

March 3, 2008

# Freedom Watch

AFGHANISTAN



Off Duty? ■ Airmen as Educators ■ Ouch!

## DOD

### Face of Defense: Airman drives 120 convoys in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Air Force Master Sgt. Demetrius A. Lester  
*Special to American Forces Press Service*

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Regardless of what job Air Force members have, being an Airman comes first. In today’s Air Force, being an Airman sometimes means doing a job normally performed by Soldiers. Senior Airman Vanessa Velez, a convoy driver with the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, knows this all too well.

Before she went to Fort Bragg, N.C., for predeployment training, Velez thought her year-long deployment to Afghanistan would be spent maintaining vehicles as she does at her home unit, the 6th Logistics Readiness Squadron, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

“I was told, ‘You won’t be working vehicle maintenance; you will be a driver,’” she said. “At Fort Bragg, I found out I wouldn’t be driving shuttles, distinguished visitors or commanders around in a car or bus like I was mistakenly told at my duty station. I would be driving a fully-loaded Humvee outside the wire in enemy territory at least five times a week.”

The Airman said Army Lt. Col. Bobby Robinson, Bagram PRT commander, told Velez’s team they would be living in tents and riding outside the wire.



Senior Airman Vanessa Velez, a convoy driver with the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, poses for a photo in front of her Humvee before a mission. Velez, a vehicle maintenance controller with 6th Logistics Readiness Squadron, at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., has driven more than 120 convoys during her deployment.



Senior Airman Vanessa Velez prepares her Humvee just before her next mission. Velez, a vehicle maintenance controller with the 6th Logistics Readiness Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., is a convoy driver with the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team.

“That’s when reality set in,” she said. “At first, I was shocked and couldn’t believe that a girl from the Bronx, N.Y., was about to be a driver in a hostile situation.”

When she arrived in Afghanistan, Velez was assigned to the Bagram PRT, whose mission is to secure and develop a post-Taliban Afghanistan by extending the authority of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, improving security and promoting reconstruction. The PRTs have been so successful that they became the template for helping to rebuild Iraq.

“My first convoy, I was so nervous that I kept stomping the brakes until the brake line broke,” said Velez. “The heat and fluid from the brake line started a fire.”

More than 120 missions later, Velez hasn’t experienced anymore brake problems or fires. She continues to shuttle truck and mission commanders outside the wire on a daily basis, and said she believes she has made a difference for both America and the Afghan people during this war.

“I have learned so much about a lot of things, especially my job and the Afghan people,” she said. “I had the mentality they were all al-Qaeda and Taliban until I talked to them. After spending time with the Afghans, I learned they don’t like the Taliban either. Everything has gotten better since my arrival in March of last year. Even the roads have improved.”

When she’s outside the wire, Velez is somewhat of a celebrity with the Afghan children. “They get excited because they see a female Airman. They want to touch my hair and earrings,” she said. “The Afghans want to learn and have a lot of questions. They want to work and take care of their families like most people (in the U.S.) do.”

This is Velez’s third deployment in three years, but she said she has no regrets.

“I am an Airman first, just like all the services have been preaching,” she added. “This shows, in this day and age, you could be tasked to do anything to support the War on Terror.”

“My job satisfaction comes from constantly thinking about all the people’s lives I have in my hands,” she continued. “My vehicle is my job. I drive so much that my Humvee is my office. I don’t have a computer, e-mail or an office. I have a Humvee.”

*(Air Force Master Sgt. Demetrius A. Lester serves with 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs.)*

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**COVER:** An OH-58 D Kiowa Warrior  
prepares to depart Jalalabad Airfield to  
conduct a surveillance mission. (U.S.  
Army photo by Spc. George Welcome)

**BACK COVER:** An Afghan girl  
conceals her mouth for a photograph  
during a humanitarian aid handout in  
Parun Valley, Nuristan Province, Af-  
ghanistan. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Steven  
C. Jones)

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# Kiowa Warrior, Task Force Out Front in fight against insurgents

Story and photo by Spc. George Welcome  
101st CAB Public Affairs

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, Afghanistan** - In wars past, the role of the cavalry unit in combat was to serve as the eyes and ears of the division, providing awareness of the terrain and the enemy's capabilities.

While today's cavalry traded horses for tracks, wheels and rotors, their impact on the battlefield remains as pivotal now as it was then. Task Force Out Front, from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, is providing aviation support for the 173rd Airborne Brigade. New to their area of operations is the OH-58 D Kiowa Warrior, a reconnaissance and light attack helicopter.

