



COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE 82

REGIONAL COMMAND – EAST
BAGRAM, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09354

RC–EAST PAO

On behalf Combined Joint Task Force 82, thank you for your interest in pursuing an embed.

To expedite your application and, if approved, assist you during your coverage of events in Afghanistan the Media Operations Center at Bagram Air Field is available to help coordinate your embed. Keep in mind, transportation at times can be frustrating due to the war fight. Please be patient and flexible. The embed approval process is dependent on transportation and the units ability to host a journalist.

Our forces not only conduct combat operations to deliberately engage the enemies of peace and stability, they also continually work to bring stability through development projects. These projects include construction that supports transportation, water management, education, health care and governance; local governance initiatives; medical services; education; economic growth and other humanitarian projects that help build the capacity of the nation.

If your specific request does not fall under the traditional scope of RC-East, we may refer you to a different command in Afghanistan for assistance. Operations we are NOT directly involved with include training the Afghan Security Forces, opium eradication, government ministries and operations outside of our area of operational control or that are conducted by our multi-national partners, which are mostly found outside of RC-East. If you're interested in these areas there are other organizations and points of contact we can refer you to for help with your request.

Our ultimate mission is to support the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and bring peace and stability to the people of Afghanistan. This means that the bulk of our mission is devoted to nation building activities. While we appreciate the immediacy of combat operations and have common media requests to "see the action," and "go on patrols" the majority of our efforts in Afghanistan are devoted to development and counter-insurgency operations. Adding details to your request will enable us to better determine our ability to support it and list detailed options in the event we cannot fulfill your original request.

To start the embed request process please complete and return the application. We are committed to doing our best to assist you in developing your program of coverage.

All media coming to Afghanistan are strongly encouraged to register with NATO – ISAF Public Affairs Office and obtain an ISAF media badge before coming on to any US military installation. But, it is not required for embedding in RC-East. You can find detailed information on this website, http://www.nato.int/isaf/services/media_card.html.

****Attention****

We are currently experiencing flight delays due to the weather and units rotating in and out of RC-East. Expect four to five day delays on both ends of your embed. Also, we need 21 to 28 days notice of your embed request date to complete the approval process. Each individual requesting an embed needs to submit a RC-East questionnaire.

///Signed///
Scot R. Keith
Capt., U.S. Army
Director of Media Operations, CJTF-82 & RC-East

Media Information Packet

All local Afghan as well as international, foreign and/or American media representatives must be credentialed by RC – East and issued a Media Badge to cover U.S. Coalition Forces. Expiration dates will vary depending on length of approved coverage dates and embed periods.

All journalists/media representatives are required to have an RC – East Media Badge while on BAF. There will be specific ground rules to follow while on BAF, which will be briefed to you upon arrival.

Journalists who are granted access on BAF or other installations falling under RC-East are automatically bound by the RC – East Ground Rules governing coverage in Afghanistan. You and your agency must adhere to all rules and accept the risks that exist when covering activities and operations on or around RC – East installations.

Cellular telephone service in Afghanistan is not completely reliable, so please use our e-mail as the primary form of communication. The Media Operations Center email address is bagrammoc@swa.army.mil. From February 2009 to February 2010 the Media Operations Center Director's email address is: scot.r.keith@afghan.swa.army.mil. The Media Embed Officer in Charge's (OIC) email address is: kevin.s.wade@afghan.swa.army.mil.

We provide billeting/housing and meals while at BAF awaiting transportation to your embed site. Please read the packing list in the attachment , we do not provide required gear. There is one computer with internet available at the MOC for visiting media. **The government operated NIPR computers are for official use only, not for visiting media.** Providing your own satellite access is the only guaranteed method of internet in Afghanistan.

NOTE: Alcohol, non-prescription drugs, knives and firearms are not allowed on any RC – East installation/compound. Cellular/satellite phones, cameras/photography, video and computer equipment must be inspected and cleared by Force Protection representatives.

DO NOT FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING FORMS
The following pages in this document are examples of forms that you will be required to fill out upon your arrival. There will be clean copies waiting for you at BAF.

