

FREEDOM WATCH

SEPTEMBER 2010



Photo by Army Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander, TF Rakusan PAO

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FREEDOM WATCH

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(Cover Photo) Army Sergeant Joseph Wilson of Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, provides security during a mission in the Zirat mountain area, Waza Kwah district, Paktika province.

GENERAL PETRAEUS' COUNTERINSURGENCY GUIDANCE

FOR THE SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN, MARINES, AND CIVILIANS OF NATO ISAF AND US FORCES AFGHANISTAN

In keeping with the admonition in this guidance to "learn and adapt," I will update this document periodically in the months ahead. Indeed, this edition is my first update, as I received useful feedback on the initial draft from Afghan partners and also received advice from elders and Special Forces teams in Herat province's Zericho Valley. I welcome further feedback.

As I noted during my assumption of command remarks, it is a privilege to serve with each of you in this hugely important endeavor. And I appreciate all that you will do in helping to turn this guidance into reality on the ground.

SECURE AND SERVE THE POPULATION. The decisive terrain is the human terrain. The people are the center of gravity. Only by providing them security and earning their trust and confidence can the Afghan government and ISAF prevail.

LIVE AMONG THE PEOPLE. We can't commute to the fight. Position joint bases and combat outposts as close to those we're seeking to secure as is feasible. Decide on locations with input from our partners and after consultation with local citizens and informed by intelligence and security assessments.

HELP CONFRONT THE CULTURE OF IMPUNITY. The Taliban are not the only enemy of the people. The people are also threatened by inadequate governance, corruption, and abuse of power - recruiters for the Taliban. President Karzai has forthrightly committed to combat these threats. Work with our Afghan partners to help turn his words into reality and to help our partners protect the people from malign actors as well as from terrorists.

HELP AFGHANS BUILD ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE. Afghanistan has a long history of representative self-government at all levels, from the village shura to the government in Kabul. Help the government and the people revive those traditions and help them develop checks and balances to prevent abuses.

PURSUE THE ENEMY RELENTLESSLY. Together with our Afghan partners, get our teeth into insurgents and don't let go. When the extremists fight, make them pay. Seek out and eliminate those who threaten the population. Don't let them intimidate the innocent. Target the whole network, not just individuals.

WALK, STOP, DON'T DRIVE BY. Stop by, don't drive by. Patrol on foot whenever possible and engage the population. Take off your sunglasses. Situational awareness can only be gained by interacting face-to-face, not separated by ballistic glass or Oakleys.

FIGHT HARD AND FIGHT WITH DISCIPLINE. Hunt the enemy aggressively, but use only the firepower needed to win a fight. We can't win without fighting, but we also cannot kill or capture our way to victory. Moreover, if we kill civilians or damage property in the course of our operations, we will create more enemies than our operations eliminate. That's exactly what the Taliban want. Don't fall into their trap. We must continue our efforts to reduce civilian casualties to an absolute minimum.

IDENTIFY CORRUPT OFFICIALS. President Karzai has said, "My government is committed to fighting corruption with all means possible." Help the government achieve that aim. Make sure the people we work with work for the people. If they don't, work with partners to enable action, or we will appear to be part of the problem. Bring networks of malign actors to the attention of trusted Afghan partners and your chain of command. Act with your Afghan partners to confront, isolate, pressure, and defund malign actors - and, where appropriate, to refer malign actors for prosecution.

HOLD WHAT WE SECURE. Together with our Afghan partners, develop the plan to hold an area (and to build in it) before starting to clear or secure it. The people need to know that we will not abandon them. Prioritize population security over short-duration disruption operations. And when we begin to transition to Afghan lead, thin out rather than handing off and withdrawing, maintaining headquarters even as we reduce combat elements.

PROMOTE LOCAL REINTEGRATION. Together with our Afghan partners, identify and separate the "reconcilables" from the "irreconcilables." Identify and report obstacles to reintegration. Help our partners address grievances and strive to make the reconcilable part of the local solution, even as we work with our partners to identify and kill, capture, drive out, or "turn" the irreconcilables.



FOSTER LASTING SOLUTIONS. Help our Afghan partners create good governance and enduring security. Avoid compromises with malign actors that achieve short-term gains at the expense of long-term stability. Think hard before pursuing initiatives that may not be sustainable in the long run. When it comes to projects, small is often beautiful.

BE A GOOD GUEST. Treat the Afghan people and their property with respect. Think about how we drive, how we patrol, how we relate to people, and how we help the community. View our actions through the eyes of the Afghans and, together with our partners, consult with elders before pursuing new initiatives and operations.

CONSULT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS; but not just with those who seek us out. Earn the people's trust, talk to them, ask them questions, and learn about their lives. Inquire about social dynamics, frictions, local histories, and grievances. Hear what they say. Be aware of others in the room and how their presence may affect the answers you get. Cross-check information and make sure you have the full story. Avoid knee-jerk responses based on first impressions. Don't be a pawn in someone else's game. Spend time, listen, consult, and drink lots of tea.

MONEY IS AMMUNITION; don't put it in the wrong hands. Institute "COIN contracting." Pay close attention to the impact of our spending and understand who benefits from it. And remember, we are who we fund. How we spend is often more important than how much we spend.

ACT AS ONE TEAM. Work closely with our international and Afghan partners, civilian as well as military. Treat them as brothers-in-arms. Unity of effort and cooperation are not optional.

PARTNER WITH ANSF. Live, eat, train, plan, and operate together. Depend on one another. Hold each other accountable at all echelons down to trooper level. Help our ANSF partners achieve excellence. Respect them and listen to them. Be a good role model.

BE FIRST WITH THE TRUTH. Beat the insurgents and malign actors to the headlines. Preempt rumors. Get accurate information to the chain of command, to Afghan leaders, to the people, and to the press as soon as possible. Integrity is critical to this fight. Avoid spinning, and don't try to "dress up" an ugly situation. Acknowledge setbacks and failures, including civilian casualties, and then state how we'll respond and what we've learned.

FIGHT THE INFORMATION WAR AGGRESSIVELY. Challenge disinformation. Turn our enemies' extremist ideologies, oppressive practices, and indiscriminate violence against them. Hang their barbaric actions like millstones around their necks.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS. Avoid premature declarations of success. Note what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done. Strive to under-promise and over-deliver.

LIVE OUR VALUES. Stay true to the values we hold dear. This is what distinguishes us from our enemies. We are engaged in a tough endeavor. It is often brutal, physically demanding, and frustrating. All of us experience moments of anger, but we must not give in to dark impulses or tolerate unacceptable actions by others.

MAINTAIN CONTINUITY THROUGH UNIT TRANSITIONS. From day one, start building the information you'll provide to your successors. Share information and understanding in the months before transitions. Strive to maintain operational tempo and local relationships throughout transitions to avoid giving insurgents and malign actors a rest.

