

Engineers bring hope to Afghan village

By Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti
11th Public Affairs Detachment

TURKMAN, Afghanistan – Dead grape vines line the road in fields that at one time flourished but have now since dried. The town used to be a tourist attraction because of its beauty said a local villager. But now there is nothing left after years of turmoil and drought.

Turkman is only a shadow of what it once was, but with the help of two engineer battalions, the town will hopefully once again flourish.

The 769th Engineer Battalion, a National Guard unit from Baton Rouge, La., took the lead when they decided to adopt Turkman late last December.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti

1st Lt. Shannon Dowell, 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), Riverdale, Md., interacts with the local children of Turkman during Monday's humanitarian visit.

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Continuing PX expansion offers more to troops



Photo by Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Spc. Mathew Wood, driver, 229th Aviation Regiment, Fort Bragg, N.C., looks at a new Operation Enduring Freedom, "Army of One" t-shirt.

Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – PT uniforms and PT Cruisers may have little in common, but both are available for purchase at the Post Exchange here.

The PX expanded their clothing section recently. These expansions include new "Army of One" t-shirts and hats; the Army physical training uniform; Air Force "Aim High" t-shirts, hats and sweatshirts; reflective belts; athletic socks and shoes.

The staff affectionately calls it the "Hooah" room in honor of the Army because the Army is the largest component here and we made it mostly Army, according to Maria Schizas-Price, PX manager.

The additional section was placed in a previously unused room, increasing the PX by approximately 100 square feet.

"We are here because of the soldiers and we want them to know we care," said Schizas-Price. "We just want to honor our forces."

The PX also cares enough to offer soldiers new cars at lower than average prices.

The Exchange New Car Sales offers special order, custom built vehicles directly from the manufacturer.

"The soldiers do not have to deal with any dealers and the vehicle is built the way they want it," said Grahame Gourlay, program manager, Exchange New Car Sales.

The process is simple, according to Gourlay. The soldier's information is input into the computer, then Gourlay brings up the car and adds all the features the soldier wants and comes out with a price.

"The requirements, aside from financial,

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)

Bush 'disappointed' by NATO

WASHINGTON — President Bush pronounced himself “disappointed” after France, Germany and Belgium blocked a U.S.-led effort to begin planning to defend Turkey in the event of a war with Iraq.

“I don’t understand that decision. It affects the alliance in a negative way ... when you are not able to make a statement of mutual defense,” Bush said.

Turkey, the alliance’s only Muslim member, immediately requested emergency consultations under NATO’s defense treaty, believed to be the first time a member state has ever done so.

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld criticized the three nations for not supporting the U.S. initiative, saying they were preventing “NATO from fulfilling its obligation” to a member.

Calling Turkey an “important ally,” he said the delay will not affect any possible war with Iraq because the United States is prepared to move forward even without full NATO support.

Piece of shuttle left wing identified

CNN — A possibly crucial fragment found by debris searchers came from the left wing of the space shuttle Columbia, a top NASA deputy announced Monday.

The orbiter broke apart Feb. 1, minutes after experiencing problems with its left wing during a re-entry attempt.

Space agency investigators hope pieces of the wing can shed light on the disaster that killed seven astronauts.

“I think they have identified that they have at least one piece of the left wing,” said Michael Kostelnik, deputy NASA administrator.

The wing section had been recovered days ago, but it was not immediately clear which side it came from. Like many of the 12,000 pieces of recovered shuttle debris, it was charred and mangled.

It remains unknown where the segment fit into the wing, but it included reinforced carbon-carbon material, which protects the leading edge of shuttle wings from the 3,000-degree Fahrenheit heat of atmospheric re-entry.



Investigators look at the window assembly in front of the mission pilot seating area. U.S. Navy Cmdr. William McCool, was the mission's pilot.

Prepare, don't panic

WASHINGTON — As the Department of Homeland Security issued advice on how to prepare for biological or chemical attack, Attorney General John Ashcroft said Monday that Americans should not curtail their activities because of the nation’s recently elevated threat level but should carry on with greater awareness.

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security urged Americans to take steps to prepare for a possible attack, but said its advice that was intended not as a “dire” warning but as cautionary advice.

