



AFGHAN SWAT

Training the best

Top - Afghan National Police go through SWAT training, learning how to operate in small tactical units. Below - ANP students check a closet in the back of the room making sure it is clear before proceeding through the rest of the structure.

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KABUL, Afghanistan – The battle against the Taliban is an ongoing fight throughout Afghanistan. One of the groups leading the charge against the terrorists and insurgents is the Afghan National Police.

Recently a new capability is being added to make the ANP an even stronger force to be able to battle and defeat the enemies of Afghanistan. The Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), will be an elite group of police officers filling a variety of roles.

Superintendent James Rainville, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, is currently assigned as a mentor with Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan and is in a lead role helping to develop the Afghan's police capabilities.

“These police officers have already finished basic training, some have been on the

police force for a couple of years or more,” Rainville said. “They recently completed a 60-day course in advanced police training and tactics focused on team building, unit cohesiveness and upgrading skills and abilities before becoming a fully operational unit.”

The police officers undergoing ANCOP training learn to work in small tactical teams, requiring dedicated professionals, said Rainville.

“These (police officers) are the cream of the crop,” he said. “The police officers coming through this program are about 90 percent literate, which is very high for Afghanistan. They are eager to learn and they are catching on very fast.”

The 300 officers going through training here are being instructed by coalition military and civilian mentors.

Sgt. 1st Class Warren Bockhol, an embedded trainer from Task Force Phoenix VI, assigned to the 201st Corps, is working with the students to hone their skills.

“These guys are motivated and want to



learn,” Bockhol said. “They want to be here and it shows.”

The skills they learn will help keep them in the fight and establish dominance over their enemy.

“We are teaching them SWAT techniques, some of these are very similar to infantry skills we use in the field,” Bockhol said. “Cordon and search are things we do in an urban environment; these are things they will need to do as well.”

Cordon and search refers to clearing buildings and making sure each room is methodically secured and safe.

“We’re teaching them how to go room-by-room, making sure it is safe to proceed,” Bockhol said. “We are still in the ‘walking’ phase of instruction. They are learning the theory and application. By the time they finish this training they will be effective operators.”

Not every police officer will be in the SWAT unit.

“This is as much a selection process as it is training,” Rainville said.

Those who do not make the cut for SWAT will still be part of ANCOP, but used in the other roles such as crowd and riot control.

“We are looking for people who can shoot accurately, think on their feet, take and follow orders,” said Scott Hill, a DynCorp ANCOP training mentor. “We need them to be responsive and take in the situation and understand how it is developing.”

Hill, a 13-year veteran of a sheriff’s department’ says it is not about shooting or hurting people.

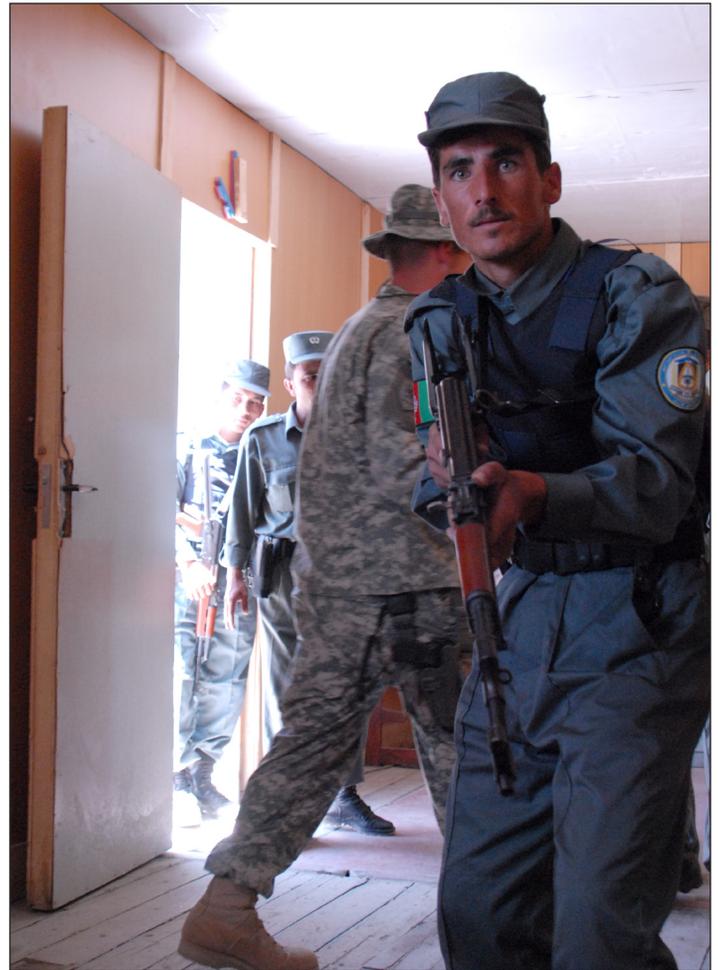
“When a SWAT team enters a building they are going in there to rescue people,” Hill said. “The last thing they want to do is go in there, start shooting and kill the wrong person. Discipline is a key part to working in a SWAT unit, as it teamwork and communication.”

Sgt. Abdul Shokoor is an ANP officer and has worn the uniform for the past three years. He is motivated and is a standout among his peers, according to Bockhol. Talking to him reveals a dedicated officer who wants to serve with the best Afghanistan has to offer.

“I want to serve my country and make Afghanistan safe for the people,” said Shokoor. “Being part of ANCOP has given me the chance to learn new skills and serve with the best. The instructors are excellent and are willing to share their experience with us. They really make this training worthwhile.”

Rainville is glad to see the progress in the overall training program.

“When these units go into the field they will be on par with any police unit in the West,” he said. “They will have the best training and the best equipment in Afghanistan and will



be capable to carry out the tough missions with success.”

These police officers will be assigned to Kabul with future classes being stationed in other provinces throughout Afghanistan.

Top - Coalition forces acting as mentors to the ANP show these ANCOP students the proper way to enter and clear a building. About 300 ANP officers are going through the class.

Below - Superintendent James Rainville, Royal Canadian Mounted Police talks with his Afghan counterpart about issues and challenges the training site is encountering.