EMPOWER SUBORDINATES. Resource to enable decentralized action. Push assets and authorities down to those who most need them and can actually use them. Flatten reporting chains (while maintaining hierarchical decision chains). Remember that it is those at tactical levels - the so-called "strategic sergeants" and "strategic captains" - who turn big ideas in counterinsurgency operations into reality on the ground.

WIN THE BATTLE OF WITS. Learn and adapt more quickly than the enemy. Be cunning. Outsmart the insurgents. Share best practices and lessons learned. Create and exploit opportunities.

EXERCISE INITIATIVE. In the absence of guidance or orders, figure out what the orders should have been and execute them aggressively.

David H. Petraeus
General, United States Army
Commander, International Security Assistance Force/
United States Forces-Afghanistan

Afghan Air Force Saves Thousands

Story by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class David R. Quillen, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class David R. Quillen, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan

On July 28 and 29, the Afghan Air Force responded with two Mi-17 helicopter and aircrew accompanied by the U.S. Air Force advisors to an urgent request to begin rescue operations of civilians affected by rising flood waters at the Kabul and Laghman rivers about 11 miles west of Jalalabad. Over 2,100 people were rescued from the flood, most under the threat of Taliban and insurgent fighters.

Crouched low against the beating winds, Afghan civilians trudge quickly through knee deep muddy fields to the relative safety of a waiting Mi-17 transport helicopter, courtesy of the Afghan Air Force. Bringing only what they could carry, villagers from the Laghman, Nangahar and Kunar provinces sought refuge from the severe flooding that had struck the region, almost overnight.

The Taliban maintain a strong presence in the Kunar region and routinely use surface-to-air fire against low flying helicopters, yet heedless of this threat Afghan Air Force Brig. Gen. Muhammad Barat, Kabul Air Wing Commander --assisted by NATO allies--launched two Mi-17 helicopters, solely tasked to help as many as they could.

"The weather was simply terrible. It started to clear a bit the second day but the first was definitely flown under special visual flight rules or even under instrument flight rules, as visibility was exceedingly poor" explains Air Force Lt. Col. Greg Roberts, 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron, Combined Air Power

Transition Force. Roberts helped pilot and assisted in the rescue.

Dealing with half mile visibility in the rain, 500-foot flight ceilings, and a general haze, all of which contributed to low or no visibility, the crews of the Mi-17's were able to rescue 50 civilians trapped in the over-swept isles in the middle of the raging Kabul River in Laghman province.

Once these first groups of people were rescued, the Afghan rescue group, knowing their help was still needed, re-tasked and began rescuing people just north and east of Jalalabad, in Nangahar province. Here another 200 people were rescued the first day and another 50 the second day, before the group was tasked to go up the Kunar Valley.

"We're going to get shot. We're going to get shot, but it's OK. We need to do this mission," Roberts said to himself, remembering Barats' words. "We were flying into the Kunar province and he kept saying it. Sure, Barat was nervous, we all were, but like he said we needed to do the mission. Those people needed help."

The Kunar Valley is a hotbed of insurgent activity and consistently has multiple surface-to-air fire events daily, but this is where the largest portion of civilians were being overrun by flood waters. Eighteen hundred people were rescued from flood waters of the Kunar River, about five miles south of the town of Asadabad.

The hope was that should the helicopters make it to the rescue site without being hit by surface-to-air fire, insurgents in the area would let them continue.

Shooting the helicopter while helping civilians would look bad on the Taliban; though even that would not be the case during re-fueling operations at Forward Operating Base Wright, near Asadabad.

There the helicopters and rescue crews would be

far enough away from the civilian population that it would not be immediately obvious that they were in the middle of rescue operations and the Taliban would be free to attack and achieve their goal of undermining the abilities of the Afghan government. Fortunately, for whatever the reason, the Taliban held off and the weather was the only threat faced by the rescue crews.

The Afghan pilots and crews along with their allies from CAPTF, demonstrated unwavering skill and heroism during difficult landings, one wheel hovers on embankments, bridge abutments, rooftops, and working adjacent to and between swift water.

They demonstrated to 2,100 people what the Afghan government and its Air Force is capable of, and what the Taliban is not. 🇦🇫



Photo by Afghan Air Force Maj. Kazim

Afghan Air Force Lt. Col. Bahadur rescues a small child on July 29, when the Afghan Air Force responded with two Mi-17 helicopters and aircrew accompanied by U.S. Air Force advisors to an urgent request to begin rescuing people overrun by rapidly rising flood waters at the confluence of the Kabul and Laghman Rivers, about 11 miles west of Jalalabad. More than 2,100 people were saved, by the Afghan Air Force from the raging flood waters, all the while under the threat of attacks by insurgents.



Photo by Air Force Col. Kenneth Madura

Between July 28 and July 29, two Mi-17 helicopters with Afghan air crew accompanied by U.S. Air Force advisors, and led by the Kabul Air Wing Commander, Brig. Gen. Barat, saved more than 2,100 Afghans from severe flooding conditions in Nangahar and Kunar provinces.



Photo by Afghan Air Force Maj. Kazim

On July 29, the Afghan Air Force responded with two Mi-17 helicopters and aircrew accompanied by U.S. Air Force Air Advisors to an urgent request to begin rescuing people overrun by rapidly rising flood waters at the confluence of the Kabul and Laghman Rivers, about 11 miles west of Jalalabad.

Regional Support Command - East Creating a Capable and Sustainable ANSF

Story by Army Sgt. Andrew A. Reagan, 304th PAD

The Regional Support Command-East team, composed of 254 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, provides direct support and operational coordination for the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police in all 14 provinces in Regional Command-East. RSC-E is committed to creating capable and sustainable ANA and ANP forces in eastern Afghanistan.

"Our mission is to field, equip, train and sustain the Afghan National Security Force," said Army Col. Ronald J. Metternich, RSC-E commander and a native of Reno, Nev. "We provide training and resource support to the 201st and 203rd Afghan Army Corps, the 202nd and 505th (Afghan National) Police Commands, and the 1st and 2nd Zones of the Afghan Border Police, as well as oversight to eight regional police academies and two regional military training centers."

RSC-E has trained and equipped more than 7,600 police recruits and 5,300 army recruits since its creation in September 2009. The mission of training and sustaining both the ANA and the ANP brings with it separate circumstances and challenges.

--- ANA ---

The two Regional Military Training Centers in RC-East that the RSC-E team oversees provide different types of training.

The RMTC at Camp Parsa in Khowst province is the home of a Regional Basic Warrior Training site, where ANA recruits spend eight weeks learning basic military skills, including rifle marksmanship, medical skills and squad and platoon level tactics.

The other RMTC is located at Forward Operating Base Lightning, near Gardez, Paktya province, and is the site of a noncommissioned officer academy, as well as NATO weapons, literacy and up-armor humvee courses.

