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Photo by Sgt. Raftullah Mohibat

Local Afghans flee to safety as an ANA soldier from the 201st Corps rushes to help in Salang Pass Feb. 9. Massive avalanches in the pass killed at least 171 and injured hundreds more Feb. 8. More than 2,500 people were stranded in the avalanches that covered nearly four miles of mountainous road between the capital city of Kabul and the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.



Photo by Sgt. Raftullah Mohibat

Soldiers from the 201st Corps of the ANA provide assistance to thousands of victims caught in devastating avalanches in the mountain pass of Salang Feb. 9. More than 180 injured personnel were transported on coalition forces helicopters to Bagram Air Base for treatment. Rescue efforts to find survivors and assist victims continued through Feb. 12.

Massive avalanches in Salang Pass kill 171, injur hundreds

201st Corps Soldiers respond and provide crucial assistance to thousands of stranded victims

Story compiled by 201st Corps Public Affairs Office

Massive avalanches that occurred Monday Feb. 8, in the mountainous region of Salang Pass claimed the lives of at least 171 people, injured more than 400 and stranded thousands.

Approximately 500 Afghan National Army Soldiers from the 201st Corps as well as 400 Afghan National Police and 100 civilians responded to the scene Feb. 9 and began an epic rescue effort that resulted in saving thousands of lives.

In addition to the thousands of people who were left stranded along the snowy pass, hundreds more were found buried in their vehicles under at least 10 feet of snow along the 3.5 mile section of roadway approximately 70 miles north of the capital city of Kabul. Some of the vehicles were discovered more than 200 feet off of the roadway.

About 2,600 people were rescued and about 400 injured victims were taken to treatment facilities, including 180 who were taken by coalition force helicopters to Bagram Air Base for treatment.



Photo by Sgt. Raftullah Mohibat

Epic tragedy strikes Salang Pass

A team of Afghan National Army Soldiers along with the help of a group of civilians and members of the Afghan National Police carry a body of an avalanche victim up a slippery incline Feb. 12 after uncovering the victim's vehicle under approximately 10-feet of snow. Bodies of victims were taken to either Parwan province in the north, or Baglan province in the south. At least 15 people were found dead on a bus that had been swept away under the force of the avalanche.

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201st Corps Soldiers conduct rescue operations for avalanche victims

Story by Maj. M. Osman Khamoosh
201st Corps Public Affairs Office

February 8th will be a day many Afghans will never forget. That was the day tragedy struck in the mountains of Salang Pass when more than a dozen massive avalanches came roaring down the mountain and overwhelmed unsuspecting motorists on the busy highway below.

With thousands of local people stranded, more than 400 injured and hundreds trapped inside their vehicles under more than 10-feet of snow, the Soldiers of the ANA mobilized to help their fellow Afghans in desperate need.

With fresh orders from the Ministry of Defense and the staff general of the ANA, more than 400 Soldiers from 1st Brigade, 3rd Brigade, the Commando Battalion, and

members from the Headquarters of 201st Corps quickly mobilized and responded to the area.

Equipped with every kind of engineering equipment they could get their hands on ranging from shovels to hydraulic cranes and bulldozers the Soldiers set to work.

Assistance provided ranged from assisting victims into awaiting vehicles, to digging vehicles out of the snow to removing the dead and evacuating the injured.

The ANA Soldiers were joined in the monumental effort by the Afghan National Police, the ANA Air Corps, Coalition Forces and about 100 civilian volunteers.

Their efforts soon paid off as they were

able to rescue 144 wounded personnel, evacuate more than 2,000 stranded victims and recover 171 bodies.

The Soldiers and personnel of the 201st Corps were very proud to have served their fellow Afghans in this great tragedy.

All of the ANA Soldiers, and those who served beside them at Salang Pass expressed their condolences for the families of those killed and injured in the event.

The Soldiers of the ANA are proud to serve their country by defending their nation and serving the Afghan people so all can live in peace and enjoy stability.

The ANA showed their nation that they stand ready to support their people in any circumstance from war to national tragedy.



Photo by Sgt. Raffullah Mohibat

Surveying the scene

Many high ranking government officials visited Salang Pass to see the tragedy for themselves and provide knowledge and suggestions to assist with the rescue efforts. (From the right) Maj. Gen. Gulam Heider, executive officer for the 201st Corps, Basmallah Mohammadi, Chief of Staff for the Afghan National Army, Abdul Baseir Salangi, Parwan Province Governor, Abdul Kareem Khaleley, 2nd Vice President for President Hamid Karzi, (far left) Maj. Gen. Yaftalli general medical officer for the Afghan National Army.



Photos by Sgt. Raffullah Mohibat

Afghan Army Soldiers work together to pull tow cables from a hydraulic crane to a victim's vehicle that was pushed nearly 200 feet off of the roadway by avalanches Feb. 8 in the mountainous region of Salang Pass nearly 70 miles north of Kabul.



(Above) ANA Soldiers work to recover a victim's vehicle using cables and a hydraulic crane. Hundreds of disabled vehicles have been recovered. (Right) ANA Soldiers work in teams using long poles to probe for hidden vehicles that are often discovered more than 10-feet under the snow.