“Al-Qaida’s interests in obtaining chemical or biological or radiological weapons is not declining,”

Homeland Security spokesman Gordon Johndroe said, “and therefore, should they be successful in their attempts to obtain these types of weapons, we want the American public to be ready.”

President Bush’s Homeland Security Council decided Friday to raise the national threat level from yellow to orange. Orange indicates a “high” risk of terrorist attack, and yellow indicates an “elevated” risk.

The level was raised in part because of a high amount of “chatter” being intercepted by intelligence agencies, and that level has not declined, an administration official told CNN on Monday.

The official could not predict when the threat level would return to yellow but said it would not drop before Friday’s end of the Hajj, the annual Muslim time of pilgrimage to Mecca.

Espionage case of former sergeant in hands of jury

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The fate of a retired Air Force sergeant accused of offering to sell military secrets to Iraq, China and Libya was in the hands of a jury Monday afternoon after a two-week trial.

Brian Patrick Regan, a retired Air Force master sergeant, could be sentenced to death if convicted on three counts of attempted espionage and one count of illegally gathering national security information.

A jury of eight men and four women began deliberations Monday afternoon and will resume Wednesday.

Prosecutors say Regan offered to sell secrets from the National Reconnaissance Office, which analyzes information from U.S. spy satellites, to Iraq, China and Libya for \$13 million.

The 40-year-old father of four from Bowie, Md., has pleaded innocent.

If convicted, he could become the first American executed for spying since 1953, when Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were put to death for conspiring to steal U.S. atomic secrets for the Soviet Union.

'Dell Dude' released after arrest

NEW YORK — Benjamin Curtis, better known as the “Dell Dude” from the computer company’s television commercials, was released from jail Monday after being arrested on Manhattan’s Lower East Side on suspicion of trying to buy marijuana.

Curtis was arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court on Monday after being held in custody overnight. He was released and the case was adjourned in contemplation of dismissal, meaning it will be dismissed and Curtis’ record expunged if he stays out of trouble for the next year, said a spokesman for the Manhattan district attorney’s office.

Curtis was arrested at 11:30 p.m. Sunday and charged with criminal possession of marijuana when an officer saw him making the purchase from Queens resident Omar Mendez, a police spokesman said.

Police said Curtis was buying “a small bag” and was not being charged with intent to distribute.



Spc. Marcie Delahaye, 769th Eng. Bn., Baton Rouge, La., hands a box to a local child.

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“I wanted the soldiers to get into the spirit of Christmas,” said Lt. Col. James Boutte, battalion commander, 769th. “I also wanted them to get involved with the local community. We mostly stay on Bagram and this was a good way to get them out there and see why we are here.”

Members of the unit have made a total of three trips out to the village, bringing items such as school supplies, blankets, coats and anything else that was donated from outside sources.

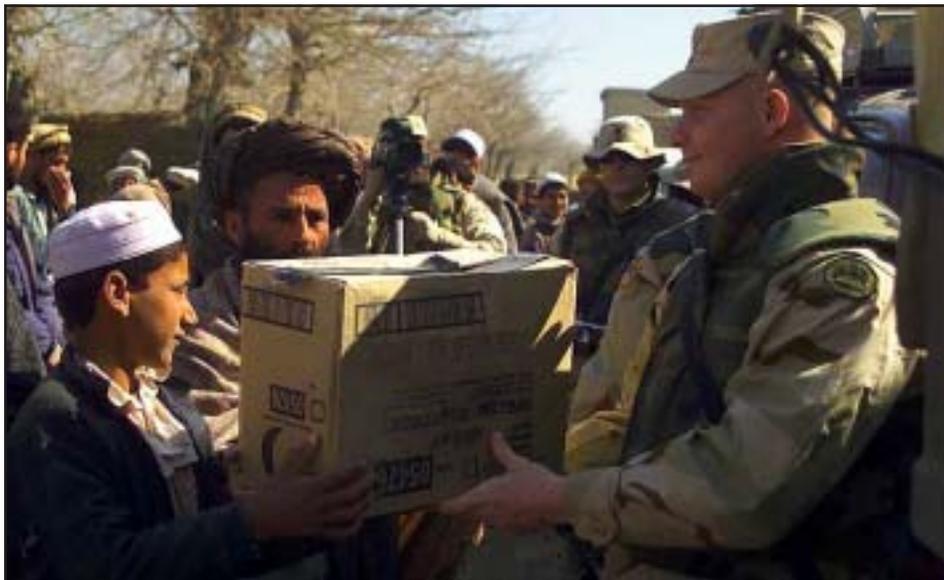
“We know that in the big picture we aren’t doing much for their overall quality of life, but for right now it helps, and they will hopefully have a warmer winter because of us,” said Boutte.