According to Army Capt. Steven Seber, commander for Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, which oversees the RBWT site in Khowst, ANA Soldiers have made noticeable progress in terms of their comprehen-

sion of basic military skills.

"There's been huge improvements across the board. At our Basic Warrior Training site in Khowst, their (M-16 rifle) qualifications were under 10 percent when we first got them, and now we have them above 95 percent," said Seber, a native of Carl Junction, Mo. "Our guys are doing an outstanding job out there. They've overcome a lot of challenges and they've developed very good relationships with their counterparts. I think they've been very effective."

Although the RBWT course and advanced skills courses are currently at different bases, Seber said RSC-E plans to facilitate the consolidation of the two sites at FOB Lightning, allowing the ANA to have better command and control over the training of its Soldiers.

"Every corps in the Afghan Army has or will have an RMTC paired with it," Seber said. "The long term

plan is to provide the training for each corps, both for basic training and NCO training, (at one site) generally located with the corps headquarters. The end state (for RC-East) is RWBC and RMTC both located in Gardez."

As the location of ANA training sites in RC-East is currently in transition, the way the training is conducted is also in a state of flux. The RSC-E team has focused on preparing Afghan trainers to take full control of ANA training from coalition forces.

"Our long-term goal and our planning with every cycle is to step further and further back, where in the end we're just watching the ANA train their own students and we give them feedback," said Seber. "We want to work ourselves out of a job. We want them to be proficient enough where they can conduct all of the training without us."



Training the ANP: A threefold mission

The ANP is composed of three branches: the Afghan Uniform Police, the Afghan Border Police and the Afghan National Civil Order Police. Each branch has a different mission, focus and training.

--- AUP ---

"The Afghan Uniform Police is who you would most commonly associate with 'the cop on the beat,' the individual you see on the street corner, manning a small checkpoint in town and responding to crime," said Army Maj. Bradley Waite, the ANP team chief for RSC-E and a native of Eldon, Mo.

The AUP is the largest of the three branches, and six of the eight ANP training centers that RSC-E oversees are dedicated to training AUP officers.

Basic training for AUP is six weeks long and includes weapons training, instruction on the proper ways to handcuff a suspect and conduct searches, ethics and rule of law training, and drills on how to move under fire.

Waite placed special emphasis on the rule of law and ethics training.

"We focus a lot on ethics and rule of law" he said. "We're trying to instill a feeling of professionalism, that there are certain things that are just not acceptable. Our goal is to start from scratch here so that there are no gray areas."

As the "cops on the beat" the AUP are the police officers that the Afghan people will have the most contact with, and Waite stressed how important their training is, so they can effectively patrol and protect Afghans at the lowest level.

"We realize it is only with security at the local level that we will be able to effectively change Afghanistan's course," Waite said. "It's nice to have Army units everywhere but the bottom line is that in a counter-insurgency you win or lose by how effective your police are."

--- ABP ---

The ABP receive specialized training at their training facility at FOB Lone Star in Nangarhar province in order to accomplish their mission of protecting Afghanistan's borders from insurgents and anyone else trying to enter or exit illegally.

"The ABP receive more specialized training both in running checkpoints and conducting in-depth searches. They also have more heavy weapons training," said Waite. "The border areas are more kinetic than other areas and they routinely take larger caliber fire from neighboring countries because the enemy understands it's easier to fire with impunity and then escape more rapidly into a country where we won't pursue, so the border police are generally given heavier weapons to help them."

Waite went on to elaborate on the special weapons and equipment that RSC-E helps the ABP acquire to help it achieve its mission on the border, which included mortars, and patrolling type equipment—global position systems and binoculars.

--- ANCOP ---

The ANCOP is a small, highly specialized unit within the ANP and is structured at a higher level compared to the AUP.

"Their role is more along the lines of riot police. They're organized more like an army unit; they're actually in kandaks, which is a term most commonly associated with the army," said Waite. "They are a national-level asset. I can take a kandak unit from Nangarhar province and I can send them down to Helmand tomorrow, which you cannot do with normal Uniform Police, which are out of local districts."

The ANCOP initial training is 16 weeks, and is also more intense, focusing on large formation tactical movements in both urban and rural environments.

The criteria for entry into the ANCOP are more selective than the other two branches of the ANP, requiring a higher degree of literacy.

The first ANCOP class trained in RC-East is scheduled to graduate at the end of September at the RTC Metherlan in Laghman province.

Putting it All Together

The overall goal of the RSC-E team is to help both the ANA and ANP stand on their own and protect the Afghan people for years to come.

"Everyone here on the Afghan National Security Force side is making progress," said Seber "For someone that's just sitting on the ground they may not necessarily see that progress but over the course of time that progress is huge. The six months that I've been here the change on the ANA side is dramatic. The forces here are becoming more and more professional with every day that passes."

"The absolute end-all goal is I can shake hands with the Afghan commander of that training site, give him a salute and then walk away, and that training site will continue to train Afghan police forces for 20 years," added Waite. 🇦🇫

Creating Leaders in the ANSF

By Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick, TF Bayonet PAO

Combat Outpost Sayed Abad in Wardak province is now home to a new noncommissioned officer school designed to deliver a train-the-trainer approach at teaching and hone the skills Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army soldiers need to be successful NCOs.

The school was designed with input from ANA, ANP and U.S. forces to give Afghan students skills and knowledge that will be instrumental in the training of their soldiers.

Members of the 401st Military Police Company teamed up with the Sky Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team to offer a three-to-four-week course that covers subjects like basic patrolling techniques, so Afghan National Security Force officers and non-commissioned officers can return to their units and train others.

"I will teach the things my teachers have taught me," said ANP Sgt. Hakmut Ullah Rahimi. "At first, we were given more information about Army regulations ... before [this course] I knew I was a sergeant, but that was really all I knew. After this training, I am sure, really sure, that I am a soldier, and I now know

what to do in my job."

The course was intended to help Afghan forces increase their professionalism in key areas that would bolster their effectiveness and instill teaching skills in leaders. Assassin Co. 1st Sgt. Donald Harding, from Springfield, Va., played a pivotal role in the shaping of the school and maintaining its standards, as well as supervising the Coalition's cadre staff, comprised of infantrymen and military police.

But the Afghans were not the only ones who learned something.

Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Beauchamp from Chestertown, Md., learned that the Afghan units had various people who had specialized skills, skills that surprised Beauchamp and fellow instructor Parker. These skills, combined with the new approach to instruction, provided an environment for the Afghan students to learn from one another.

In the past, a great deal of training was focused on the ANA, so this class was intentionally balanced between the ANP and ANA. Although the Afghan Soldiers and police haven't trained side-by-side in the past, they embraced the opportunity to familiarize themselves with each other.