Regional Command East Media Ground Rules

I, _____ of _____ understand that I am bound to the
(print first, middle initial, last name) (media organization/affiliation)
following RC-East Media Ground Rules. Any violation of these rules will result in the immediate termination of
coverage/access to RC-East units/installations and confiscation of my RC-East Media Badge.
(Please initial) _____.

RC-East Media Ground Rules:

1. **Media on Bagram Air Field will not take photographs, video or conduct interviews unless escorted by Public Affairs personnel.**
2. All interviews will be on the record.
3. During interviews, no questions will be asked about the politics of the military. (e.g. Iraq war, equipment, readiness, funding, etc.)
4. When embedded with a unit, media must remain with that unit at all times.
5. Media will not carry or possess personal weapons, knives, firearms, pornography or alcohol.
6. The media is responsible for loading and carrying its own equipment at all times.
7. Under no circumstances will media take photographs or video of detainees or persons in custody, detainee or custody facilities; or detainee operations in Afghanistan. No interviews with detainees or persons in custody will be granted.
8. Information and images of special operations units, U.S. or coalition will not be released unless otherwise directed by the RC-East public affairs or granted prior approval by Combined Joint Special Operation Task Force (CJSOTF).
9. The following categories of information are not releasable since their publication or broadcast jeopardize operations and endanger lives:
 - a. Specific numerical information on troop strength, equipment or critical supplies (e.g. artillery, tanks, landing craft, radars, trucks, water, etc.) for U.S. or coalition units.
 - b. Information regarding future operations, current operations or strikes including postponed or cancelled operations.
 - c. Information regarding security precautions or force protection measures at military installations or encampments, to include video or still footage. RC-East PAO may allow photography/video on a case-by-case basis if footage is reviewed prior to release.
 - d. Photography that shows level of security at military installations or encampments, especially aerial and satellite photography which reveals the name or specific location of military units or installations.
 - e. Information on intelligence collection activities/operations compromising tactics, techniques and procedures to include targets, methods, analyses and/or results.
 - f. Rules of engagement details.
 - g. During an operation, specific information on friendly forces, troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security or lives. Information on ongoing engagements will not be released unless authorized for release by the on-scene commander.
 - h. Information on effectiveness of enemy electronic warfare.
 - i. Any additional guidelines the RC-East PAO or Task Force PAO's determines necessary to protect tactical security.
10. Photos of local nationals employed by the coalition may not be published without written consent of the individual photographed or the Commander of the unit the individual is supporting.
11. Media will not be allowed to photograph or record video of U.S. personnel killed in action. Written coverage of all killed and wounded is also prohibited unless the following conditions are adhered to:
 - a. Names or identifiable written/oral descriptions of wounded service members will not be released without the service member's prior written consent. If the service member later becomes a KIA, Rule 10(b) applies.
 - b. DOD will release names of KIAs. In respect for family members, names or identifying oral/written reporting of individuals "killed in action" will not be released prior to notification of next of kin

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and in accordance with current legislation. Names of KIAs may be released after the DOD announcement has been made – journalists may check the DefenseLink.mil Web site for those announcements.

12. If media decides to terminate coverage and/or embed opportunity before planned, they must coordinate with appropriate authority (unit commander, unit public affairs representative, PAO...) to properly end embed experience and make arrangements to exit the area of operation.
13. As embedded media you will be treated with respect and dignity while with Coalition Forces, the same is expected in return. Failure to do so may result in an immediate termination of your embed. If you feel the same courtesies are not being offered to you, it is imperative that the problem or issue is raised through that unit's Chain-of-Command. If an honest attempt to resolve the problem has failed, please inform the Media Support Center NCOIC or the Media Support Center Director of all facts surrounding the issue.
14. Photographs or video of damaged MRAPs and armoured support vehicles to include their components are not permitted.
15. Embedded journalist are required to maintain a copy of these ground rules on their person at all times during the embed.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____ **Witness initials** _____
(MSC Personnel)