"Our mission is to provide aviation support to Task Force Bayonet in the Nuristan, Nangahar, Kunar and Laghman provinces," said Army Lt. Col. John Lynch, TF Out Front commander. "We provide everything from attack helicopters to conducting air assaults. Our Kiowas will provide reconnaissance and we'll also provide maintenance and FARP (Forward Arming and Refueling Point) support as well."

Initially, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, was slated to deploy to Iraq instead of Afghanistan. It was thought that the single engine Kiowa Warrior would have difficulty operating in Afghanistan's higher elevation.

"The idea behind bringing the Kiowa Warrior here was the desire to put an aviation task force headquarters with a squadron commander here in Jalalabad," said Lynch. "There are certainly challenges with the Kiowa. We had to look at areas on the map where we could use it successfully, and that's usually in the lower elevations."

Despite some of the limitations of the Kiowa Warrior, the TF is committed to finding ways to use it for the benefit of Coalition forces and the people of Afghanistan.

"Kiowa Warriors have never operated up here in the north," said Army Maj. Jeffrey Bouma, TF Out Front executive officer. "We've already done a lot of good work with convoy security and reconnaissance. We've found a number of IED locations and escorted over 50 convoys during security missions. That, along with the Chinook's, Black Hawks and MEDEVAC assets being added, should have a positive impact. I think we're going to have a chance to get the enemy off their game. We have three times as much aviation than has ever been out here before," he said.

The most common mission for Kiowa pilots is convoy security.

"I just flew in a convoy security mission with some added area reconnaissance yesterday," said Bouma. "We were successful in getting the convoy from its start point to its release point with out any IED or small-arms incidents."

The Kiowa Warrior is easy to maintain, easy to get airborne and very low maintenance, according to Bouma.

Effective coverage, however, would not be possible without support from maintainers who keep the aircraft flying.

"D Troop's mission is aviation maintenance in support of combat operations," said Army Capt. Andrew Herzberg, D Troop commander.

"We maintain and repair all four MDS' (Mission Design Series); attack helicopters, cargo helicopters, utility helicopters and observation helicopters," said Herzberg. "The biggest challenge we have is that everyone who was in the troop back in Ft. Campbell was an OH-58 D maintainer. We got over here and picked up all the other MDS' and there is a very steep learning curve involved in learning how other aircraft are maintained. It's completely different than how Kiowas are maintained."

Fuel and ammunition are also important in keeping the helicopters of TF Out Front in the fight.

"The forward support troop provides organizational and direct support in reference to refueling and supplying ammunition and ground maintenance," said Army Capt. Brian Falcasantos, E Troop commander. "We are responsible for all the maintenance for non-aviation assets like refueling, resupplying ammunition and fixing trucks."

With a long mission in front of them, TF Out Front hopes that they can not only cause major disruption in enemy activity, but leave their base and area of operations better for the unit replacing them.

"We want to have the footprint established for the next team," said Lynch. When they hit the ground they can go right into conducting whatever operations they want to conduct."



An OH-58 D Kiowa Warrior returns to Jalalabad Airfield after completing an aerial surveillance mission. The Kiowa Warrior is a new asset to the area, brought into theater by Task Force Out Front from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. With more aviation assets, TF Out Front will help keep ground forces safe by providing convoy security and route reconnaissance.

# Off-duty ANP detain five IED emplacers

By Army Capt. Ashley Dellavalle  
Task Force Rugged - Public Affairs

**MATUN DISTRICT, Afghanistan** – Five off-duty Afghan National Police officers detained five people who were emplacing an improvised explosive device Feb. 17 on a road east of Khowst City, Khowst Province.

The officers, stationed at the Tereza District Center, were traveling in their own personal vehicles in civilian attire and noticed two men setting up the IED. The officers stopped their vehicles to question the suspects, who claimed they were placing

the explosives to harm Americans, rather than the ANP. Three other men, suspected of being lookouts, were also detained.

The five detainees were taken to the district center for additional questioning. Another officer recognized one of the detainees. ANP members went to the suspect's family compound and detained six additional men for questioning.

Demolition experts successfully cleared the IED and its materials, while ANP secured the area, making the roadway safe for commerce and travel.

“The Afghan National Police are committed to thwarting insurgent activity in

their neighborhoods,” said Army Capt. David Meier, Company C, 70th Engineer Battalion commander. “We praise these heroes for their allegiance to the Afghan National Security Forces and the people of Afghanistan by disrupting the terrorist activity and detaining the insurgents. ANSF continues to help find and render IEDs safe, making the roads safer for Afghans.”

According to data collected by Coalition forces' IED route clearance units, ANSF partnered with Coalition forces, are finding, interdicting or receiving turned-in IEDs more often than these explosives are detonating on vehicles and people.