"We try to teach them pride of ownership and the importance of retaining and applying what is taught here."

-Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Beauchamp

"It's good that the ANP and ANA come from all over Afghanistan; it helps them bond as a team, despite being from different tribes or villages," said Army Sgt. Antwan Parker, who is from Chicago.

Beauchamp added that the course was successful in helping the Afghan forces realize that they had far more in common than differences between them. All of the students agreed that it was their country, and they wanted to have a better rapport with each other and the villagers they visit on patrol.

"I think the Afghans out there on patrol show a lot of ownership in what they do," Beauchamp said.

Although the Afghan students bonded well during the course, instructors had to re-evaluate their form of instruction for optimum learning results.

"The secret to training is realizing that here in Afghanistan, nothing is done quickly," Parker said. "They have their own style and their own pace of how to do things, so we had to adjust our teaching style to their ways."

"You can buy them a boat, but it's better to get them the supplies and let them build the boat themselves," said Beauchamp. "We try to teach them pride of ownership and the importance of retaining and applying what is taught here."

The Afghan forces were taught the rules of driving, and because so many Afghans had lost their friends and comrades due to vehicle accidents, they appreciated the instructions about tactical vehicles; they operate differently from the vehicles they typically use.

"We did not really ever understand the rules of the highways very well, and as a result, we lost many of our dear friends some very good soldiers who were dear to us," said ANA Sgt. Mohammad Kahn Mashowni.

Realizing the lack of hands-on teaching in the past, the instructors focused tangible training as much as possible with each student.

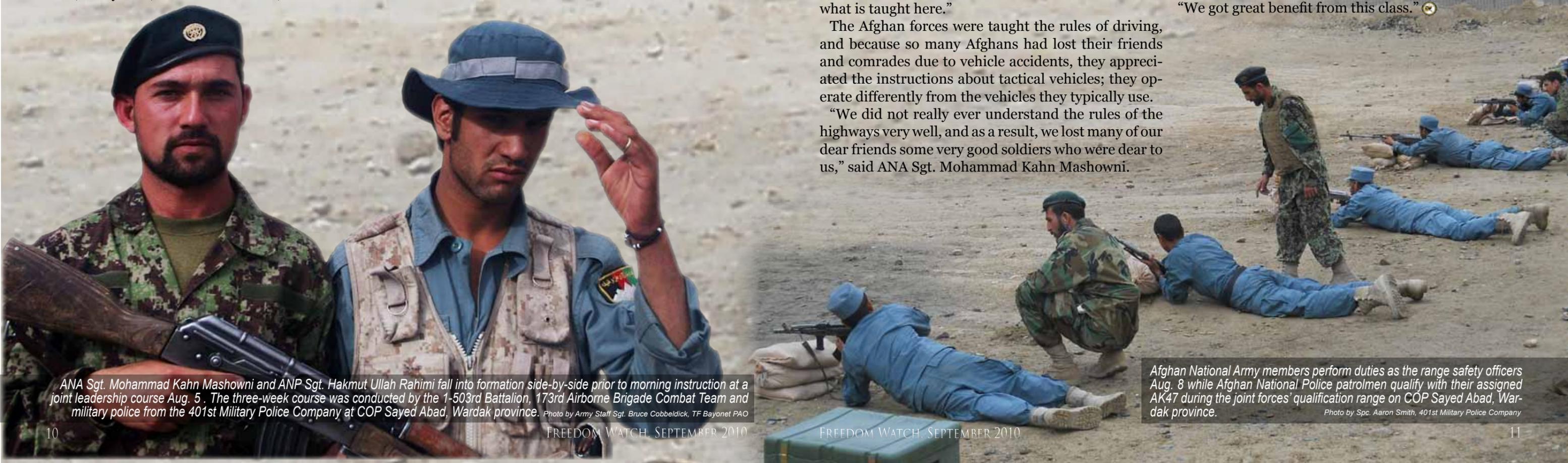
"These ANA and ANP fighters received most of their training in classrooms initially," Beauchamp said. "They did not get a lot of hands-on training, so we got them outside, and we tried to make the instruction as dynamic for them as possible."

Parker said there were a lot of practical lessons throughout the course, but especially regarding the safe operation of vehicles.

"The roads here are tricky," Parker said. "They are often on steep inclines, very narrow and can be very dangerous, so handling tactical vehicles under the tough conditions here is very challenging."

The students were grateful for the training and enjoyed the quality time they had with their American counterparts. Harding invested a great deal of time in developing the course and said he remains convinced that the training Coalition Forces provide today will help Afghan military and police leaders train tomorrow's forces.

"I am very appreciative of what we have been given and all the help we have received," said Mashowni. "We got great benefit from this class." 🙏



ANA Sgt. Mohammad Kahn Mashowni and ANP Sgt. Hakmut Ullah Rahimi fall into formation side-by-side prior to morning instruction at a joint leadership course Aug. 5. The three-week course was conducted by the 1-503rd Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and military police from the 401st Military Police Company at COP Sayed Abad, Wardak province. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick, TF Bayonet PAO

Afghan National Army members perform duties as the range safety officers Aug. 8 while Afghan National Police patrolmen qualify with their assigned AK47 during the joint forces' qualification range on COP Sayed Abad, Wardak province. Photo by Spc. Aaron Smith, 401st Military Police Company

The Steps to Good Relations

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte, 300th MPAD

It does not take long for the kids to show up.

When Afghan and International Security Assistance Forces set foot in a community in eastern Afghanistan, they become objects of fascination to question, shake hands with and watch.

"They'll ask us why we're here," said Spc. Cory B. Petrosky of Grapevine, Texas, a radio operator with Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog. "They'll talk about their daily lives ... They like to let us know what they're doing. They'll show us their school books."

Many of the youths ask for the pens U.S. Soldiers keep in their uniform sleeves while others want to say hello and show off their English skills. Troops can quickly find themselves surrounded by a crowd of smiling children.

Army Capt. Robert R. Reynolds of Huntsville, Ala., the company commander of the unit based at Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle in Kunar province, said the more contact his Soldiers have had with a village, the friendlier the residents are and the more cooperation they provide.

"I think we're very respectful to the people," he said. "They always want to ask us in for tea, and the kids always go up to the Soldiers and want to give them high-fives."

Reynolds, whose base sits where the Watapur and Pech Valleys meet, said their most recent focus with residents has been crop diversification. This program involves the Afghan government paying farmers to keep roadside cornfields at a certain height and thereby denying insurgents a place from which they can ambush traffic.

"We're getting out there and working with the locals ... and showing them we're here to secure the area for everyone," Reynolds said.

Building rapport with the Afghan people can be accomplished in many ways.

Provincial reconstruction, agribusiness development and civil affairs teams across the country serve as a conduit between the people and their government to ensure the progress of public works projects.