The unit wrote home for donations. They wrote to family, friends and churches in their area.

“My mom donated stuff she didn’t wear and use anymore and she sent items from my little sister,” said Spc. Ray Machuca, 769th.

The first two visits were obvious successes, said Boutte. The village not only appreciated the donations, but also invited the unit back.

“These people appreciate what we are doing and why we are here,” said Boutte.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti

Spc. Shannon Kidder, 769th Engineer Battalion, Baton Rouge, La., hands a box to a local child as part of the unit's last humanitarian mission, Monday, to the village of Turkman before they leave Afghanistan.

“The military is doing a lot for progress, but this unit is doing a lot for the people of Turkman.”

Monday’s visit was the last for the unit. The 769th is getting ready to end their stay on Bagram.

Most of the time when a unit departs, help for their town diminishes also, but this will not be the case for Turkman. They are guaranteed help for at least another six months — the 527th Engineer Battalion.

Also a Louisiana National Guard unit, the 527th has enthusiastically taken over humanitarian assistance to Turkman.

“We really want to do this,” said Capt. Lea McLemore, 527th intelligence officer. “We have heard the stories from the 769th, and being engineers we are builders to begin with, so helping to rebuild a village should be second nature to us.”

The last mission started without a hitch. With the help of the civil affairs units here on Bagram, the 769th loaded their last truckful of donations for those in need.

“It not really much this time,” said Spc. Shannon Kidder, 769th. “It mostly just stuff we don’t want to take back to the states. But we all know that these people will really appreciate anything we can give them, and it’s such a good feeling to do it.”

Thirty minutes later, the people of Turkman greeted them. Hugs were exchanged as the donations were being un-

loaded and given to the village elders for equitable distribution. It was the symbol of a new beginning for an incoming unit and a sad goodbye for an outgoing unit.

“We have seen how they react when we go into the town. They are happy to see us. This is something that we wouldn’t have gotten to see otherwise. It has really been a great experience for me and the soldiers,” said Boutte.

After the distribution of donations, the elders invited Boutte, his soldiers and representatives of the 527th into the house for tea.

“We are so happy with the U.S.,” said town elder Sarwar Khan through an interpreter. “They have brought not only peace to the people of Afghanistan, they share what they have with us. We are so happy they are here.”

His sentiments were echoed by the other elders when they placed their hands over their hearts as a symbol of deep gratitude, hoping that they never again have the sleepless nights Khan said he had when fighting could be heard across the countryside.

As the convoy left the town, the echoes of laughing children were the only things heard. The silence of the 769th soldiers rang deafeningly in their vehicle as they got their last look at the village of Turkman.

“This was a great experience,” said Spc. Joshua Johnson, 769th. “This is something that I will never forget.”



Photo by Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Grahame Gourlay, program manager, Exchange New Car Sales, talks to soldiers about buying a new car.

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are a copy of your ID card, current LES and orders showing you are overseas,” said Gourlay.

According to Gourlay, there are very good benefits to this program, including the lowest price guaranteed, price protection, full disclosure policy, standard factory rebate, exclusive rebates for military personnel deployed overseas and guaranteed rebate protection.

“The average cost is \$2,000-\$5,000 less than the vehicle would cost in the United States,” said Gourlay. “This is before the rebates. Most vehicles are sold for less than the invoice price.”

With all the benefits, Gourlay does see one issue.

“The biggest problem is contactability,” said Gourlay. “People just need to be patient. I cannot check my email until I’m at home base (Seeb Air Base, Oman) — sometimes that is weeks.”