## 11 suspected insurgents detained in Zabul Province

Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Eleven suspected insurgents were detained during a combined Afghan National Security and Coalition forces operation.

The joint force searched com-

pounds in the Dey Chopan District, targeting a Taliban leader responsible for several attacks against Coalition forces. The individual also allegedly facilitated weapons and financial support to Taliban fighters.

The joint force employed aerial munitions to suppress several suspected insurgents during

the search.

The detained individuals will be questioned on their involvement in Taliban operations and other illegal activities.

“Afghan National Security Forces found six of the detainees, one of whom was identified as a Taliban leader, hiding in a concealed room in a mosque

on the compound,” said Army Maj. Chris Belcher, Coalition forces spokesman. “Mindful of cultural sensitivities, no Coalition forces members entered the mosque.”

“Afghan and Coalition forces are taking measures to inhibit the effectiveness of Taliban leadership,” said Belcher.

## Coalition forces degrade insurgent operations in Oruzgan

Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs

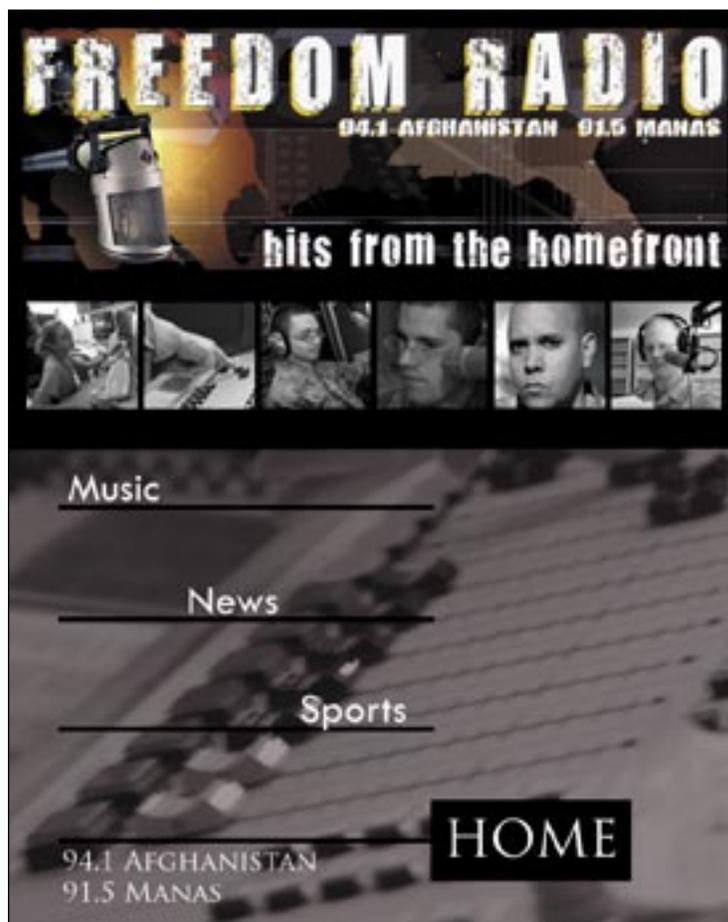
**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – An armed assailant was killed and three individuals detained during a Coalition forces' operation in Oruzgan Province to degrade insurgent networks in the area.

Coalition forces performed a search of compounds in the Tarin Kowt District targeting a Taliban commander responsible for conducting anti-government activities.

While conducting a search of one of the compounds, Coalition forces were engaged by multiple armed assailants barricaded in a building. One of the assailants was killed by Coalition forces employing small-arms fire. Another armed assailant who fired on Coalition forces was captured.

After completing the search, Coalition forces detained three individuals including the captured assailant who fired on Coalition forces with suspected links to the Taliban. The detained individuals will be questioned on their involvement with Taliban operations and other extremist activities.

“Coalition forces remain focused on defeating insurgent networks in Afghanistan,” said Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman, Coalition forces spokesperson.



# Arizona National Guard rescues U.S. Senators

By Army Maj. John Bozicevic  
*Arizona National Guard*

**MEHTAR LAM, Afghanistan** – When a helicopter carrying three senior U.S. senators was forced to make an emergency landing due to blizzard conditions in the mountains of Afghanistan, Soldiers of the Arizona National Guard, 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, responded to secure the site.

Evacuated from the helicopter were Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.), Joseph Biden (D-Del.) and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.).

The D Co. platoon, led by Army 1st Lt. Dennis Chamberlain of Gilbert, Ariz., along with servicemembers of Combined Joint Task Force-82, made the cross-country journey from Bagram Airfield to their rendezvous less than one hour after receiving notice of the downed aircraft.