STEPS: page 14

Army Pfc. Gary W. Faust of Bowling Green, Ky., a medic with 4th Plt., Co. D, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Regt., TF Bulldog, practices his fist bump with children of Andersil village in Kunar province July 20. The unit, based at nearby COP Honaker-Miracle, visited the community to discuss crop diversification programs with village elders.



Reaching out

At Combat Outpost Najil in Laghman province, the civil affairs team does its work through daily meetings with area residents – whether in their homes, at community gathering places or on the hillside base itself.

Army Staff Sgt. Joshua E. Barton of Ridgefield, Conn., with Co. B, 1st Bn., 102nd Inf. Regt., Task Force Iron Gray, said establishing trust with the Afghans can be a long process.

“If they don’t trust you, they won’t believe you,” Barton said. “They won’t work with you.”

Barton, who serves as the lead noncommissioned officer for the COP Najil civil affairs team, said they build respect through everyday interactions – getting to know the residents and letting the Afghans get to know them. He said his main goal is to mentor the Afghans and help them help themselves.

When the team makes repeated visits to villages, the residents become accustomed to their presence, Barton said.

“The next time I go, I’m not a stranger anymore,” he said.

Gaining the confidence and support of the people is essential to the mission, he noted. Demonstrating they can believe what he says is a crucial part of it. Recently, he sponsored a pre-Ramadan dinner for locals to demonstrate his respect for their culture.

“In order to get close to people, you have to build a relationship with them,” Barton said. “You have to get out every single day.”

In some cases, relationships can be built without ever seeing the person. One successful ISAF program is the sponsoring of Afghan-managed radio stations.

At COP Honaker-Miracle, the station is “The

Voice of the Waterpur,” at 91.5 FM where music, advice shows and Islamic programming serve as a rallying point to bring Afghan communities from throughout the area together, Army Capt. Adam R. Alexander of Mount Airy, Md., the base executive officer, said.

The station has attracted such an audience that it receives about 200 letters a week, ranging from fan letters to song requests. It has featured informative interviews with local public figures such as the director of the District Development Authority and the Afghan National Army commander from nearby COP Able Main.

Most importantly, the station is run and programmed by local Afghans – not the Americans.

“We don’t use it as a propaganda tool,” Alexander said. “It’s really popular ... it’s an entertaining radio station. People are well-aware of it around here.”

The station also provides an alternative to a nearby insurgent radio station that encourages attacks against Afghan and ISAF troops. “Voice of the Waterpur” Manager Rasol Mohammad said despite insurgent threats against his broadcasters, the local population regularly expresses its appreciation of the work they do and the message they send.

“They like us,” Mohammad said. “They respect us because we work at the radio station. It’s a service for my country.”



Spc. Cory B. Petrosky, a radio operator with 1st Plt., Co. A, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Regt., TF Bulldog, greets a youth outside the village of Shamir Kowt in Kunar province July 21. The unit, based at nearby COP Honaker-Miracle, patrolled the area with ANP officers and surveyed business owners in the village bazaar about their concerns.

Being prepared

Service is also a focus at Forward Operating Base Finley-Shields in the Nangarhar province, where an Afghan scouting program has steadily built momentum.

The program, which currently involves servicemembers and base personnel working with Afghan children, was recently awarded a \$100,000 grant by the U.S. Department of State. Army Capt. Glenn T. Battschinger of Mays Landing, N.J., a civil affairs team commander with the 404th Civil Affairs Bn., Task Force Spartan, began the program in February.

As a Boy Scout troop leader and former Eagle Scout, Battschinger said he wanted a way to provide Afghan youth with the attention they need and to help teach them discipline and respect.

“I’m teaching these kids the way I teach my Scouts at home,” he said. “They’re the same children.”

With the support of local Afghan leaders, about 100 boys have joined the troop and meet weekly in a secure field at the base, learning such skills as knot-tying and first aid.

“It takes an hour a week and that’s more joy than we get from the rest of the week,” Battschinger said of those at the base who volunteer to help at the meetings.

One of those volunteers was Army Capt. Mary B. Danner-Jones of Neenah, Wis., the public affairs officer for the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team. Her unit’s executive officer, Army Maj. Jocelyn Leventhal, asked her to take charge of a girl’s scouting program that would mirror the boys’. In August, they had their first meeting in a separate part of the field.

Plans call for the girls to learn crafts, hygiene and first aid. Danner-Jones said she hopes the girls’ program “opens up the world for

them and gives them a view outside of their compound.”

The Afghan Scouts program is currently not affiliated with the World Organization of the Scout Movement, although it uses many of the same traditions. In April, Boy Scouts from the United States sent the Afghans neckerchiefs they could wear to make up for their lack of uniforms.

Uniforms won’t be a problem much longer with the State Department grant, which will fund Afghan Scout troops at 30 schools throughout the Jalalabad area for a year, Battschinger said. It will cover the costs of two troops at each school – one male and one female – in addition to uniforms and instructors.

“All those Afghan children need is a bit of attention,” he said, noting the future leaders of the country are children. “This is something that will touch everyone that comes in contact with it.”

Faridoon Malikzai, a senior patrol leader interviewed in April, said the program had encouraged the kids to go to school, stay honest and stay out of trouble. He hoped to someday work as a professional scout leader.

“I’ll train the people to do good works,” Malikzai said. “The future of the country belongs to the kids. They will know what is right and what is wrong.”

Trust during wartime

Army Capt. Dakota Steedsman of Harvey, N.D., company commander of Company D, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Regt., at Combat Outpost Michigan, has been working with local leaders on both crop diversification and the rebuilding of the main road through the Pech Valley.

The road suffered washouts during the heavy rains of July. While the damage impacts military pa-

trols, it also hurts residents, since they have to use the road for transportation and commerce, he noted.

“That’s the main way for the people to get their products to market,” Steedsman said.

One recent success working with community leaders is the village of Shamun, which hasn’t been visited by officials in years locals said. His unit made contact with the village in July and is discussing potential development projects with its elders.

“It’s all been positive,” Steedsman said. “They’re happy to have us there.”

Afghan personnel can make a difference in these meetings. During the unit’s first visit to Shamun, an Afghan Army lieutenant encouraged village elders to participate in crop diversification, making the case and discussing the issues without the need of a translator.

“It definitely helps when we go to these things,” Steedsman said.

Petrosky said the reaction village children have to himself and his fellow Soldiers is a good way to tell how a community feels about them. Some children at villages unused to them, hang back, scared of their presence.

Once the people become comfortable with them, the children move in with their questions and requests.

Before he came to Afghanistan, Petrosky was not expecting the populace to be friendly at all. He thought they would be hostile, and it makes an impact when he and other Soldiers get the opposite reaction.

“It makes me feel like we’re here for a reason,” Petrosky said. “It makes you feel pretty good ... It makes us feel like we’re making a difference here.”