Registration

I (name) _____ am a/an _____ (job title) with (organization) _____, and have read the Media Ground Rules and agree, with my signature, to abide by them. I also understand that violation of these ground rules is cause for the revocation of my media accreditation with RC-East and loss of all media privileges in CENTCOM area of responsibility. I am not aware of any existing physical or health conditions, which would adversely affect my covering strenuous combat activities. _____ (Initial)

Hold Harmless/Release from Liability Statement

- a. I recognize that covering combat and other military operations carries with it certain inherent risks to life, limb and equipment.
- b. I recognize that U.S. military, in pursuing the successful accomplishment of its mission, cannot guarantee my personal safety or the safety of my equipment.
- c. I hereby release the U.S. government and the U.S. military of any liability and hold them harmless for any injuries I may suffer or any equipment that may be damaged as a result of my covering combat or any other military operations.
- d. I understand that my agreement to this statement is a condition of being credentialed to cover U.S. military operations and receiving assistance for that coverage.

Signature

Date

Printed name

Address

Phone Number (Cell & Local)

E-mail Address

Organization

Specialty: Radio/Video/Print (Circle One)

Employer's Name/Contact Information

Blood Type

Date of Birth (month/day/yr)

Passport Number/Social Security Number/ID Number

Transportation Hold Harmless Agreement

In consideration of receiving free transportation from the United States Military by land, air or other means that may be reasonably required to cover military operations in Afghanistan, I hereby release the United States Government, including its subdivisions, officers, military personnel, employees, and agents from all liability for any injuries or death that may result to me from this transportation, whether caused by negligence or otherwise.

I understand that in transporting me, the United States Government is not acting as a common carrier for hire and does not bear the liabilities attaching to that status.

I acknowledge that I voluntarily accept such transportation, I incur no obligation toward the United States Government except as imposed by this release.

I agree that this release not only binds me, but also my family, heirs, assigns, administrators, and executors.

Signature

Date

Witness (MOC Personnel)

**RELEASE, INDEMNIFICATION, AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT
AND
AGREEMENT NOT TO SUE FOR 'EMBEDDING' JOURNALISTS**

1. The United States of America (the "Government"), acting by and through the Department of Defense, believes it to be mutually beneficial to both the Government and news media organizations ("media organizations") to place selected news media organization employees ("media employees") with selected military units ("military units") for the purpose of providing news media coverage before, during, and after military operations. The placement of media employees with military units is referred to in this Agreement as "embedding" or the "embedding process" and will require media employees to live, travel, eat, sleep, and conduct all professional and personal activities with the military unit to which the media employees are "embedded."

2. Definitions.

a. The term "Government" means the United States Government, including its departments, subdivisions, agencies, instrumentalities, officers, employees (including military and civilian personnel), servants, contractors, volunteers, and agents.

b. The term "media organization" means the "media employee's" employer, a registered U.S. or foreign profit or not-for-profit organization, its successors, and assigns.

c. The term "media employee" means an employee or agent of a "media organization," his or her guardians, executors, administrators, heirs, and assigns.

3. Media organizations and media employees understand and agree that the embedding process will expose media employees to the same risks and hazards as those to which the military members of military units are exposed, including the extreme and unpredictable risks of war, combat operations, and combat support operations, as well as common and uncommon hazards of military living. Media organizations and media employees fully understand and appreciate the following:

a. The embedding process will expose media employees to all hazards of a military environment, including but not limited to the extreme and unpredictable hazards of war, combat operations, and combat support operations. The military environment is inherently dangerous and may result in death or personal injury of media employees or damage to personal property.

b. The embedding process may include strenuous and inherently dangerous activities, including transportation in, and close proximity to, military tactical vehicles, aircraft, watercraft, and other Government (and Government contracted) vehicles and may involve substantial risk of serious injury or death as the result of the media employee's own actions or inaction, the actions or inactions of others including agents, contractors, officers, service members, and employees of the Government, the conditions of the Government facility and the natural environment, the known or unknown condition of any government-furnished equipment, and the inherent dangers of war, combat operations, and combat support operations.