“The weather was our biggest adversary,” Chamberlain said. “We moved out slow and methodically. If we had crashed or had a problem with our convoy, it would

have delayed our response time. ‘Slow is smooth and smooth is fast,’ is a saying in the infantry and this mission was no different than any other.”

Chamberlain’s men are no strangers to adversity. Since arriving in Afghanistan 11 months ago, the platoon has been in more than 100 enemy engagements, primarily in Tag Ab valley, Kapisa Province, where they recently returned from.

The unit was just beginning to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere at Bagram Airfield, when they received the order to move again. Initially, the Soldiers were unaware of the VIP passengers on the helicopters.

Army Staff Sgt. Chris Dempsey of Yuma, Ariz., was conducting inventory in the platoon office when the call came.

“I was really concerned about the pilots and crews,” said Dempsey. They came to our aid when we were pinned down by enemy fire. Now it was time to return the favor.”

When the platoon arrived at the site, one squad immediately convoyed the sena-

tors back to base while the rest of the platoon endured the harsh weather conditions for more than 15 hours. They secured the helicopters and crews until relief could arrive the following day, according to Army Sgt. Brian Genthe of Chandler, Ariz.

“We brought our cold weather gear and it paid off,” said Army Spc. Albert Jurado of Glendale, Ariz.

Due to the weather and limited visibility, finding a route to the aircraft was difficult, but Army Staff Sgt. William McClain of Peoria, Ariz., led the way.

“With only a grid to go by he led us,” Dempsey said. “As the snow fell to the point where you could barely see the vehicle in front of you, he stayed on course. When the road turned into no more than a trail he plowed through. As other vehicles fell to the wayside, he kept going and when the trail ended, he was the one who walked the rest of the way to the downed crews,” he said.

McClain’s perseverance and guidance paid-off, resulting in a successful mission.

# Afghans complete advanced medical training

Story and photo by Army Capt.  
**Bob Everdeen**  
*Provincial Reconstruction Team  
Qalat*

**QALAT, Afghanistan** - Less than a month after a basic emergency medical technician training class graduated in Qalat, seven more Afghan men entered the medical career field. They graduated from a nursing school program facilitated by the joint Air Force and Army Provincial Reconstruction Team here.

The training program teaches taking vital signs, assessing overall health, initial patient screening, medical terminology and an overview of medications. The course is taught by a local Afghan employed by the PRT.

The importance of the accomplishment the seven men achieved was best described by three Afghan government representatives from Zabul Province who attended the gradu-

ation ceremony: Dr. Nazir Ahmadzai, director of public health; Mr. Abdul Nabi Wadan, director of education; and Dr. Fazul Rahman, director of Ibn Sina Medical.

“I have seen people who completed this training in the past,” said Rahman. “You will help to make things better for Zabul Province and Afghanistan.”

“We look forward to more classes in the future,” he said. “You’ve studied hard, earned your certification and now employers will be eager to accept you into their practices.”

“To the students, congratulations, to the PRT, thank you,” Ahmadzai said. “One person can make a difference, especially in Zabul where we don’t have enough educated people, particularly in the medical field.”

The graduates must successfully complete a certification test in Kabul before being hired into practice in Afghanistan.



Ahmadullah (left), a graduate of the basic nursing program in Qalat, accepts his certificate of completion from director of Ibn Sina Medical, Dr. Fazul Rahman. The 12-month training program facilitated by the joint Air Force and Army Provincial Reconstruction Team, teaches students the basics of nursing: taking vital signs, assessing overall health, initial patient screening, medical terminology and an overview of medications. The course is taught by a local Afghan employed by the Provincial Reconstruction Team.

# Afghan, Coalition forces go to remote Oruzgan village

Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Afghan National Security Forces, along with Coalition forces, revisited the village of Khorma, Tarin Kowt District, Oruzgan Province.

The combined team previously visited the village Jan. 6 to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's effort to improve medical care and distribute supplies to Afghans living in remote areas of the country. During the first visit, soldiers provided medical check-ups and items to help villagers get through the harsh winter.

This visit was no different. ANSF and Coalition forces met with village elders to determine the security in the area. Elders reported that although the village remains secure, sporadic insurgent activity continues to plague the area.

The elders were encouraged by the Coalition forces to report insurgent activity. The district is known to contain insurgent elements responsible for several improvised explosive device attacks against government and Coalition forces.

Citizens are taking an active role to secure their own villages. As a result, insurgents are finding some areas unwelcome to their activities.

Soldiers were able to provide more government aid to ensure villagers' needs were being met. One of the most pressing needs was getting school supplies for the children. Soldiers provided school supplies including backpacks, pencils, erasers, notebooks and government flags. With increased security, Afghans feel better about sending their children to schools.