Fast Response Means Security for Soldiers

Story and photo by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte
300th MPAD

When the enemy shoots at Soldiers on Combat Outpost Michigan, members of the mortar section don't run for cover – they run for their guns.

Attacks that range from small arms to recoilless rocket fire are an almost daily experience for the U.S. and Afghan troops who live at the base in Kunar province.

In just under two months, the mortar section, attached to Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog, had almost 1,000 fire missions, according to their records.

The protection they provide for units both inside and outside the wire is considered an essential part of area security operations throughout the area.

"The crew we have here is one of the best crews I've worked with in my entire career," Army Staff Sgt. Joshua E. Ferencz, the mortar section sergeant, said. "We have rounds out within a minute of having received the mission from whatever element is on the ground."

Ferencz, who is from Greensburg, Pa., said good standard procedures and constant practice, as well as every Soldier's expert skills with each gun system, make for fast results.

"When you're taking fire, I think that adds to your speed as well," Ferencz added with a smile.

The company commander, Army Capt. Dakota Steedsman of Harvey, N.D., noted the importance of the mortar section in protecting Soldiers from insurgent attacks.

"They keep this (base) running," he said. "They keep us safe."

Fire missions come at all hours and keep no schedule. The entire section lives near to the mortars

and scrambles to throw on their body armor whenever someone begins shooting at the base or a mission is called in.

No more than three people are allowed to be away from the mortar pit at any given time.



The mortar section, attached to Co. D, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Regt., TF Bulldog, fires to protect COP Michigan here as it comes under enemy attack July 11. The section ran almost 1,000 fire missions from late May to mid-July this year, according to their records.

"Everyone is on call," Ferencz said. "We get sleep when we can and just work it."

Army Cpl. Billy Rose of Saginaw, Mich., a squad leader with the mortar section, said he is pleased to be finally using his specialty during deployment.

When he was previously sent to Iraq after his advance individual training, he and other mortar Soldiers were assigned to do regular infantry missions.

"It's pretty exciting," he said. "This time it was hard for me to believe I was going (to Afghanistan) to do my job."

The job doesn't just mean the deafening boom of firing rounds at the enemy.

The heavy gun tubes must be quickly adjusted and moved by hand every time they switch targets.

There's also the careful registering of target locations, the constant maintenance of the guns, and the by-hand packaging of each round so it is ready for immediate firing.

"There's a lot of work nobody sees," said Rose.

While the towers provide cover fire for the mortar section when combat breaks out, the gunners are still targeted by the enemy.

During one July attack, a recoilless shell struck the mortar pit, setting several rounds on fire. Other incidents have involved everything from small arms to heavy machine gun fire, Ferencz said.

"You aim it, we pretty much get it," he said.

Rose said everyone in the mortar section constantly listens for trouble – which would mean another rush to the guns.

"We all stay on our toes." ☺

Afghan Policewomen Brave Threats

"These females are the toughest policewomen in the world. Even with the threats, they're going to work and do their best. No one else in the world has these threats; these are real threats."

-Havard Fallar, Norwegian Police Superintendent

Story and photo by Navy Chief Petty Officer Brian Brannon, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan

Despite threats from the Taliban intended to bully them into quitting, a group of 12 female Afghan National Police officers graduated from an innovative law enforcement training course on Aug. 5 at Camp Nathan Smith.

One of the graduates works in the Crimes Against Women Branch of the ANP in Kandahar. She said that it's time to bring cruelty and mistreatment of Afghan females to an end.

"The main goal of the courses and all that we have learned is to return the rights of the women in Kandahar province and give them all the respect that they deserve," she said.

The Afghan Ministry of the Interior selected a course called Self-Security Awareness developed in Kabul by the Norwegian Police. The MOI worked with ANP instructors and the Canadian Civil Police to introduce it to Kandahar. The course includes instruction on law and order, self-defense, baton defense, and small arms familiarization.

Norwegian Police Superintendent Havard Fallar said that seeing the women work through the course left a lasting impression on him.

"These females are the toughest policewomen in the world," he said. "Even with the threats, they're going to work and do their best. No one else in the world has these threats; these are real threats."

ANP Brig. Gen. Dastgier Mayar, the warden of Sarposa Prison in Kandahar City, spoke at the graduation. He said that after touring correctional facilities in other countries and seeing equal numbers of women working alongside men, it has been his dream to see the same thing happen in Afghanistan. For him, the graduation ceremony was a historic event.

"Honestly, this is a day full of honor for me and for Afghanistan," he said.

ANP Maj. Sher Ali Khan Farhad, director of the Kandahar Criminal Investigation Division, commended the women for their courage and resolve on behalf of all the policemen in his district.

"I strongly believe that our woman officers are committed to their jobs," he said. "They are very brave and I strongly believe that they will fulfill their commit-



Canadian Civil Police Cpl. Karen Holowaychuck hugs an Afghan National Police officer who graduated the Self-Security Awareness course at Camp Nathan Smith Aug. 5. Developed by Norwegian Police in Kabul, the Afghan Ministry of the Interior brought the security course to Kandahar with the help of the Canadian Civil Police.

ment and their promise to the people of Kandahar."

While Afghan instructors worked directly with the students, Canadian police officers acted as mentors and advisors to the instructors. Jess Dutton, who heads the civilian component of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, said the Afghan policewomen are fundamental to the security of the province.

"I am convinced with the training you have received the past few weeks, you will work very hard to make the streets of Kandahar safer for everyone," he said. ☺

Team Effort Saves Lives

Story and photo by Marine Cpl. Matthew Troyer, Regimental Combat Team-2, 1st Marine Division PAO

After the initial call to the Marine route clearance detachment reported one man with lacerations to his leg, a laceration turned out to be an amputation and one patient grew to nine.

While driving down a commonly used route in Delaram, a commercial bus was struck by an improvised explosive device in the early morning of July 28, with nearly 60 passengers onboard. During a route clearance mission, Gunnery Sgt. Robert D. Ogle, the platoon sergeant for 2nd Route Clearance Platoon, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, took a detachment of his convoy to ensure the safety of the passengers and driver of the bus.

After a brief encounter with the assistant driver of the bus, the Marines assessed the site and swept for secondary IEDs.

"All the passengers were moved to a building about 500 to 800 meters from the IED site," said Ogle.

The Marines and soldiers on site offered to provide aid and water for the victims of the IED strike. Marines continued their mission after the victims of the bomb had been moved to a clinic within the city of Delaram.

Victims of the IED strike were taken to a medical clinic by Afghan civilians. Those who suffered injuries beyond their clinic's medical capabilities were moved to Camp Delaram II by Afghan Uniformed Police.

At 8 a.m., Regimental Combat Team 2's Shock Trauma Platoon received word from sentries at the entry control point that there was a man present with a large laceration on his left leg and was in need of medical aid.