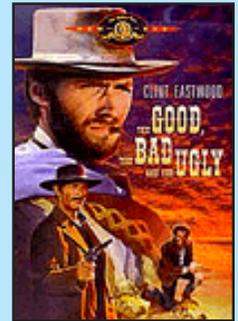
In addition to Bagram, Gourlay is responsible for the car sales services in Kandahar, Kabul and K2.

On average, he stays at a base four to five days every two to three weeks.

“This service has been offered for over 40 years,” said Gourlay. “It’s a well established program.”

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.” Two gunmen have formed a partnership. One is a wanted man (the Ugly) and his partner (the Good) will turn him in for the reward. Both of them end up in a Union prisoner of war camp run by a sadistic Union officer (The Bad) who discovers their secret and takes them from the camp to find the cash. Tomorrow’s movie will be “Edward Scissorhands.”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Wenesday</i>
Bagram:	<i>Partly cloudy</i> H: 50F L: 23F	<i>Haze</i> H: 48F L: 30F
Kandahar:	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 70F L: 41F	<i>Haze</i> H: 68F L: 37F
Kabul:	<i>Haze</i> H: 45F L: 27F	<i>Fog</i> H: 46F L: 25F
Manas:	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 39F L: 25F	<i>Snow</i> H: 36F L: 28F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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- Commander — Maj. William Mott
- NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti
- Editor — Sgt. W. Cullen James
- Journalists — Pfc. Christina Carde, Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

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CJ-7: Designing a better Bagram

Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Before a building goes up, a light is turned on, or a road paved, a team of engineers sits down and creates a design that ensures every last detail is dedicated to a successful project.

Here, the Joint Operations Center engineer team (CJ-7) is responsible for designing the plumbing, water, electrical systems and landscaping plans, which have been and will be the foundations for all of the engineer projects on Bagram.

“Whenever there is a project in the works on Bagram we are responsible for making the design to fit that project,” said Cpt. John Bittner, CJ-7 team leader, Combined Joint Task Force-180. “Once the designs are complete, they go to the individual engineer units to begin construction.”

The designs are created by a forward engineer support team, presently of five people, who design everything from maps of the landscape, to sewer systems.

“Two of the main projects that we are in the process of designing now are better wa-

ter and plumbing systems,” said Bittner. “As soon as next month, trenches will be dug for pipes for running water and eventually real toilets.”

Even though the CJ-7 team designs the project plans, the actual construction is out of their hands.

“Priority and funding are the major factors that affect the construction process,” said Bittner. “We can create the designs but the decision on when the actual work will begin is up to higher.”

In addition to electrical and pipe designs, landscaping is also a big part of CJ-7’s job.

“Before construction can begin on a site, the area must first be cleared for mines,” said Kelly Longfellow, geographical information specialist, CJ-7, CJTF-180. “We draw up maps of the site to be cleared, so engineers will know where the mines are and what to look for.”

The latest task CJ-7 has been given is to create the first ever Bagram database.

“When the database is complete, authorized personnel will be able to access any location on Bagram just by clicking on a map,” said Longfellow. “For example, if I wanted to look at Motel 6, I could just click

on the map and it would have the capability of giving me the size of a room, information on electrical systems and troops working in that office.”

“This database is designed for us, military police and emergency operations to have access to it whenever they need it,” she added.

Even though there are many developments and construction projects taking place on the air base, most of them are for temporary operations only.

“Right now, the military is focusing most of their funds on temporary structures and rebuilding what is already in place here,” said Bittner. “The wooden structures such as the dining facilities and tents are only designed to last two years.”

According to Bittner, the military has good reason for temporary construction projects.

“This is probably the military’s way of mapping out their time here,” said Bittner. “By building temporary structures we are letting the people of Afghanistan know we are only here to help them get back on their feet, and then we’re going home.”

Black History Month

February is Black History Month. In light of all the accomplishments made by African-Americans, every day this month the *Freedom Watch* will highlight an individual.

Herman Russell Branson, *physicist*

Born: 1914 **Birthplace:** Pocahontas, Va.

As chair of the Department of Physics at Howard University, Herman Branson helped the scientific community gain new insight into organic molecules and biological systems. His collaboration with Robert B. Corey and Nobel laureate Linus B. Pauling led to the identification of the alpha and gamma helical structures of proteins. An innovative researcher, Branson formed cross-disciplinary research teams of physicians, engineers, mathematicians, biologists, chemists, and physicists to facilitate study. After more than two decades of trailblazing research, Branson went on to serve as president at two historically black colleges, Central State University in Ohio (1968-1970) and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania (1970-1985).