c. The embedding process requires media employees to be in overall good physical health and condition. Persons who are not in overall good physical health and condition should not participate in the embedding process. Media employees should consult their physicians prior to embedding to be certain they are qualified to do so. Persons with a history of heart or lung disease or conditions, or coronary disease, or other chronic or pervasive diseases or conditions may not participate. Likewise, those women currently pregnant may not participate. Anyone suffering from any injuries, conditions, ailments or pre-existing conditions that could be affected by the embedding process may not participate.

d. As part of the embedding process, the Government will make available anthrax and smallpox vaccinations to media employees, provided it is done at no cost to the Government (full reimbursement of all Government costs) and provided that the media employees sign an additional agreement regarding the risks involved. These vaccinations are voluntary and are not a prerequisite for participating in the embedding process. Media organizations and media employees agree, for those media employees choosing to receive the

anthrax and smallpox vaccinations, that the Release, Indemnification, and Hold Harmless Agreement and Agreement Not to Sue specifically includes all risks and hazards associated with the smallpox and anthrax vaccinations, including any negative reactions, adverse effects, including the media employee's illness, infirmity, or death.

4. The media employee agrees to:

a. Participate in the embedding process and to follow the direction and orders of the Government related to such participation. The media employee further agrees to follow Government regulations. The media employee acknowledges that failure to follow any direction, order, regulation, or ground rule may result in the termination of the media employee's participation in the embedding process.

b. Voluntarily, willingly, and knowingly ASSUME ANY AND ALL RISKS, known and unknown, in any way associated with the embedding process, war, combat operations, and combat support operations.

c. RELEASE, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS the Government from and against any claims, demands, actions, liens, rights, subrogated or contribution interests, debts, liabilities, judgements, costs, and attorney's fees, arising out of, claimed on account of, or in any manner predicted upon the media employee's participation in the embedding process, including any loss or damage to property or the personal injury or death of any person which may occur as a result of the media employee's participation in the embedding process, even where that loss, damage, personal injury, or death is caused or contributed to, in any manner, by the Government.

5. The media organization agrees to permit its media employees to participate in the embedding process. As a condition of being permitted to participate in the embedding process, the media organization agrees to RELEASE, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS the Government from and against any claims, demands, actions, liens, rights, subrogated or contribution interests, debts, liabilities, judgements, costs, and attorney's fees arising out of, claimed on account of, or in any manner predicated upon the media employee's participation in the embedding process, including any loss or damage to property or the personal injury or death of any person, even where that loss, damage, personal injury, or death is caused or contributed to, in any manner, by the Government.

6. The media organization and media employee hereby covenant and agree they will never institute, prosecute or in any way aid in the institution or prosecution of any demand, claim or suit against the Government for any destruction, loss, or damage to the media organization's property or the media employee's property, or the personal injury or death of media employees which may occur as a result of the media employee's participation in the embedding process.

7. The media organization and media employee grant express, voluntary, and knowing consent to the rendering of all emergency medical or dental treatment that may, in the professional judgement of a Government medical or dental officer, become necessary while participating in the embedding process. Transportation to a definitive Government or commercial care facility may be required as an adjunct to authorized emergency medical or dental care. Persons receiving Government medical or dental care who are not otherwise eligible to receive such care shall be obligated to reimburse the Government.

8. The media organization and the media employee understand and agree that the Government may terminate the embedding process at *any time for any reason*, as the Government determines appropriate in its sole discretion.

9. The Release, Indemnification, Hold Harmless Agreement and Agreement Not to Sue shall be interpreted according to federal law. It is to be construed as broadly and inclusively as is permitted by relevant federal law. If any portion of this document is held invalid, the balance shall continue in full force and effect.

