



# Seeking Terrorists

**US and coalition forces continue to search out pockets of resistance in Afghanistan and maintain combat air patrols in the States.**



**Photography by USAF photographers**

*Nighttime, covert insertion and extraction of special operations units are the specialty of these MH-53J Pave Low helicopters, which have crisscrossed Afghanistan in the past few months. They fly lights-out, as seen in this night vision view from the gunner door of another Pave Low.*

**A Pave Low takes on fuel from a special ops MC-130 Combat Talon. Besides serving as transportation for special ops troops, pararescuemen, and combat air controllers, Pave Lows sometimes conduct surveillance with their sophisticated night vision gear.**

**To reduce the need for refueling and to expand speed and capability, the Air Force hopes to replace the MH-53J with the tilt-rotor CV-22 some-time this decade.**



USAF photo by TSgt. Manuel Trejo

USAF photos by TSgt. Scott Reed



**An MC-130 lowers the refueling drogue for a hookup with a Pave Low. The MC-130s perform many classified missions besides refueling special operations choppers. At left, a gunner at the rear of an MH-53. Pave Low crews routinely land in "hot" areas and must be prepared to defend themselves.**

**Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft crew members, such as these two at right with the 405th Air Expeditionary Wing, have the critical job of managing the airspace over the battlefield. Fourteen-hour days are typical, as there are never enough AWACS aircraft to go around.**

**As can be seen here, even on intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance "heavies," crews fly without name tags and patches—just in case.**



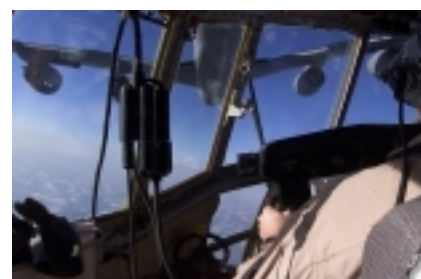
USAF photo by TSgt. Cedric H. Rudisill



*The EC-130E Commando Solo, with its distinctive pods and antennas, is operated only by the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. The aircraft is a flying TV and radio station broadcasting the real story of what's happening to anyone in range. It also serves as a listening post in the sky.*

*Above, crews work their electronic magic from the "capsule" in the EC-130's cargo bay. In the first three months of Enduring Freedom, Commando Solo crews broadcast more than 1,100 hours over Afghanistan.*

*At right, gassing up behind a tanker.*



*When a B-1B went down in the Indian Ocean, rescue crews jumped into action. At right, the medical element discusses their part before heading out to USS Russell, which picked up the downed fliers.*

*Below, two of the four rescued crew members—all were safely recovered—get a medical check.*



USAF photo by SSgt. Shane Cuomo

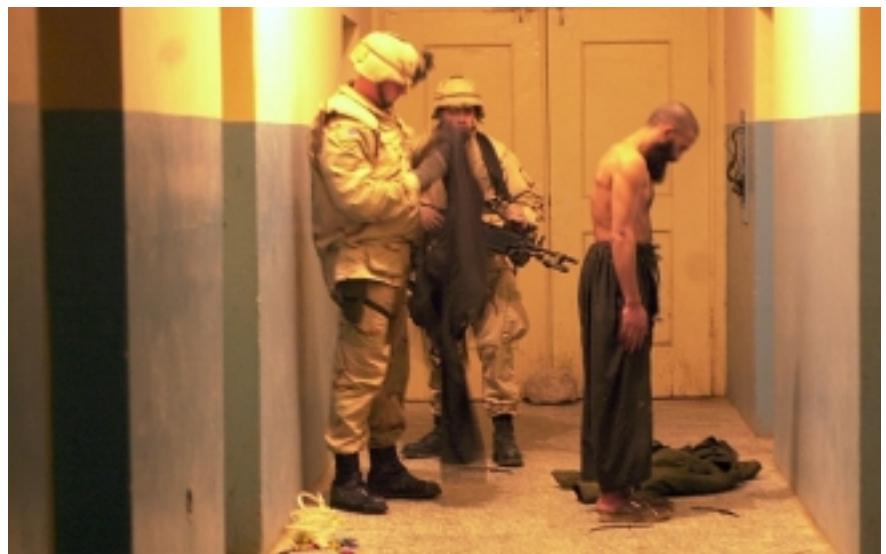
USAF photo by SSgt. Shane Cuomo



USAF photo by TSgt. Cedric H. Rudisill

*Loss of the B-1 was due to malfunctions, but officials deemed no grounding was necessary and the other B-1Bs continued to fly.*

*A captured Taliban or al Qaeda fighter is strip-searched by two US troops. With several prisoner uprisings resulting in Northern Alliance and American deaths, prisoners are treated with the utmost caution. Although complaints were made about the shackling and restraint of prisoners flown to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, USAF Gen. Richard B. Myers, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, noted one uprising where a prisoner used a grenade or other explosive to blow himself up, taking anyone nearby. He said, "These are very, very dangerous people, and that's how they're being treated."*



USAF photo by TSgt. Cedric H. Rudisill



*Where there's an airfield, there's a way: Mighty C-5 Galaxys deliver troops, equipment, vehicles, and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan via Kyrgyzstan. Operating out of former Soviet republics has helped build new friendships in the region.*

*Note the all-terrain vehicles and humvees being shipped in for use by special forces. Afghanistan has some extremely rough terrain and often quite a harsh climate.*



*While the C-17 has often grabbed the airlift spotlight in Operation Enduring Freedom, the C-5s—from both active and Air Force Reserve Command units—have been pulling their share of the load.*

**Mail call has a decidedly different flavor nowadays. In previous wars, families might wait anxiously for weeks without word from their troops at the front, but thanks to the Internet, many now stay in daily contact. E-mail stations provide a way to stay in touch with home while half a world away.**

USAF photo by MSgt. Blake R. Borsic



USAF photo by TSgt. Jack Braden

USAF photo by TSgt. Michael R. Nixon



**RED HORSE civil engineering units have been busy improving austere locations. Often they must use whatever is at hand, for instance materials bought on the local economy or recycled items such as packing crates. Their ingenuity is matched only by their hard work.**

**Meanwhile on the home front, active and reserve units routinely fly Combat Air Patrol over dozens of American cities for Operation Noble Eagle. The flights are intended to dissuade further air attacks like those on Sept. 11 and to provide a quick response if a threat materializes.**

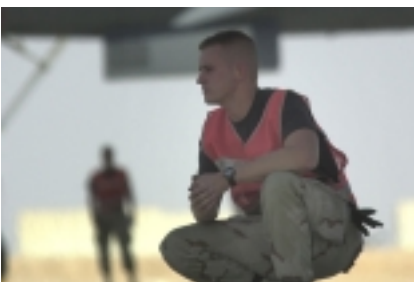


USAF photo by Scott H. Spitzer



**Operation Enduring Freedom brought the first sustained combat for the B-1B in its 15-year career. The success of the missions show that long training has paid off in reliable strikes across a wide range of targets. The Air Force insists that it still wants to reduce the size of the B-1B fleet, but Congress has ordered further review of the plan, especially in light of the aircraft's operational success.**

**At left, the crew discusses last-minute details before a sortie. The round-trip from Diego Garcia to targets in Afghanistan lasts about six hours.**



**At left, a crew chief watches as "his" airplane, lent to the flight crew, taxis toward takeoff.**

**Air Force personnel are now deployed in nearly a dozen countries supporting Enduring Freedom and are committed to getting the job done. ■**

