

# Regional Command Southwest

## Round-up

Weekly PAO Report

..... August 7, 2012 .....



### NEWS

## Afghan, Marine partnership bears fruit through progress, transition in southern Helmand

Story by Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez



HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – When the Marines and sailors of Regimental Combat Team 5 arrived here in August 2011, their predecessors from RCT-1 had already planted the seeds of transition with Afghan National Security Forces. Through this partnership, the people of Marjah, Nawa, Garmsir and Khan Neshin districts were able to begin rebuilding a land once controlled by a Taliban insurgency. “Initially, we were in the lead in conducting counterinsurgency operations, partnered with the Afghan forces,” said Col. Roger B. Turner Jr., the commanding officer of RCT-5. “Additionally, we were developing their governance, in order to create an environment that allows the Afghan government to become increasingly capable.” [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Afghan forces increasingly in security lead in southern Helmand province

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brian Buckwalter

COMBAT OUTPOST DEHLI, Afghanistan — As Marines drove along the narrow dirt roads of southern Helmand province they watched farmers tend to their corn fields and livestock. They saw children running alongside vehicles and swimming in a river that irrigates the fields surrounding it. Trucks carrying bags of wheat and other products passed the Marines' convoy regularly on their way to deliver their goods to bazaars and customers in the area. Also on this road in the Central Helmand River Valley are Afghan National Army recruiting billboards showing soldiers smiling in uniform. There are anti-insurgency billboards too. One depicts a man in jail, his head in his hands. A thought bubble over his head shows the wife and children he left behind. The billboards reinforce what everyone in the area is seeing, more ANA influence and fewer insurgents. It's not uncommon to see ANA soldiers or Afghan police race up and down the road in their pickups, running between their manned checkpoints and outposts along the route. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Afghan forces hold training exercise at Combat Outpost Castle

Story and photos by Cpl. Ed Galo



COMBAT OUTPOST CASTLE, Afghanistan – As Afghan forces prepare to take the lead in combat roles, Marines with Police Advisor Team, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 6, and Afghan forces at Combat Outpost Castle held a command post exercise, July 18, 2012. The exercise tested how the district level operational coordination center handles scenarios that occur on the battlefield. The OCCD acts as a hub for managing local Afghan National Security Force operations. Captain William Van Eaton, PAT officer-in-charge, said the scenarios included how to handle finding an improvised explosive device, how to properly call for an emergency medical evacuation and calling for Marine support in case the enemy overwhelms the Afghan forces. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Combat Logistics Battalion 5 cases colors in Afghanistan, heads home to prepare for next mission

Story and photos by Sgt. Michele Watson

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 5, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) stood proudly during a casing of the colors ceremony, marking the end of a successful tour in Afghanistan. Lt. Col. Robert Meade, CLB-5 commanding officer and Sgt. Maj. Troy Black, the battalion sergeant major, cased the battalion's colors at Camp Dwyer, July 30. After their arrival in April, the battalion made a significant impact on operations in southern Helmand Province.

Brig. Gen. John J. Broadmeadow, Commanding General, 1st MLG (Fwd), spoke to the Marines and sailors at the ceremony about their accomplishments over the past few months. "You have been incredibly successful in what you've done out here," said Brig. Gen. Broadmeadow. "You have helped to off-ramp three infantry battalions and a regimental headquarters. You have reset the battle space out here, and you have done all of that on top of continuing to support those units in combat." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Third Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion disrupts enemy passageways

Story and photos by Cpl. Ed Galo



KHANESHIN DISTRICT, Afghanistan – As the morning sun rose, the sound of helicopter rotor blades could be heard from the flight line at Forward Operating Base Payne, July 21, 2012. Carrying their gear and enough food and water to sustain themselves for 48 hours, Marines with Bravo Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 6, awaited their turn to board Marine CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters that would insert them deep into the Khaneshin District of Afghanistan. The main purpose of the operation was to disrupt enemy movement in the area. The Marines were accompanied by four members of the Afghan Border Patrol. According to 1st Lt. Ted Rose, platoon commander, Bravo Co., 3rd LAR, the presence of Marines and Afghan forces helps deter the enemy from using the area for

trafficking. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Sweathogs haul supplies to expand airfield

Story and photos by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth

COMBAT OUTPOST SHUKVANI, Afghanistan – A convoy of vehicles with Marine Wing Support Squadron 273 cautiously trudges along the attack-prone route to Combat Outpost Shukvani, Helmand province, July 13. The group of trucks and armored vehicles is on its fourth and final convoy to transport supplies and equipment to enlarge the base. The expansion will turn Shukvani into a forward operating base able to house up to approximately a dozen helicopters, hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel, along with personnel and equipment to support air operations.