Media Employee's Signature

Date

Media Organization

Witnessed By (MOC Personnel)

Recommended Media Packing Checklist & Preventive Medicine

NO GEAR WILL BE PROVIDED BY RC-EAST

1. All Media should have appropriate items prior to arriving at Bagram including:
 - Protective ballistic vest and helmet (required)
 - Eye protection (goggles or shatter proof glasses)
 - Proper field gear for the weather conditions at the time of the embed
 - Some mountainous locations easily vary 50°F
 - Sleeping bag
 - Field pack
 - Do not bring suit cases or boxes that are not easily carried on the battlefield
 - All media are expected to carry their own equipment and gear
 - Canteen, water bottle, or hydration system
 - A must have, even in the winter months
 - Purification is not required, most camps have bottled water, but the distant camps will have a common potable water source
 - Suitable clothing
 - Bring suitable clothes for hiking and that can have layers added or removed easily. Bring enough clothing for your embed and do not expect to have the ability to buy what you need while embedded.
 - Military Uniforms (complete or pieced) are not authorized.** This is for your safety, wearing a uniform identifies you as a member of military organization, making it difficult to distinguish you as a non-combatant.
 - Waterproof boots
 - Your boots will be needed for hiking. They should be comfortable and durable for mountainous conditions.
 - Wet weather gear
 - Recommended that you bring both top and bottoms for wet weather gear
 - Cold weather gear
 - During the winter months temps will drop below freezing (Oct-April).
 - Flashlight (or headlamp) with red lens and extra batteries
 - Necessary reporting equipment
 - Personal medical and hygiene necessities
 - Refer to the brochure
“A Soldier’s Guide to Staying Healthy in Afghanistan and Pakistan”
 - Recommend bringing a small first aid kit
 - shower shoes/sandals and towel
 - Laundry bag
 - There are laundry facilities on Bagram and some of the larger Forward Operating Bases but you will not have laundry facilities available in some of the smaller FOBs.
 - Ear protection (ear plugs)
 - Power converter for non-US style plugs. We have 110V power with US style outlets on most US base camps.
2. Please take into consideration where you are going and the season of the year.
 - The winter months can be extremely cold at night and moderate to extremely cold during the day. The more mountainous the colder it will probably be.
 - The spring starts off cool and wet and ends hot and moist
 - The summer months are hot, dusty and dry during both the day and night
 - The fall is cool and dry until the end when it starts to snow in the mountains and the temperatures quickly drop.
3. A reflective (runners) belt is required to be worn at night on Bagram.
4. Know your blood type.
 - Recommended to wear medical tags stating your blood type, allergies and any pre-existing medical conditions that you have
5. Passport and visa <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/visa.html>

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (CONTINUED)

have sexual contact. Hepatitis B is widespread, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) also occurs. Though the immediate impact of hepatitis B and HIV on an operation is limited, the long-term impact on your individual health is substantial. See GTA 08-05-062 for appropriate countermeasures.

HIGH ELEVATIONS

High altitude illnesses can kill. Afghanistan and Pakistan operations occurring at elevations over 6,000 feet can seriously impact unit and individual effectiveness. Serious illness or death can result if you ascend rapidly without allowing for acclimatization. Remain well hydrated; individual water requirements are greater at higher altitudes.

- When deployed to high mountain areas, be observant of the common symptoms of mountain sickness: headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, fatigue, irritability, and coughing. Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.
- Pyridostigmine bromide tablets may increase the chance of dizziness or fainting during the first 24 hours at high altitude if you are not acclimatized.
- Lower oxygen levels at high altitudes ("thin air") combined with the heavier work requirements when wearing mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) gear can increase your risk of high altitude illnesses. When wearing MOPP gear at higher altitudes, you may require more time and concentration to perform assigned tasks.
- For appropriate countermeasures during high altitude operations, see GTA 08-05-062 and GTA 08-05-060, *A Soldier's Guide to Staying Healthy at High Elevations*.

HEARING PROTECTION

It is essential that you use properly fitted hearing protection during military operations. Exposure to high-intensity noise may cause hearing loss that can adversely affect your combat effectiveness and individual readiness. Good hearing is essential and required for mission success. If you are a dismounted soldier, the Combat Arms Earplug (NSN 6515-01-466-2710) will protect you from the impact noise of weapons fire while only slightly interfering with voice communications and detection of combat sounds such as vehicle noise, footfalls in leaves, and the closing of a rifle bolt. While not as effective as the Combat Arms Earplug in preserving your ability to hear important mission-related sounds, noise muffs or standard earplugs are very effective at preventing noise-induced injury. If you are a member of vehicle or helicopter crews, your combat vehicle crew or aircrew helmets have built-in hearing protectors.

