

Regional Command Southwest

Round-up

Weekly PAO Report

----- June 25, 2012 -----



NEWS

Afghan military presence increases in southwest

Story and photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Brian Buckwalter



DELARAM, Afghanistan – Afghan military leaders are sending more of their soldiers to southwest Afghanistan to bolster their presence in a region known as a hotbed for insurgent activity. Afghan National Army Brig. Gen. Abdul Wasea, commanding general, 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps, welcomed nearly 500 soldiers from 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 207th Corps, to his area of operations, June 16. The soldiers recently traveled 200 miles from Herat to Delaram to train before heading to Washir district, 30 miles to the east of Delaram. “I appreciate your service, and I welcome your arrival,” Gen. Wasea, said to the formation in Pashto. He praised the unit for being professional and well-trained. The

unit will be relieving another kandak already in the area. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Afghan forces and British troops clear insurgent hot spot

U.K. Defence News

Afghan policemen accompanied by British troops recently cleared an insurgent hot spot to the east of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province. At sunrise 90 Afghan police patrolmen supported by members of B Squadron of the King's Royal Hussars and the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards patrolled into the village of Pulpazay. The area has suffered from intimidation and extortion by the insurgents and from the laying of IEDs. The aim of the operation was to drive out the Taliban, allowing the Afghan forces to conduct policing within the area. This was one of the first joint operations of this scale to be conducted with the Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) in the district. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Afghan engineers display skill, confidence through southern Helmand projects

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez



PATROL BASE REGI TOPA, Afghanistan – As Afghan forces take the lead in security operations across southern Helmand province, greater emphasis has been placed on the development of the Afghan National Army's combat support capabilities by Afghan leaders and their Marine counterparts. Soldiers with the ANA's 4th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, in particular have been consistently increasing their engineering capabilities under the guidance of the Regimental Combat Team 5 Combat Support Advisor Team. The ANA engineers completed several projects earlier this month, including the establishment of Patrol Base Sistani and the turnover of PB Regi Topa from Marines and sailors

with 2nd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, to Afghan soldiers with the brigade's 2nd Kandak. **(Read the STORY)**

Afghan Army engineers develop heavy equipment operations

Story and photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Brian Buckwalter

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELARAM II, Afghanistan – A group of Afghan National Army soldiers are training to become the first licensed heavy equipment operators in the ANA. Fifteen soldiers from 4th Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps, are learning from Marine advisors how to operate backhoes, bulldozers, road graders and dump trucks. Concurrently, ANA leadership is training to run a licensing program themselves. Sergeant Charles Norris, engineering operations chief, Marine Wing Support Squadron 273, designed the course. He's an experienced heavy equipment licensor for the Marine Corps and says he's impressed with the soldiers' skill levels and enthusiasm for learning. "They adapt really quick," Norris, from Mansfield, Ohio said. "They are fast learners and are always requesting more information." **(Read the STORY)**



Afghan and British soldiers bridge canal to relieve troubled area

U.K. Defence News



Afghan warriors and British soldiers recently bridged a canal while under enemy fire as part of an operation to bring security to a troubled area of Helmand province. Operation ZMARAY SAIFULLAH 2 was planned and executed by Afghan warriors from the 4th Kandak (Battalion) of 3/215 Brigade, with help from British soldiers of the Brigade Advisory Group. The operation involved Afghan engineers bridging the Nahr-e Saraj canal to allow troops to clear the area of Mohajeri in central Helmand and to search compounds known to have been used as enemy firing points. Shortly into the operation the patrol came into contact with the enemy. The Afghan engineer team held their nerve and bridged the canal whilst under fire, allowing their troops to

advance. The insurgents initially fought to regain the initiative from the Afghan Army, but on realising the strength of the numbers involved and the tenacity of the opposing forces they stopped firing and retreated. **(Read the STORY)**

Combat Logistics Battalion 4 supports Operation Branding Iron

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Mark Stroud

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Marines and sailors with 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), provided sustained logistics support to Regimental Combat Team 6, north of Musa Qal'ah, May 27-June 11, in support of Operation Branding Iron. The platoon transported supplies and equipment to and from a rearming, refueling and resupply point (R3P), as well as provided troop transport and vehicle recovery capabilities. "Our role is to provide direct tactical logistics support to [2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6] in support of their operations," said Capt. Donald L. Hotchkiss, company commander, Alpha Co., CLB-4. "We provide a reach back capability to transport critical classes of supply and essential equipment in order for the battalion to continue sustained combat operations." Marines and sailors with 2nd Bn., 5th Marines used the R3P site to rest and refit during the operation. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Castle in the sand: US Navy Seabees improve coalition forces' access to Alexander the Great landmark