Soldiers also provided medical assistance to residents of the village. A crying two-year-old girl was brought to a medic who



Coalition forces examine a two-year-old girl with a possible fractured arm and dislocated shoulder. A combined team of Afghan National Security and Coalition forces visited Khorma Village, Tarin Kowt District, Oruzgan Province. ANSF and Coalition forces met with village elders to determine the security situation in the area. (U.S. Army photo)



An Afghan National Army soldier speaks with children of Khorma Village, Tarin Kowt District, Oruzgan Province. ANSF and Coalition forces met with village elders to determine the security situation in the area. The soldiers also provided school supplies, backpacks, pencils, erasers, notebooks and government flags to the children of the village. (U.S. Army photo)

*"It's clear that Afghans want a safer country,"*

*-Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman*

immediately assessed her condition. None of the villagers knew what was wrong with the child, but they reported that the child recently fell while climbing on a storage area. ANSF and Coalition medics examined the girl and diagnosed her with a fractured arm and dislocated shoulder.

After administering first-aid and immobilizing her arm and shoulder, the combined force escorted her, along with her father and brother, to a combined military outpost in the district for x-rays and further medical treatment. The girl is expected to make a full recovery.

"This is the kind of activity the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan can provide when there is security," said Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman, a Coalition spokesperson. "Security starts in the villages and spreads throughout the district, the province and the entire country."

"It's clear that Afghans want a safer country. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is committed to ensuring the needs of its citizens are met," said Bowman.

# Airmen Mentor Afg

Story and photos by Air  
AFN A

Airmen from the 755th Expeditionary Support Squadron are mentoring Afghan National Army Soldiers at the Logistics Support Operations Center in Kabul. The Airmen work closely with their Afghan counterparts to assist them in setting up a web of logistics throughout the country. The eventual goal is to have the ANA be completely self-sufficient in the War on Terror.

The LSOC is the primary logistics hub for the ANA and Afghan National Police in Afghanistan. The 90-man unit handles all classes of materials, excluding medical supplies, which they should get by the end of the year, according to Air Force Col. John McGuire, 755th ESPTS, senior mentor for the LSOC.

Requests come in from the field to the customer service desk and are sent to the appropriate LSOC offices. For example, a request for ammunition would go to Col. Tahir in the ammo section, whereas a request for clothing would go to Maj. Dagmarman Saber, the director of Field Services. The requests are then verified, the equipment sent to a depot and it is issued.

“This is an interesting job,” said McGuire. “Small steps here make a big difference. It was a big step to get them to handle their own supplies. They knew the theory behind logistics and we are mentoring them to help them improve. One of the challenges was to get agencies to talk to each other and getting the ANA to work together.”

“We have several depots in Kabul,” said ANA Col. Nabi Ahmadzi, LSOC commander. “We supply all the ANA and ANP from these depots,” he said.

Supplies must be transported to the depots, which is where the distributing office comes in. Lt. Col. Quadoose is the distribution commander. He orders the vehicles needed to carry the supplies.

“My daily duties are to take requests and make plans for trucks to deliver supplies to our customers,” said Quadoose. “Our supplies must be on time and the priority is forward support depots. Since the LSOC was established, things have greatly improved. We used to move all of our supplies by civilian trucks, now we use mostly ANA trucks.”

“I am 100 percent happy to work with our U.S. mentors,” continued Quadoose. “If they were not here, we would not be able to function at this level.”

“We mentor and help with problems that may come up,” said Air Force Capt. Atley Gray, senior mentor to the Distribu-



Tech. Sgt. Natalie Cerchio, 755th Expeditionary Support Squadron, gives computer instruction to Afghan National Army Col. Dadagul, Feb. 20. Cerchio is one of the Airmen mentors who work with ANA soldiers to help them improve upon their logistics skills. Part of the training is to teach them to use computers to track their supplies. “This is the first time I have used computers; and with as much as I’ve learned I will be able to train other people; said Col. Dadagul.

An Afghan National Army Civilian loads rice into a truck at the Class-1 Depot in Kabul. The depot distributes dried food goods throughout Kabul, and halal meals throughout Afghanistan to ANA and Afghan National Police.



Left - A trucks at the Class-1 Depot Agency

Right - Afghan National Army soldier loading a truck with fuel and gasoline at the Class-1 Depot in Kabul.

# Afghan National Army

Force Staff Sgt. Ian Carrier  
Afghanistan

tion Office. We try as mentors to have our counterparts come up with solutions. This is their country, we try not to interfere. They come to us for guidance and we give direction, we don't tell them what to do.

