

4th Operations Group

Tactical Air Perspectives from Afghanistan



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This Briefing is:
UNCLASSIFIED



OVERVIEW



- **Mission Statement**
- **Operational Tempo (Jun 07 – Dec 07)**
- **Pre-mission preparation**
- **OEF Kill Chain from a Tac-Air Perspective**
- **Successes**
- **Limitations**
- **Mission Examples**



455th EOG Mission



- 1. SAVE U.S. & COALITION LIVES**
- 2. PROTECT INNOCENT AFGHANI CIVILIANS**
- 3. KILL THE ENEMY**



“The mission is an 18 year-old soldier with a rifle; all else is support.”



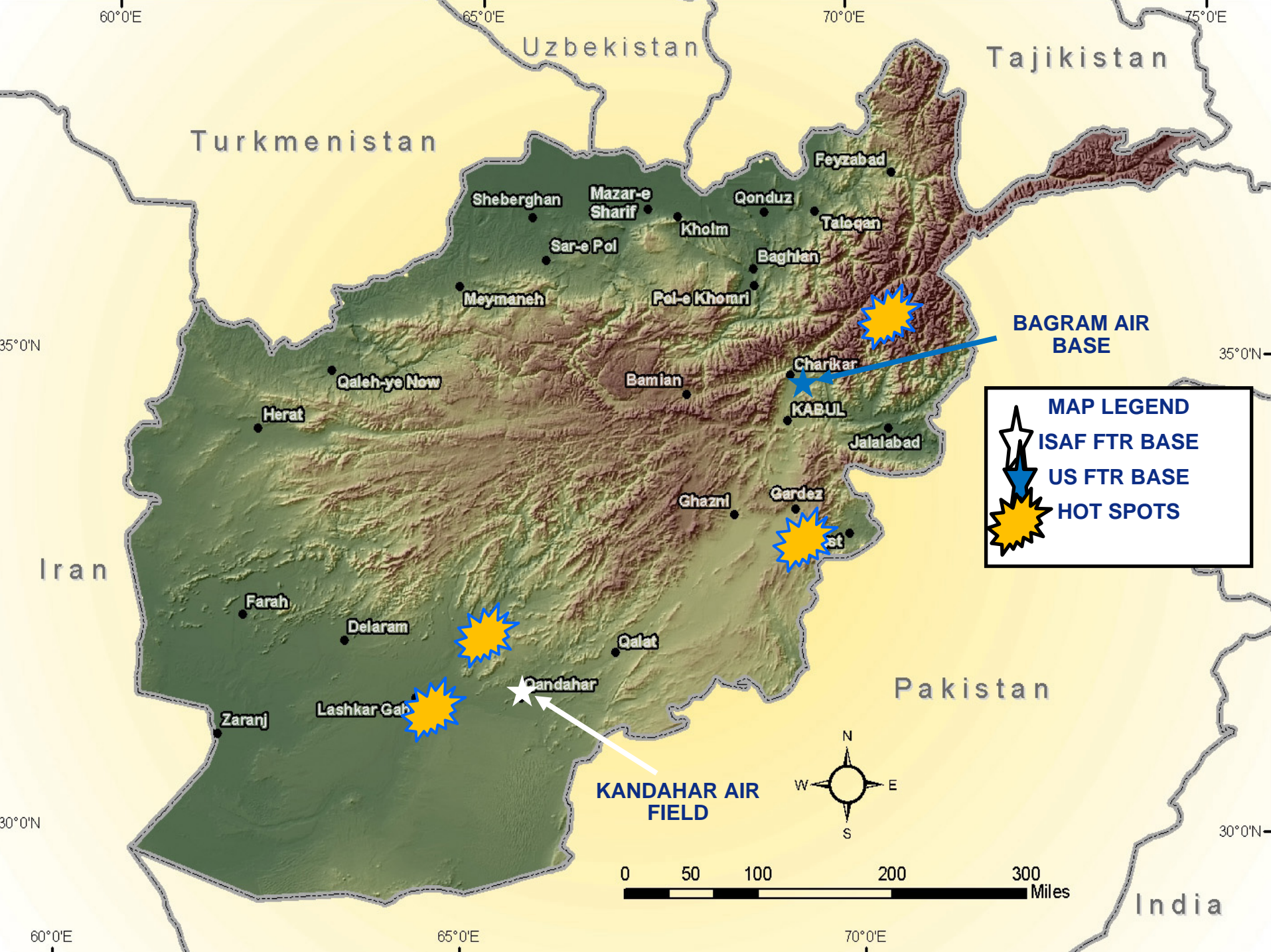
Temperature of the Fight

Jun 07 – Dec 07



- **OVER 95% OF MISSIONS WERE DYNAMIC TARGETING**
 - CAS
 - TST
- **BROKE ALL RECORDS**
 - BOMBS DROPPED
 - ROUNDS SHOT
 - ANTI-COALITION MILITANTS KILLED
- **MAX 24 HOUR PERIOD:**
 - 40 SORTIES WITH 12xF-15E
 - 40 SORTIES WITH 12xA-10
- **FIRST FLIGHT (June) through FINI FLIGHT (Dec)**
 - TROOPS IN CONTACT/ DANGER CLOSE ENGAGEMENTS DAILY
 - WIA/KIA DAILY
 - COALITION OPERATION LIBERATED MUSA QALAH
 - INCREDIBLE SUCCESS AGAINST HIGH VALUE TARGETS







Fighter Aviation 101

AKA: Motherhood



- **Review JTARs/Msn Plan – many JTARs were standard**
- **Intel Brief and SITREP (Army GLO)**
- **Flight briefing – division of duties/in-flight responsibilities**
- **Preflight**
 - **F-15E: SNIPER, 2xGBU-12, 3xGBU-38, 1xGBU-31, 510x20mm Gun**
 - **A-10A(C): LITENING, 30mm Gun, Rockets, Mk-82, GBU-12, (GBU-38)**





Kill Chain from the Cockpit

Find, Fix, and Track



- **Find and Fix**

- **Enroute C2 – Tasking changes were a common occurrence**
- **Mission Dependent**
 - **Armed Overwatch**
 - **Troops in Contact**
 - **Raid Support**
 - **Time Sensitive Target**
- **ISR Assets Assigned or Nearby**



- **Track**

- **On-board Sensors**
 - **Target Pod (ROVER, IR Pointer, Laser Spot Tracker)**
 - **NVGs**
 - **Radar – Limited Use**
- **Off-Board Sensors**
 - **JTAC**
 - **UAV**
 - **Other Assets**
- **Yo-Yo Ops (F-15Es split experience between aircraft within formation)**
- **Start working Positive Identification (PID) if it hasn't been accomplished**





Kill Chain from the Cockpit Target



- **Target**

- **PID if you haven't already**
 - Compare what you see in the pod to what you see with your eyes