Story and photos by UTCN Marlene Hounbedji



HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Tasked with not one but two short-term projects, Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11, Detachment Dwyer defied time constraints, high winds, uneven terrain and logistical challenges to complete a new Entry Control Point and repair damaged culverts in two locations: Combat Outpost Castle and COP Taghaz, which they completed June 9, 2012. The 20-Seabee crew led by Equipment Operator 1st Class Jason M. Roy, from Oakland, Calif., reported to COP Castle in late May. The mission: thirty days to build a new ECP as a replacement for an existing one in which proximity to a local, crowded bazaar did not allow easy or safe access to the

COP that serves as home to the U.S. Marines 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. The strategically-located COP owes its name to a castle captured from the Taliban as early as 2009. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Behind the scenes: Administration shop supports hundreds of Marines

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michele Watson

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – From reconstructing roads to eliminating insurgents, many Marines and sailors deployed to Afghanistan make an impact that is readily visible. Within 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), there are thousands of Marines from multiple units working in various roles to support the warfighter on the front lines. Behind every one of those service members is a less visible but extremely important team that enables mission accomplishment in a different way. "Administration is the behind the scenes action for every mission," said Staff Sgt. Alain Espinosa, adjutant, Headquarters and Services Company, 1st MLG (Fwd). "We provide support through personnel accountability, personnel strength, awards, meritorious promotions, Red Cross messages, [authorized leave] and personnel casualty reports." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Troops in Afghanistan celebrate Father's Day

U.K. Defence News



Deployed dads across Afghanistan's Helmand province received a welcome morale-boost yesterday when they opened Father's Day cards from their sons and daughters back home. The cards were delivered to the operational theatre during what is traditionally one of the busiest postal delivery times of the year, thanks to the British Forces Post Office. Although work continues seven-days-a-week for deployed personnel, Father's Day allowed many of them to take a break from their duties. Amongst those opening cards yesterday in Helmand was Corporal Wayne Tudor, from Tidworth-based 26 Engineer Regiment, who is currently deployed at Camp Bastion - the main UK base in Helmand. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Seabees celebrate mid-deployment, remain focused

Story and photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Jonathan Carmichael

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Seabees and sailors assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11 celebrated their deployment's midway point June 17, 2012 with sports activities, food, and games in Afghanistan. On Camp Leatherneck, Seabees had the opportunity to take some time off of work and enjoy volleyball, corn hole (beanbag toss), wrestling in sumo suits, Frisbee, a dunk tank, a bench press competition, and a pull-up and dip competition. The games and sports activities were followed by a meal served by the battalion's chiefs and officers. Door prizes were awarded to ranks E-5 and below whose names were randomly drawn, and winners from the earlier competitions were announced and posed for photos before cake was served. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



VIGNETTES

“Fighting Fifth” celebrates 95th birthday in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez



CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – The 5th Marine Regiment is considered the most highly decorated regiment in the United States Marine Corps. Since its activation in 1917, the “Fighting Fifth,” the regiment's nickname earned in the battlefields of Western Europe during World War I, has valiantly answered America's call to arms for 95 years. Marines and sailors of Regimental Combat Team 5 celebrated the regiment's 95th birthday, and honored those who have served before them, during a ceremony here, June 11, 2012. “Fifth Marines is a really special place, not only because of the Marines and sailors assigned to it, but also because we all know for a fact that we walk on the footsteps of giants of men,” said Col. Roger B. Turner, the commanding officer of RCT-5. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Cottage Grove Marine recognized for outstanding achievements in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michele Watson

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Typical mornings for officers and senior staff members with 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) headquarters begin with an operations and intelligence briefing given to the commanding general and his staff. The service members gather to brief the commanding general about daily activities and ongoing operations throughout Helmand Province, Afghanistan. On the morning of June 2, Brig. Gen. John J. Broadmeadow, Commanding General, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), scanned the room and asked why the intelligence portion of the brief was always led by a young lance corporal. “He said, ‘Something needs to change about this,’ and right there on the spot he called ‘attention to orders,’ and I was meritoriously promoted to corporal,” said Cpl. John Miller, intelligence analyst with G-2, Headquarters and Services Company, 1st MLG (Fwd). [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Mexican immigrant serves in Marines, OEF; eyes US citizenship