"It's been great working with the Colonel and his staff," he added. "They are willing to learn. They thank me, and I thank them back because it's easier to teach people who want to learn," said Gray.

One of the ways the mentors are trying to streamline the logistical process is by getting the ANA up to speed with computer technology, making data more efficient by using spreadsheets instead of dry-erase boards.

Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Wendel Wilson and Tech. Sgt. Natalie Cerchio, both with the 755th ESPTS, are mentors for the Central Supply Depot. They teach Afghan soldiers basic computer skills such as Word and Excel. The training began in April of 2007. So far 120 students have been taught, and the program is expected to continue.

"It is fun and challenging," said Cerchio. "You have to break things down and start at the basic level. They are the future of this country, and someday they will be teaching others the skills we have taught them."

"I like the computer a lot because it helps in our office very much," said ANA Col. Dadagul, a student from the Central Supply Depot Material Office. "This is the first time I have used computers, and with as much as I've learned I will be able to train other people."

An important link in the chain is the Central Movement Agency. This is where all the vehicles that transport supplies are kept. There are five truck companies; two light, one medium, one heavy and a Headquarters Company.

The mentors at the CMA help the Afghans with convoy scheduling, techniques, property book managing and fuel management. According to Air Force Master Sgt. James Fink, 755th ESPTS and CMA mentor, approximately 100 convoys are run a week. These convoys are run through coordination with the LSOC.

The mentoring Airmen of the 755th ESPTS are helping change the way the ANA conduct their logistics and, in turn, are helping Afghanistan in the War on Terror.

"We are happy with the changes," said Ahmadzi. "Most of our problems are solved."



Some of the supplies distributed by the Afghan National Army's Logistics Support Operations Center on display in a warehouse. Airmen from the 755th Expeditionary Support Squadron mentor ANA soldiers at the JSOC in logistical skills.



Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Quadoose, Logistics Support Operations Distribution commander, gives a briefing on his duties at the JSOC, Feb. 20. U.S. Airmen from the 755th Expeditionary Support Squadron work closely with ANA counterparts as mentors, teaching Afghans to efficiently conduct logistics operations.

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# Airmen spearhead ANA women's seminar

Story and photo by Air Force  
Staff Sgt. Ian Carrier  
AFN Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan – In an effort to help promote change in the male-dominated society of Afghanistan, two Airmen are currently heading a weekly women's seminar for female Afghan National Army soldiers and female ANA civilian workers.

Air Force Tech. Sgts. Lulu Tapia and Natalie Cerchio, from the 755th Expeditionary Support Squadron are assigned as mentors to the Afghan National Army's Logistic Support Operations Command. They began by encouraging the Afghan women to wear their uniforms to work.

Eventually, the ANA females began to look to the Airmen for guidance and questioned them on their role in the U.S. military. Tapia came upon the idea to start a forum for the women to vent their concerns. With the blessing of Afghan Army Gen. Abdul Basir, LSOC commanding general, the women's seminar was begun.

"Things are not the same as they were under the communist, mujadeen and Taliban regimes," Basir said. "I think many Afghans in the U.S. and Europe think there is still the same discrimination. We have 90 female personnel in the area, and now we have a weekly seminar with the Americans," Basir said.

"We get a lot of support from the general," Tapia said. "That means a lot due to the cultural differences."

According to Tapia, during the first meeting the main topics were dress and appearance. Approximately 20 females showed up but only three of them were in uniform. By the second meeting, about 10 were in uniform. At the latest session, there were nearly 50 participants and more than half were in uniform.

Over the course of the last 6 weeks, the topics began to vary from uniform standards to other topics such as training, physical training and professionalism. The women were encouraged to use their chain-of-command to gain credibility and address issues.

Guest speakers are also incorporated into the program. The guest speaker for the Feb. 23 session was ANA Gen. Khotul, who is not only the first Afghan female general, but also the first Afghan



Afghan National Army Gen. Khotul addresses a womens seminar at the ANA Logistics Support Operations Center, Kabul, Feb. 23. Khotul is Afghanistan's only female general and only female paratrooper. Seated next to her is ANA Gen. Abdul Basir, LSOC commanding general. The women's seminar was coordinated by U.S. Airmen.

female paratrooper.

"I stand before you today a general, something I earned through hard work and many years serving my country," Khotul said. "I want to tell you ladies that you are the future of Afghanistan. Learn as much as you can, and request support from your officers. If you have questions, ask them. Work together, help each other and be united. When you take care of yourself and take care of each other, you also take care of your leaders, and they, in turn, will take care of you."

The general also encouraged the women to look and behave as soldiers and look to the American females as role models. She thanked the Airmen for their part in the seminars.