Died: 1995

“I’d like to see the dessert tray, if you don’t mind.”



kevin_kilgore@hotmail.com

By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support



Coalition Sports Zone

Men's College Basketball (Compiled from ESPN.com)

Huskies win second without Calhoun

HARTFORD, Conn. — Connecticut needed a big-time win and the (No. 19 ESPN/USA Today, No. 23 AP) Huskies got it Monday night by using balanced offense and solid defense to beat (No. 18 ESPN/USA Today, No. 17 AP) Syracuse 75-61.

“This won’t make up for any tough losses, but we just beat a quality team and we needed a quality win badly,” said sophomore center Emeka Okafor, who had 15 points, 12 rebounds and six blocked shots.

The Huskies (15-5, 6-3 Big East) won their second straight game since losing two in a row by more than 20 points. They improved to 2-1 without coach Jim Calhoun, who was released from the hospital Sunday, three days after having surgery to remove a cancerous prostate. They also won their second game without starting point guard Taliek Brown, who will be out four-to-six weeks with a broken finger.

“We just got it done,” Okafor said of the Huskies’ first win over a ranked team this season. “Coach is out. Taliek is out. This shows what we can do, and we’re doing it at a good time. The Big Chief is



Denham Brown and UConn won their second straight game.

out, but we’re holding down the fort.”

Freshman Carmelo Anthony matched his career high with 29 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Orangemen (16-4, 7-3), who had won three straight and five of six.

“Their defense was tough, they denied us and tried to take the lane, but we missed shots we usually make,” said Anthony, who was 9-for-25 from the field and scored 12 of his 17 second-half points after getting an offensive rebound. “At the beginning of the game, Coach said we had to hit the offensive boards, and that wasn’t easy because they had some big guys in there.”

Louisville climbs, Florida falls

ARLINGTON, Va. — Arizona is back on top, but Louisville and Kentucky made the biggest jumps in the latest USA Today/ESPN coaches’ poll released Monday night.

Arizona (18-2) was the No. 1 team from the preseason through the week of Dec. 15 and regained the top ranking from Jan. 19 through Feb. 2 before relinquishing it to Florida (19-3). This past week, the Wildcats beat Washington in overtime on Thursday and defeated Washington State, 75-62, on Saturday.

Arizona received 25 of the 31 first-place votes and 767 points from a panel of Division I coaches.

Louisville (18-1), which has the nation’s longest winning streak with 17 straight victories, climbed four spots to No. 2 and claimed the other six first-place votes.

Kentucky (18-3) has won 12 straight and also ascended four places to No. 3. This past week, the Wildcats posted impressive wins over Florida and Mississippi State.

Oklahoma (16-3) moved up one spot to No. 4 and Florida slipped to No. 5. After losing at Kentucky, 70-55 on Tuesday, the Gators bounced back with a 75-56 victory over Alabama, which dropped out of the poll six weeks after being ranked as high as third.

Texas (15-4) and Pittsburgh (16-3) each fell three places to No. 6 and No. 7, respectively. Duke (16-3), Notre Dame (19-4) and Kansas (17-5) rounded out the top 10.

NCAA Division 1: ESPN/USA Today Coaches Poll

Team	Record
1. Arizona	18-2
2. Louisville	18-1
3. Kentucky	18-3
4. Oklahoma	16-3
5. Florida	19-3
6. Texas	15-4
7. Pittsburgh	16-3
8. Duke	16-3
9. Notre Dame	19-4
10. Kansas	17-5
11. Marquette	17-3
12. Creighton	21-2



Team	Record
13. Illinois	16-4
14. Oklahoma State	18-3
15. Maryland	14-6
16. Xavier	17-4
17. Wake Forest	16-3
18. Syracuse	16-3
19. Connecticut	14-5
20. Mississippi St.	15-5
21. Missouri	14-5
22. Georgia	13-6
23. California	16-4
24. Stanford	17-6
25. Purdue	15-5