ORAL HEALTH

Dental disease is a common problem during deployments due to the challenge of maintaining good oral hygiene. You should deploy with toothbrush, dental floss, and fluoride toothpaste. Daily flossing and twice daily brushing of teeth is the best way to ensure prevention of periodontal disease and to decrease your risk of problems such as trench mouth and tooth decay. In difficult tactical environments, teeth should be brushed at least once a day. Seek medical attention immediately at the onset of any dental problems.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT HEALTH INFORMATION

- Complete the Pre-Deployment Health Assessment (DD FORM 2795) to assess your state of health before deployment and to assist health care providers in identifying your medical needs and providing present and future medical care to you.
- You will not have access to your health care record during the deployment. The Adult Preventive and Chronic Care Flowsheet (DD FORM 2766) will be used as your deployment health record. This document will include information on all your immunizations, any medications you are currently taking, and any ongoing medical problems that you may have. When you go through readiness processing, ensure that all appropriate information is documented on your DD FORM 2766. When you return home, this information will be placed in your regular health record.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HEALTH CARE WHILE DEPLOYED

- It is important that you know where to seek health care while deployed. This may or may not be through the same channels as your home station. Ask your chain of command for more information.
- While deployed, you must maintain your health and seek care whenever an illness or injury threatens your ability to complete your tasks. Your unit is depending on you. It is always better to seek care early so that your problems can be documented appropriately and taken care of immediately.

POST-DEPLOYMENT HEALTH INFORMATION

- Complete the Post-Deployment Health Assessment (DD FORM 2796) to assess your state of health after deployment and to assist health care providers in identifying your medical needs and providing present and future medical care to you.
- If you become sick after you return home, tell your physician that you were deployed.
- Complete malaria medications as directed, and receive follow-on medical care/tests as directed.

Contact your Preventive Medicine or Medical Support Unit for more information.

DISTRIBUTION: UNLIMITED

Prepared by:



U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion & Preventive Medicine
<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>

SIPRNet: <http://usachppm1.army.smil.mil>

(800) 222-9698/ DSN 584-4375/(410) 436-4375

SHG 001-0302

A SOLDIER'S GUIDE TO STAYING HEALTHY IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

This country-specific guide should be used in conjunction with GTA 08-05-062, *Guide to Staying Healthy*, and is intended to provide information that can help reduce your risk of Disease and Non-battle Injuries (DNBI) when deployed. This health threat and countermeasure information is based on the most current data available from U.S. Department of Defense medical agencies at the time of production. In addition to the information in this guide, you should also receive force health protection, health threat, and preventive medicine countermeasures training/briefings prior to and, as required, throughout the length of your deployment.

AFGHANISTAN OVERVIEW

Afghanistan is approximately the size of Texas and is divided into three geographic regions. The elevation ranges from 500 feet above sea level in the Southwestern Plateau to 25,000 feet in the Central Highlands. Afghanistan has a mostly dry climate marked by seasonal, regional, and daily temperature extremes. The country also has the "Wind of 120 Days," which blows from June through September at velocities that occasionally exceed 110 mph. In the west, mean daily maximum temperatures in summer (April through September) and winter (October through March) generally are 20° F warmer than those in Kabul; extreme winter highs and lows are 100° F and -3° F, respectively. Countrywide, the extreme summer high temperature is 118° F in the west, and the extreme low temperature is -4° F in Kabul. The rainy season lasts from October through April. Although rainfall usually is scant, periodic heavy rains combined with melting snow have caused flooding. Generally, no area receives more than 15 inches of rain annually.

PAKISTAN OVERVIEW

Pakistan is approximately twice the size of California and is divided into four geographic regions. The elevation ranges from sea level to 26,000 feet in the Himalayan mountain ranges. Pakistan has significant daily, regional, and seasonal temperature variations. Tropical cyclones, causing devastating flooding and wind damage, may occur during June and July. Daily variations of 20° to 30° F occur throughout most of the interior regions. During the dry, cool winter (December through February), mean daily temperatures are 57° F on the Indus Plain, 68° F along the coast, and 4° F in the northern mountains. During the summer (March through May), mean daily temperatures are 84° F along the coast, 95° F in the desert region and on the Indus Plain, and 32° F in the mountains. The monsoon seasons, June through July and October through November, bring periodic flooding and deliver an annual average rainfall of 60 inches in the Northern Highlands, 5 inches in the Baluchistan Plateau, 15 inches in the river valleys, 6 to 8 inches along the coast, and 4 inches in the desert region.

