:	Mostly cloudy H: 98F L: 55F	Mostly cloudy H: 91F L: 55F
Kabul:	Haze H: 75F L: 46F	Haze H: 72F L: 41F
Uzbekistan:	Haze H: 88F L: 53F	Haze H: 86F L: 51F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)

Anthony caps year with NCAA title

NEW ORLEANS — If this was a one-year stopover for Carmelo Anthony, he stamped it as a season Syracuse would never forget.

The freshman with NBA talent carried the Orangemen to their first national championship Monday night in an 81-78 victory over Kansas.

Playing with what seemed to be a permanent smile on his face, Anthony scored 20 points, had 10 rebounds and seven assists.

When Kansas sliced what had been an 18-point deficit down to three, Anthony nailed a crucial 3-pointer that settled things down and helped the Orangemen rebuild the lead to 10 points.

In the final minutes with the game in the balance, he became a 6-foot-8 point guard, trusted to bring the ball down the court.

Anthony had seven assists in the first half, a career best for the player widely recognized as the best freshman in the country. And if he decides to turn pro now, he almost certainly would be a top-three pick in the NBA draft, perhaps even challenging high school hotshot LeBron James for the No. 1 slot.

This was not exactly the way Jim Boeheim thought the kid with the headband and braided hair style would work out.

“He wasn’t a top 40 player when I recruited him,” Boeheim said. “He was 170 pounds.”

But Anthony showed up on campus as a hefty 220 pounds and became an impact player immediately.

Warrick’s big block saves day

NEW ORLEANS — The Syracuse Orangemen were playground players early, a bundle of nerves late. They juked, jammed and barely held on for a victory that gave coach Jim Boeheim his long-awaited championship.

Freshmen Carmelo Anthony and Gerry McNamara did the scoring and Hakim Warrick came up with a huge block at the end Monday night to lift the Orange to a thrilling 81-78 victory over Kansas.

Warrick, who missed two free throws that would have sealed the game with 13.5 seconds left, made up for it by coming from nowhere to swat a 3-point attempt by Michael Lee that would have tied it.

Kirk Hinrich, cold all night, shot an airball at the buzzer and the Orangemen (30-5) ran to the floor to celebrate their first-ever title. Boeheim threw his arms in the air and ran to shake hands with Roy Williams, deprived once again of the championship.

Anthony showed he is certainly ready for the NBA if he chooses, fighting off a bad back to finish with 20 points, 10



Carmelo Anthony led the Orangemen with 20 points.

rebounds and seven assists. McNamara hit six 3-pointers in the first half to finish with 18 points.

In a marquee coaching matchup between Boeheim and Williams, a pair of brilliant tacticians who had never won it all, it was Boeheim who finally broke through, after 27 years coaching at his alma mater.

Sixteen years ago, Syracuse lost by one to Indiana on Keith Smart’s game-winner with four seconds left on the same Superdome floor. Boeheim said he wanted to get the last four seconds right this time, and he did just barely.

“I think this building kind of owed us one,” he said.

“That’s cute airman, but we’re not part of Star Fleet yet.”



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support