"I offer thanks to our sisters for having left their families to come here and help us," said Khotul. "We very much appreciate them."

At the end of the seminar, the general conducted a commander's call with the ANA females during which many of them voiced concerns they had. Issues from pay problems, promotion problems, housing and training were voiced. Gen.

Khotul assured the women that although change is slow, the problems would be addressed. Gen. Basir also attended the meeting, as he does every week.

"It is my wish that I should help these women jump to the moon," he said. "And I shall request more military training to help them get promoted."

Mina, an ANA soldier with the pay grade of E-8, is very pleased with the seminars.

"I feel very good about these weekly meetings, they are positive," Mina said. "The more we work together, the better our situation. The more women we can get to join, the better our military will be."

The eventual goal is to have Afghan women running the seminars and not rely on Americans, Tapia said. At the conclusion of the meeting, the ladies were tasked by the Airmen to pick three members from their own ranks to lead the next seminar.

"I am really happy to be a part of this and to have gotten this started," Tapia said. "We took an interest in them when no one else really had."

# Afghan policemen receive shot in arm

Story and photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Trevor Pedro  
AFN Afghanistan

The walls are crumbling and it doesn't keep heat very well. The only lighting around is from the cold Afghan winter sun and the occasional flicker of a light bulb.

The building is of Russian design but if you look a little closer, you'll see some remarkable things going on inside Parwan's Afghan National Police headquarters.

Army 1st Lt. Guy Smiley, Staff Sgts. Tommie Wagstaff and Brian Seiler, with the help of the Parwan Police Mentor Team, are giving the Afghan National Police a shot in the arm, literally.

In a little less than an

hour, that same crumbling half century old structure was transformed into a makeshift clinic, where the self-proclaimed "Downrange Docs" inoculated 75 policemen.

According to Smiley, today was an easy day.

"Two days ago we gave thirteen-hundred ANP their shots," said Smiley. "Polio, Diphtheria, Hepatitis B and any other required shots," he said.

The three-man crew, based out of Camp Dubbs in Kabul, does a little bit of everything. They teach the Army Combat Lifesaver Course to the ANP and advise their medical staff on basic medical care and vaccinations. Sgt. 1st Class



Army Staff Sgt. Brian Seiler administers one of six vaccinations while Army Staff Sgt. Tommie Wagstaff instructs an Afghan National Police doctor on administering vaccinations.

*"These guys probably feel like pincushions. If not, they'll feel it tomorrow,"*

*-Army Staff Sgt. Brian Seiler*



Army Staff Sgt. Tommie Wagstaff, a combat medic, delivers a Polio shot to an ANP patient.

David Vice, a member of the Parwan Police Mentor Team, says missions like this act as combat multipliers.

"This allows the police force to get healthy and stay healthy," said Vice. "We're teaching them to treat their force just like we do ours. They get these vaccinations so they can stay in the fight, find insurgents and investigate crimes," he said.

After hours of preparation, the first few policemen were excited to make their way into the clinic. That is, until they realize they're about to get three shots in each arm.

The first stop was the check-in desk where Smiley and the team's interpreter took down names for the ANP database. After a few minutes of dialogue, they pick up their new ANP identification card and make their way towards Seiler and Wagstaff.

The two medics have the process down to a science; preparing the injection sites and delivering all six shots in less than a minute.

The patients squirm; more than half of them have never received shots before. The sergeants' laugh at the situation.

"These guys probably feel like pincushions," said Seiler. "If not, they'll feel it tomorrow."

Speed is the key as the medics from Kabul and Parwan's Police Mentor Team processed all 75 in about two hours. That's 450 shots, a far cry from the amount they administered two days earlier. But for Army Maj. Stephen Tremblay, the Parwan PMT leader, it's a step in the right direction.

"All the focus has been on the ANA," said Tremblay. "It's time to focus on the police because you can't strengthen and rebuild this country without law enforcement."

Downrange Docs could be their nickname. It's clear there's pride in the term.

"We're the first team working to improve the health and skills of the ANP. That's why we truly are the Downrange Docs."