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN RISK ASSESSMENT

Based on a combination of all major infectious diseases that occur in a country, an overall country risk level is assigned from low to highest risk. Afghanistan and Pakistan are HIGH-RISK countries for infectious diseases and high altitude illnesses. Diseases of military importance to forces deployed in Afghanistan and Pakistan include hepatitis A and E, typhoid fever, and diarrheal diseases such as cholera, all acquired by consuming contaminated food, water, and dairy products; vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, leishmaniasis, West Nile virus, sandfly fever and louse-borne typhus which are acquired through the bites of various insects and ticks; tuberculosis acquired from person-to-person respiratory transmission; leptospirosis from swimming, wading, or skin contact with contaminated water; rabies from animal contact; and sexually transmitted diseases. Environmental factors also pose a significant health risk to deployed forces and include sewage, agricultural, and industrial contamination of water and food supplies; extreme night and day temperature changes; localized air pollution; and severe sandstorms and dust storms. Additionally, high altitude illnesses are a potentially significant DNBI in the mountainous regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

INCREASED REGIONAL DISEASE THREATS

Civil and military conflicts over the last three decades and recent antiterrorist activities have decimated the Afghan public health infrastructure. This situation has worsened by the recent departure of many relief agencies. Three years of continuous drought has led to widespread crop failures and water shortages. There are approximately 1 million internally displaced persons and another 4-5 million refugees who have fled from Afghanistan into bordering countries. The combination of food shortages, lack of an adequate public health infrastructure, refugee movement, and increased congregations of malnourished people significantly increase the likelihood of infectious disease transmission.

Overcrowding associated with cold weather and congregations of displaced persons is highly conducive to the transmission of respiratory illnesses such as diphtheria, tuberculosis, measles, and influenza. Tuberculosis rates in Afghanistan are among the highest in the world. Avoidance of congregations of people and livestock is essential to reduce your risk of infection. Displaced populations living in temporary camps with unsanitary conditions are extremely vulnerable to widespread typhoid fever outbreaks. Drought conditions also result in congregation of livestock, increasing the risk of animal-to-human transmission of diseases such as anthrax by possible exposure to anthrax spores in the environment.

Do not consume any locally produced raw or processed grain or dairy products. During periods of extended drought, chemically treated grains meant for seed only or grains that were harvested or stored inadequately may enter local food channels. These grains may be contaminated with toxic pesticides, weed seeds and mold spores. Consuming bread products or milk from animals that have consumed contaminated grains may result in serious chronic or acute health effects.

FIELD SANITATION TEAM

Each company-sized unit has a Field Sanitation Team (FST) whose members are trained (40-hour course) and fully equipped IAW AR 40-5, FM 4-25.12, and FORSCOM REG 700-2. Know who the members of your FST are, and know how they can assist in preventing medical threats to your health. Become familiar with FST equipment and training.

VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

There are several vector-borne diseases present in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They include malaria, dengue fever, and West Nile virus from mosquitoes; leishmaniasis and sandfly fever from sand flies; Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever from ticks; and louse-borne typhus from the human body louse (head lice or pubic lice play no role in transmission). Many other diseases are spread by the bites of mosquitoes, ticks, sand flies, fleas, mites, and lice. Your local medical authority will determine if these diseases or other vector-borne diseases are a threat in your specific location and provide appropriate countermeasures.

