

Air Power through combat maintenance

Written by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Byrd Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs
Friday, 02 April 2010 20:02 - Last Updated Friday, 02 April 2010 20:09

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Danny Gastelum, from Los Angeles, and U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Timothy D. Moore, from Stuart, Okla., are both currently serving with the Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team as valuable assets in the vehicle maintenance shop on Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, in eastern Afghanistan's Laghman province.

For these two Airmen, doing their part in bringing their fellow warriors back safely on a daily basis is the most rewarding part of this deployment.

“As long as I continue to do my job it makes things easier on everyone else,” Moore said. “I can sleep very well at night knowing that.”

Scheduling oil changes, changing tires, troubleshooting problems and ordering supplies are part of their daily routine. Their teammates rely on Gastelum and Moore to stay focused.

The vehicles and passengers conduct long missions in 120-degree weather over the rough terrain; and the people inside carry an average of 70 pounds of protective gear strapped to them, so a vehicle breakdown is the last thing the team needs.

“We want the best possible craftsmanship for the guys on the road, and that means staying until the job is done,” Gastelum said.

This deployment is the third for Gastelum and second for Moore.

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Moore is continuing a military tradition started by his father, Paul D. Moore.

“My father served in the Army as a welder and fuel handler in Desert Shield and Desert Storm,” he said. “He is my hero and I want to follow as closely as possible in his admirable footsteps.”

As for Gastelum, he is the first member of his family to join the military.

“My family always tells me that they are proud and amazed by how I am serving,” Gastelum said.

Family members are not the only people to recognize Moore and Gastelum’s work. The entire PRT, including the leadership, recognizes their hard work.

“Without them, we can’t go anywhere or interact with the locals, which is critical to effective counterinsurgency,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col Michael Simonelli, originally from Brooklyn, N.Y. and the current PRT executive officer and civil military operations center chief.