Arriving well after dark, the Marines sleep wherever they can. Fatigued after a 10-hour drive and under the constant threat of coming under attack along the way, sleep is a welcome friend. Once the sun rises, the Marines take in the scenery around them. Nothing is present except for several hills on the horizon and the fine powder-like sand beneath their feet. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Civil Affairs patrols through Khanishin District, checks up on local projects

Story and photos by Cpl. Ed Galo



COMBAT OUTPOST CASTLE, Afghanistan – Patrolling through the streets of the Khanishin District of Afghanistan with tape measures, papers and pens, the Marines of 3rd Civil Affairs Group checked up on various projects in the local area, July 19, 2012. During the patrol, Marines talked with shop owners in the district's bazaar and stopped at a school and health clinic that are both under construction. "Our role here is just to make sure the projects are going

smoothly and completed on time," said Sgt. Kairo Ortez, civil affairs noncommissioned officer, 3rd Civil Affairs Group. Ortez, from Los Angeles, says the projects should be done by the end of this year. Local Afghans provide labor for the projects, and the civil affairs team coordinates with local national and American contractors for supplies. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Antique rifle found in Afghanistan

*Story and photos courtesy of Task Force Helmand*

Few soldiers serving in Afghanistan's troubled Helmand Province would expect to be employed handling antiques, but that's exactly what one Fusilier has been doing. Aaron Gray, a Fusilier with the 1st Battalion, the Royal Welsh, has been tasked with cleaning a World War Two-era Lee Enfield Mk 4 rifle uncovered by troops in Afghanistan. "I couldn't believe it when the guys brought it back to our base. It's a real piece of history," said Aaron. "This rifle was made by the Americans during the Second World War and given to their allies. It's amazing to think about the journey it took to get here to Helmand Province. "I have been asked to try and clean it up so that we can take it back as a souvenir of our time in Afghanistan." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## VIGNETTES

### Murchison Times Two

*Story and photos by Cpl. Anthony Ward Jr.*



HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Brothers in arms, a term known by many Marines and thrown around amongst them to define the relationship they have toward one another. For Lt. Col. Michael Murchison and Capt. Nicholas Murchison, this saying rings truer than ever: They are real brothers. Separated by nearly eight years in age, the elder Murchison paved the way for the younger brother to follow in his footsteps toward the Marine Corps. "The recruiter showed up on my doorstep on a rainy, Tuesday afternoon," said the elder brother. "I went to go talk to him and he informed me of the officer programs and the chance to get an ROTC scholarship." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Arizona native helps keep rockets' red glare alive, well in Afghanistan

*Story and photos by Sgt. James Mercure*

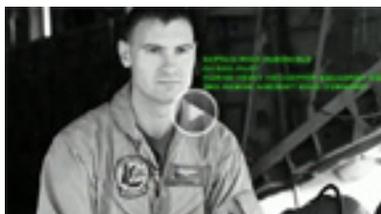
PATROL BASE EREDVI, Afghanistan - The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System delivers target destruction from miles away. Driving one of the multimillion dollar trucks that can do so much damage is Lance Cpl. Edgar Rosas. The 20-year-old Mesa, Ariz., native, is currently deployed with Sierra Battery, 5th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment to a small Georgian Army patrol base providing northern Helmand province with artillery rocket support. "When we get a call for fire, we jump in the trucks and head to the firing point," said Rosas, a 2010 graduate of Skyline High School in Mesa. "It's my responsibility to make sure the truck is on the right slope, a certain distance from any structures and to record the data once the rocket is fired." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## VIDEOS

### HMH-362 Episode 2 What We Do: General, Direct Support

*Video by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth*



The second part in a series documenting unit activities and personnel during the final deployment of the squadron. Hometown: Laramie, WY. Unit: Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362. Unit Hometown: Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Submitting Unit: 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward). Date: August 1, 2012. Location: Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.. Also available in High Definition. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

## **Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469 'Vengeance'**

*Video by Cpl. Lisa Tourtelot*

Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469, "Vengeance," demonstrates the value of close air support in Afghanistan. Also available in High Definition.

**(Watch the VIDEO)**



## **Marketed/Republished Combat Correspondent Product**

**Col. Hooks talks with Seapower Magazine about the plan of action for his command and the things they are doing to prepare to withdrawal from Afghanistan.**

**Sgt. Robert Drelich talks to a WTKF-FM reporter about his work in the personal security detail, his two tours to Afghanistan, and his career in the Marines.**

**Sgt. Joseph Dills talks to a WTKF-FM reporter about his work in the personal security detail, his multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, and his career in the Marines.**

**Artillery Marines are 'Kings of Battle' in Kajaki republished in Jacksonville Daily News**

**Marines honor fallen brothers in Afghanistan republished in Jacksonville Daily News**

**USAID brings development to Kajaki republished in Jacksonville Daily News**

**Marines Clear Afghan Villages of Insurgents aired on Pentagon Channel**

**PS3 Shatavia Howell, Atlanta, Ga. talks to a WRAS-FM reporter in Atlanta, Ga., about her job as a personnel specialist, joining the Navy after high school, cultural differences, family support and communicating with family.**

**Petty Officer Shatavia Howell, Stone Mountain, Ga., talks to a WABE-FM reporter about her job as a personnel specialist, growing up in Georgia, being passionate, being part of JRTC in high school, her**

**average day, sports, Afghan culture, communicating with family back home and her future.**

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