- Take your malaria prevention pills when directed to do so. This is CRITICAL. Normally, you will begin taking medication prior to arriving in the area, while in the area, and after returning home.
- Use the DOD Insect Repellent System detailed in GTA 08-05-062 to reduce your risk of acquiring a vector-borne disease. Wear permethrin-treated uniforms with trousers bloused and sleeves down.
- When deployed to this region, sleep under a permethrin-treated bed net to repel insects and further reduce risks of vector-borne diseases. Many insects in this region feed during the night, including mosquitoes that transmit malaria.
- When using both DEET and sunscreen products, apply sunscreen to the skin first so it does not interfere with the effectiveness of the DEET. After 30 minutes to an hour, apply the DEET. This allows the sunscreen to penetrate and bind to the skin first.

HAZARDOUS ANIMALS AND PLANTS

- Several species of highly poisonous snakes, which are well camouflaged and very aggressive, live in the region. Consider any snake encountered as poisonous, and do not handle. Seek immediate medical attention if bitten; untreated snakebites may cause serious illness or death within 1 hour.
- Several species of scorpions and spiders, some with potentially fatal venom, are present throughout the region. If possible, avoid sleeping on the ground. Shake out boots, bedding, and clothing prior to use, and never walk barefoot. If bitten or stung, seek medical attention immediately.
- Some regional plants have thorns, stinging hairs, or toxic resins that may puncture the skin or introduce poison into the skin causing skin irritation, rashes or infections. Avoid skin contact with plants when tactically feasible.
- Contact with the smoke from the burning of these plants can also cause skin rashes and damage to your lungs.
- Clean your clothing after contact with harmful plants. Decontaminate clothing by washing with soap and water.
- Some regional plants may cause systemic poisoning if leaves, berries, flowers, or other plant parts are chewed or swallowed. Symptoms include dizziness, vomiting, irregular heartbeat, and delirium or hallucinations.

SAND, WIND, AND DUST

Sand, wind, and dust cause health problems, particularly to skin, eyes, throat and lungs. Take care of problems early to avoid infection. Dry air, dust and wind dry out the nose and throat and can also cause nosebleeds, coughing and wheezing. Cracked, chapped fingers reduce manual dexterity. Body areas (such as ears, armpits, groin, elbows, knees, feet, and the area under breasts) that collect dust and sand are susceptible to chafing, abrasion and infection. High winds can turn tent pegs and loose objects into flying missiles (which may not be visible in blowing sand).

- Take a daily sponge bath, using an approved water source.
- Wash your face and eyelids several times per day.
- Carry at least two pairs of glasses and a copy of your prescription. Do not wear contact lenses; AR 40-63 prohibits contact lens use during a military deployment.
- Breathe through a wet face cloth, or coat the nostrils with a small amount of petroleum jelly to minimize drying of mucous membranes. Protect your lips with lip balm.
- Shield your face with cloth materials to protect from blowing dust and sand.
- Wear goggles to protect your eyes from wind, dust and sand or when traveling in open vehicles.
- Wear gloves and use moisturizing skin lotion to protect your hands.

HOT AND COLD WEATHER INJURIES

Temperature extremes in this region may impact military operations. The effects of cold weather are more severe in high mountainous areas due to reduced oxygen and lower air pressure. When deploying to the mountainous areas in this region, check with your unit on the requirement for packing the extended cold weather clothing system. See GTA 08-05-062 for appropriate countermeasures.

FOOD-BORNE AND WATER-BORNE DISEASES

Do not consume any food, water, or beverages (to include bottled water) that have not been approved by the U.S. military. Assume all non-approved food, ice, and water is contaminated. Water and food items available in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including dairy products, fish, fruits, and vegetables, may contain unsafe levels of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, bacteria, and viruses. Contamination with human or animal waste is widespread. Even a one-time consumption of these foods or water may cause severe illness. See GTA 08-05-062 for appropriate countermeasures.

TOXIC INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS AND MATERIALS

When deployed, you may face health risks from industrial chemicals and materials as a result of activities by terrorists or warring parties; accidents related to improper design, maintenance, or operation of indigenous industrial facilities; inadvertent exposure to toxic waste materials in the environment; or improper handling or disposal of hazardous materials with which our own forces deploy. The degree of health risks depends upon many parameters. Consult your medical authority for additional information.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Sexually transmitted diseases are highly prevalent in this region. Gonorrhea, chlamydia, and other infections are common, and may affect a high percentage of personnel who