With a large number of victims and a variety of injuries, the Afghan National Army's aid station partnered with Shock Trauma Platoon and Regimental Aid Station to assist in providing aid to injured civilians.

As injured Afghans were brought in by the Afghan National Army, they were immediately brought to the ANA compound where medics and corpsmen were standing by. As injured individuals were filtered through, the ANA's brigade aid station assessed the patients, provided bandages for wounds and addressed minor hemorrhaging for multiple IED victims. Those in need of immediate surgical attention were transported to the Shock Trauma Platoon, while others with less severe injuries were treated on site.

Operating daily on a rotating basis, a sailor is present at the Shock Trauma Platoon tent 24 hours of the day. When they received the call alerting them to an inbound patient, Shock Trauma assembled a team. Prepared to handle a "laceration," corpsmen and officers were caught off guard when the victim's leg was nearly amputated by the explosion.

"I like being there for my patients at their time of crisis. That's why I work in the [Intensive Care Unit]. We get the sickest of the sick."

—Navy Lt. Jessica Kazer, an Intensive Care Unit Nurse

"The guy showed up with his leg hanging off," said Navy Lt. Jessica Kazer, an Intensive Care Unit Nurse with the STP, and Boulder, Colo., native.

"It's a shock to see, but it doesn't stop us from moving," said Kazer. "We still do our job. As soon as he came in, I put two IVs in him and we started a blood transfusion."

Due to his massive loss of blood, the victim's vital signs were weak and he was in dire need of a blood transfusion.

"The doc told me activate the 'walking blood bank,'" said Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Genaro Beltran, a laboratory technician from San Diego.

As soon as they were able to identify the victim's blood type, Beltran sent an email to the unit leaders throughout the base requesting donors with that blood type to support the patient. Marines and sailors rushed to donate blood, not concerned as to whether the patient was American or Afghan.

After sufficient blood was received, surgeons continued to operate while the rest of the staff helped place IVs in new patients, diagnose injuries and assess patients as time progressed. While this victim was undergoing operations, seven more victims of the IED strike were brought to the STP tent.

That evening, three victims of the IED strike were

evacuated via British air assets to a larger medical facility, for further medical attention. The STP continued to care for the remaining patients and ensured they received the necessary medical attention.

"I like being there for my patients at their time of crisis," said Kazer, who is currently on her first deployment. "That's why I work in the [Intensive Care Unit]. We get the sickest of the sick."

Excited to finally be able to support the war effort, Kazer said she would not get out of the military until she deployed at least one time.

Though the patients who came across the platoon's tables were not Marines, sailors, soldiers, or airmen, STP sailors did not hesitate to act and saw nothing more than a patient in need of care.

At the end of the day, all overnight patients were transported back to the ANA BAS where follow-on care was provided. By the morning, all were safely dispatched to the city.

The day's combined actions by the ANA BAS and Shock Trauma Platoon show that Afghan civilians in need of urgent medical care will not be turned away by this Afghan-American team.

"If you come across our table, our guys are going to treat you," said Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Jones.

We are truly partnered in this fight. 🇺🇸

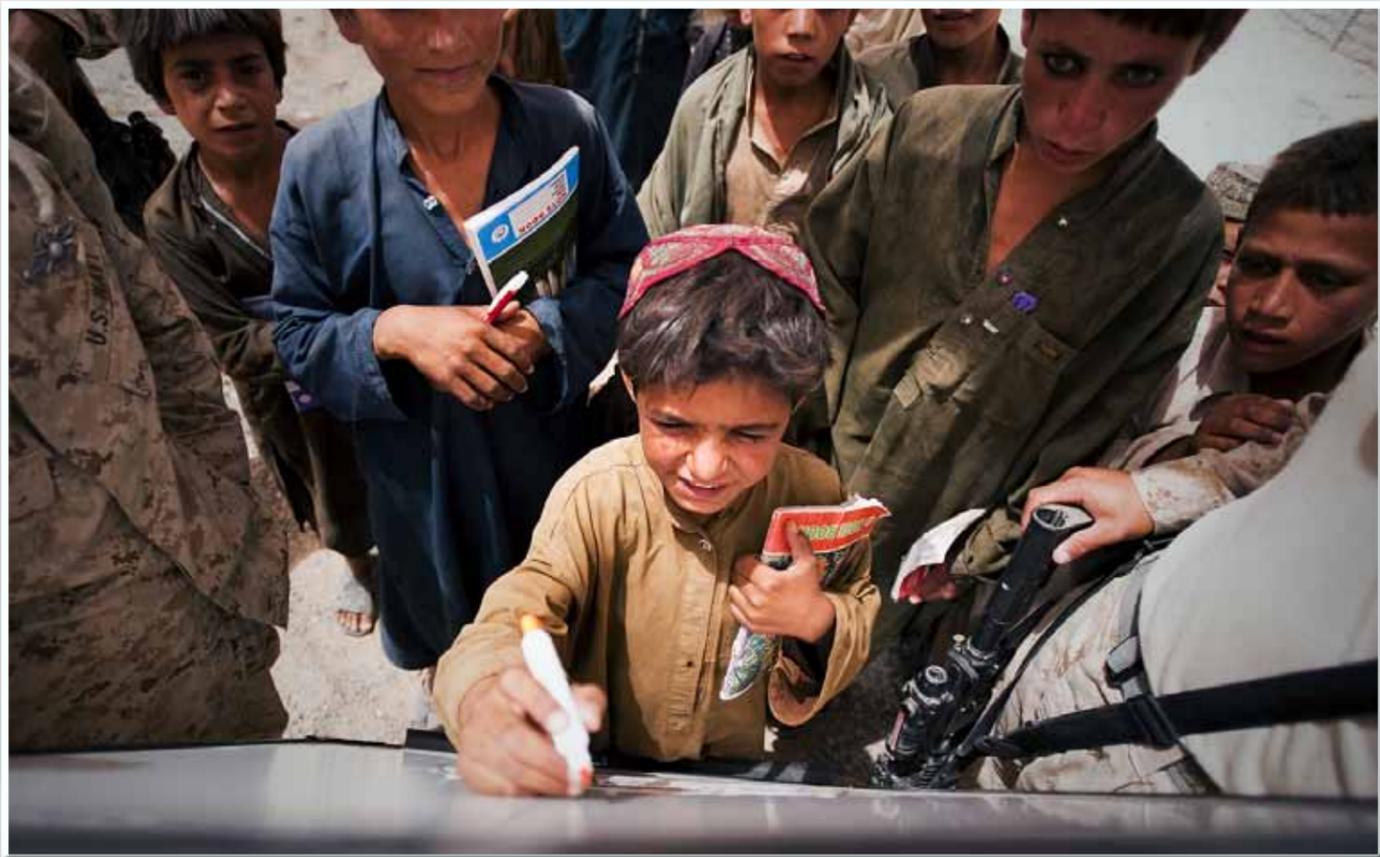


Navy Lt. Jessica Kazer, an Intensive Care Unit nurse, provides medical care to two local Afghans while awaiting a casualty evacuation at Camp Delaram II, July 28. Kazer and a medical team rallied to a number of Afghan civilians who were struck by an IED while on a bus in Delaram.