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Timothy Lenzo



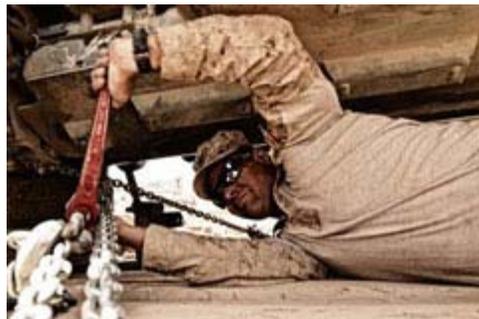
KAJAKI, Afghanistan – He stands side-by-side his fellow Marines, pours his blood and sweat into his job and sacrifices time away from his family. He lives driven by a will to earn his way in life and appreciate what's been given to him. Lance Cpl. Christopher Yudin, a machinegunner with 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6, serves in the Corps as a chance to give back to the country where, after a childhood of moving from place to place, he finally found a place to call his own. Yudin, who has called Seattle home since 1999, lived under a diplomat visa with his parents while attending high school and college. He is not an U.S. citizen but said as a child he always wanted to join the

Marines. In his mind there is nothing more American than serving in the Marine Corps. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Long Island native uses years of mechanical expertise to keep logistics Marines mission ready

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Mark Stroud

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan —“When you have a [mechanically inclined] mind and you are familiar with how an engine works and how a vehicle works, you can solve a lot of the problems and issues that come up on convoys, that you otherwise wouldn't have been able to [fix],” said Cpl. Jason K. Fricke. Fricke, a 27-year-old motor vehicle operator with 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), developed his mechanical mindset over a lifetime of working on engines and vehicles of every sort. His knowledge has been put to good use helping the Marines and sailors of 3rd Plt. maintain their vehicles and expand their motor transportation skill-set during the platoon's deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, said Sgt. Daniel B. Baker, loadmaster, 3rd Plt., Alpha Co., CLB-4. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Explosive tandem demolishes bunkers, supports Operation Jaws

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Timothy Lenzo



KAJAKI, Afghanistan – The Marines rush to take cover behind a berm, as the countdown begins. “Five, four, three, two, one,” a Marine yells as some cover their ears and others turn away from the area. The explosion shakes the ground beneath the squad, sending dust and dirt flying off their uniforms and putting a ringing sound in their ears. As the dust and smoke settles two Marines examine the blast area for their handy work. Lance Cpl. Cameron Brown, a combat engineer, with 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, partners with Lance Cpl. Jeremy Corea, an assaultman with 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6. The two Marines make a very explosive tandem, working together to not only overcome obstacles but destroy them. “I work with him pretty much every (operation),” Brown said. “We work well together and get the job done efficiently.” Corea and Brown join forces when making decisions regarding demolitions. They first teamed up when the battalion deployed in March and instantly connected. “(Corea and I) are pretty close now,” said Brown, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo. “Working together, it became a good relationship.” [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

VIDEOS

This Is My Life: Lance Cpl. Geoffrey West

Video by Marine Cpl. Timothy Lenzo

This is my life is a video journal blog of Marines in Afghanistan, documenting their daily life. This is the second episode following Lance Cpl. Geoffrey West, an infantryman with Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment.

[\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



Provost Marshal Office law-enforcement

Video by Marine Cpl. Timothy Lenzo



The Provost Marshal Office (PMO) enforces the laws and regulations on Camp Leatherneck. One of the ways they do this is with random vehicle and room inspections of the local national living on base. During these searches PMO is looking for prohibited cell phones and electronic. Along with unauthorized electronics the Military Police are also Looking for drugs, alcohol. and explosive materials. By enforcing the rules on Camp Leatherneck, everyone remains safe. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

Marketed/Republished Combat Correspondent Product

1st Lt. Carter King talks to a Crawford reporter, for their Hero of the Week segment

Cpl. Trevor Swain Aired in Cleveland Indian's Progressive Field for Marine's father's Father's Day surprise, video by Cpl. Alfred Lopez

Cmdr Eric Buenviaje talks to a WTKF-FM, N.C.

Lance Cpl. Anthony Pummill talks to a WTKF-FM, N.C.

Sgt. Rolando Ventura on WWNY-TV

Immigrant Marine Enjoys American Citizenship on WWNY-TV

Seven years, four deployments: Illinois Marine loves to serve his country on Commercial News

Afghan military presence increases in southwest on Stars and Stripes

Belleau Wood Marines reunite on Afghan battlefield on Daily News

Marine, Afghan operation against insurgents successful on Daily News

Sgt. Kristin Jackson Radio Lia

Deployed servicemembers run half marathon in Afghanistan on Daily News

Lejeune Marines and Afghan Forces unleash Operation Reservoir Dogs on Daily News