 - Coordinate source reliability varies, when in doubt – get a talk-on
- **Rules of Engagement**
- **GET A 9-LINE!**
- **Getting a Designation**
 - Bad Weather
 - Smart Weapons
- **In-flight Weaponneering**
 - Risk Estimate Distances
 - Collateral Damage Estimates
 - Proportionality





Kill Chain from the Cockpit

Engage and Assess



- **Engage**

- **Formation Mgmt – C2 Intensive; Ownship and Others**
- **Final Clearance**
- **Challenges to employment in Afghanistan**
 - **Smart enemy – Move during dusk and dawn, hide amongst rocks, in villages**
 - **Employing against moving targets**
 - **Heavyweight, high altitudes – Difficult to fly safe escapes and threat react**
 - **Nights – Finding the target and correct wire to strafe/bomb**

- **Assess (BDA)**





Successes



- **Army Ground Liaison Officer (GLO) assisted in pre-deployment spin-up and deployed squadron ops**
- **Network centric operations**
 - More aircraft are up on LINK-16 than ever before
 - TIC locations are pushed across LINK-16
- **F-15E fielding of Sniper 3.0 w/ Rover**
 - Pod displayed fragmentation circles reduce airborne RED/CDE calculation times to almost nil
 - ROVER datalink to JTAC assisted in PID and improved AOR NTISR capability
- **Mixed armament loads and the Joint Programmable Fuze**
 - Flexible targeting options for the ground commander
 - GBU-38 provides a lower collateral damage option during inclement weather



Limitations



- **Better coordination needed prior to large ISAF operations that will require or affect USAF operations**
- **Poor Situation Awareness of Afghan Friendly Forces**
 - **ANA/ANP often dress and carry same weapons as Taliban**
 - **Coalition forces had difficulty precisely locating these forces**
 - **Slowed Kill Chain as Airmen and Soldiers had to PID every group when ANA/ANP were on the move**
- **C3**
 - **F-15E has limited VHF/FM capability and no SATCOM capability**
 - **LOS radio communication could be better w/ more repeater towers – currently being worked**
 - **Army uses EPLRs which displays information to A-10C via SADL but has no capability in OEF to display information for other assets to view**



EXAMPLES



Emergency CAS: FOB Overrun

**Extended CAS: 48 HOURS FIGHT IN THE MOUNTAINS
OVER US ANGEL**

LITTLE FIGHTS – BIG FIGHTS

FF and EF: BOTH VOTE



QUESTIONS?