## A true globetrotter...



Air Force Staff Sgt. Yevgeniy Nikitin, 755th Expeditionary Support Squadron engineering technician, pores over documents in his office at Camp Phoenix. Nikitin, a California resident, was originally from Russia and moved to the U.S. in 1995 when he was 17-years-old. He joined the Air Force in 2004. "I wanted to do something to give back to the U.S. for giving me a better life," said Nikitin. Nikitin manages contracts for civilian contractors and provides specifications. He uses AutoCAD to put complex technical drawings into a visible form for Afghan contractors to execute. He is taking three college classes during this deployment and volunteers for humanitarian missions. Nikitin's goal is to get into the Air Force foreign language program. "A second language is an awesome skill to have," he said. (US Air Force photo by/ Staff Sgt. Ian Carrier)



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# Afghan military, civil organizations in Parwan province begin joint venture

Story and photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Collen McGee  
AFN Afghanistan

One more piece of the Afghan resource puzzle was put in place during a short ceremony at the Afghan National Police Parwan headquarters in Charikar, Parwan Province's regional capitol.

The Joint Provincial Coordination Center there added representatives from the Afghan National Army.

With the arrival of the ANA, Parwan Province now has the ability to react to natural disasters and hostile acts faster and with resources available through the ANP, ANA, National Directorate of Security, civil government and Coalition partners.

"The JPCC opened in October," said Army Maj. Steve Tremblay, Parwan Police Mentor Team leader. "The ANA

joined the JPCC today."

Tremblay is assigned to the 82nd Division Special Troops Battalion.

Tremblay explained that the JPCC is another link in the chain of communication. The various organizations can work together within the province and cross-talk with other provinces by creating this organizational structure. It is another step in the progress of a self governing, self protecting Afghanistan.

"There is a local saying 'We will fill this river one drop at a time,'" said Tremblay. "That is what we are doing."

Tremblay said when the 82nd DTSB first arrived; there was nothing but the empty shells of buildings where the JPCC is now. The ANA and ANP have come a long way, but the work isn't finished. Tremblay said the next rotation, from the 101st Airborne Division, will pick up

where the 82nd leaves off and carry the ball further.

Afghan National Police Gen. Abdul Khalil Zaiee escorted Parwan Province's governor, Mr. Abdul Jabar Taqwa, through a pass and review inspection of ANP troops. The ANP members also demonstrated some of their training with a vehicle response and riot control exercise. As the outdoor activities continued for the local press, the general escorted Mr. Taqwa into the new JPCC building. The building's interior design showed off some of the Coalition operating tradition and Afghan culture. The new building houses a large room with a horseshoe formation of chairs and tables common in the Western military culture. In the Afghan tradition, the room design was reminiscent of the traditional shura, or council meeting. In both traditions, the leadership sits in the front of the room and participants line the sides.

From the front of the room, Zaiee addressed the group. He emphasized the importance of cohesion and working together to be able to provide protection for the people of Parwan Province. After his remarks, he introduced the governor, or Wali in Dahri, who agreed with the general on how important it is to continue working together to improve the ability to employ the region's resources. After the meeting, members echoed their leadership's sentiments.

"It is good to bring all of the full resources (together) ... to talk, make decisions and protect the people," said ANA Capt. Mohammed Abraham, through an interpreter. In the future, Abraham hopes to see more coordination and "...activity 24 hours a day here."

That idea of protecting the Afghan people is the main reason 2nd Non-commissioned officer Rafiullah (first name not given) joined the ANA. Today's ceremony marked a definitive landmark in progress for his country.

"It feels good (to be here today)," said Rafiullah through the interpreter. "ANA, ANP and the Coalition can solve problems with full resources."



Mr. Abdul Jabar Taqwa, in civilian attire, escorted by representatives from the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army, performs a pass and review style inspection of ANA troops equipped with standard and riot gear equipment. Gov. Taqwa was present to welcome the ANA members who joined the Joint Provincial Coordination Center. The JPCC enables the Afghan services to quickly assess needs during a crisis and employ needed capabilities quickly. The creation of the JPCC is the result of a mentoring program begun by the 82nd Division Special Troops Battalion from Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

# Photos From the Field



Two CH-47 Chinooks arrive at the landing zone at FOB Morales Frasier to pick up soldiers from B-Co., Division Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Gladius and air lift them into Surobi District, Afghanistan, to protect a CH-47 that emergency landed there Jan. 20. See related story on page 6. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Johnny R. Aragon)



Have a photo you'd like to see in  
*Freedom Watch Afghanistan?*

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**Army Pfc. Justin Bernier from B-Co., Division Special Troop Battalion, Task Force Gladius, pulls security while pushing through a village in the Tag Ab District, Kapisa Province, Afghanistan, during Cold Mountain II Jan. 12. The Afghan National Army is sweeping through Landakhal village. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Johnny R. Aragon)**



**Soldiers from B Co., Division Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Gladius, move to the landing zone on FOB Morales Frasier to be airlifted into Surobi District, Afghanistan, to protect a CH-47 that emergency landed there Jan. 20. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Johnny R. Aragon)**



March 3, 2008

# Freedom Watch

AFGHANISTAN



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