Marine Staff Sgt. Patrick Jirka, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Jones, Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Eduardo Rosas and Seaman Michael Morales carry an injured Afghan civilian on a stretcher to an awaiting transport. The Shock Trauma Platoon provided immediate medical care to his wounds, suffered during an IED strike, July 28.

Afghan Children Dream of Brighter Future

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Mark Fayloga Regimental Combat Team-7, 1st Marine Div. PAO



Wali Muhammad, 8, writes letters of the alphabet on a whiteboard during class at the FOB Geronimo schoolhouse, Aug. 8. Most of the kids who attend school are younger than the current war. The children are taught by Marine, Navy and Afghan volunteers.

Wali Muhammad doesn't want to be a farmer.

This is a recent revelation for the 8-year-old Afghan boy. Wali's father wished this for his son much earlier, which is why months ago he began ordering him to "go to school and learn something."

At first Wali didn't like it. The school is more than a mile away from where he lives in Helmand province. It's not so bad in the morning, but in the afternoon the walk back home can occur in triple-digit heat. It could be worse, though, some of the other kids travel from twice as far away.

Now Wali looks forward to school. Studying and learning are his favorite parts. He calls it school, all the kids do, but a more accurate description would be class. It's only 90 minutes long, three days a week, but the children call it school because the volunteer-led program at Forward Operating Base Geronimo is the closest most of them have come to a formal education.

Some days as many as a dozen or more children join Wali on the walk to school. Other days as few as three walk with him. Wali almost never misses.

School doesn't start until 10:30 a.m., but the kids always show up early. They find shade where they can and wait for the teachers to arrive.

Excitement begins to creep up on Marine Cpl. Mary Warren the nights before school. The 22-year-old water support technician with Combat Logistics Battalion 5 is stationed at Geronimo as support. She's responsible for the base's water and says the job is important, but not difficult. She spends most of her free time volunteering at the school. When she's not teaching, she's preparing lesson plans or organizing the many donations the school has received since her sergeant major and chaplain have begun helping support her efforts.

When Warren wakes up on school days her excitement has only grown from the night before. She does what she can to make time pass as quickly as possible until she can begin the walk toward the schoolhouse, which is no more than a few hundred yards outside of the base's front gate.

As Warren makes her way down the dirt road, tiny

"I just want them to understand the importance of school, of education period. I want them to be able to read and count so they don't get cheated in life."

- Marine Cpl. Mary Warren, water support technician with Combat Logistics Battalion 5

heads begin poking out of the shade and the kids run to meet her and the other teachers at the school's entrance. It's not clear who's more excited.

"Seeing them makes my week," said Warren, from Chicago Heights, Ill.

The children line up and welcome the teachers and the security detail, Marines from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, with handshakes and ask at least twice, "How are you?" The greeting is more a proud display of English skills than an inquiry.

After the security detail sweeps the schoolhouse the students and teachers file in. Two classes take place in the school, one for adults and one for children. There is a local national day laborer program at the base and as part of the program the men must attend school.

Navy Chief Petty Officer Tyrek Alanos teaches the adult class. When he first started teaching in the last week of May, the children and adults were taught together. Splitting the students up made more sense. The children learn the basics — ABCs and 123s. Alanos teaches the adults more practical English, things they can use in conversation with Coalition Forces. Many of the adults say they enjoy the class and learning is helping them, but nobody is there who isn't required to be.

With the exception of one or two kids whose parents make them go, the children are at school because they want to be.

When Warren teaches, she speaks about half English and half Pashto. When she first started teaching she didn't know any Pashto. Now she feels comfortable enough to lead the class without an interpreter if need be, thanks to Waheed Mohammed.

Waheed also is a volunteer at the schoolhouse. He works with Information Operations on base as a radio DJ. The 28-year-old claims Philadelphia as his hometown, but he was born in Kandahar.

When Waheed was 4, his family sent him to America because he said, "there was war all over." His mother wanted him to get an education in America. Waheed lived with his uncles and went on to become a citizen and start a family.

When Waheed first heard about the schoolhouse he knew he wanted to be involved. Education played a

huge role in changing his life and he thinks it's important to his home country.

"Afghanistan will only change with education, not with a weapon," Waheed said. "If it was going to change with a weapon, 30 years would have changed it."

Every night Waheed teaches Pashto to Warren and Alanos. They're all volunteers. None of them need to teach at the school, yet they all feel compelled to. Since they've started teaching together they worked to make school happen three days a week as opposed to two. The kids began to retain the information easier after that. They hope to make school five days a week and maybe get actual teachers, but for now they're doing as much as they can.

Anos wants his students to be able to speak with and understand the Marines they work with. Waheed and Warren want the kids to realize the power of knowledge.

"I just want them to understand the importance of school, of education period," Warren said. "I want them to be able to read and count so they don't get cheated in life."

Waheed has already seen a shift by some parents.

"They're realizing there's supposed to be school in a kid's life," Waheed said.

And the children's attitudes have changed as well. Many would show up at first for the free stuff — pens, notebooks, snacks ... But now students like Wali proudly rattle off half the alphabet and count to 13 with vigor before skipping ahead to 19.

Waheed is realistic with his goals. He said he sees a lot of potential in the kids and they're quickly memorizing the alphabet, but they still don't know what the letters are used for. He will be happy if the children remember that they enjoyed school and learning, and when they have children of their own they put an emphasis on education.

"It can change, but not overnight," he said.

He's having an impact already. When Waheed asks Wali what he wants to be when he grows up the young boy looks at him with wide eyes and without hesitation answers him.

"I want to be a teacher like you." 🙏

372nd ENG Building the Future

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Spencer Case, 304th PAD

Since arriving in Afghanistan last November, reservists of the Fort Snelling, Minn.,-based 372nd Engineer Brigade have overseen a multi-faceted and evolving mission over a large swath of rugged territory.

The headquarters component includes about 130 people from across 42 states and oversees engineering operations such as construction, road repair, counter-IED patrols and engineer training of Afghan civilians and military.

At the time of their arrival to Forward Operating Base Sharana, Paktika province, the unit had about 2,500 troops, including two subordinate battalions.

Over the next several months, the number of troops under 372nd command swelled to more than 4,000, as three additional Army battalions, one naval mobile construction battalion, and two Air Force expeditionary squadrons joined the 372nd family. As a part of this expansion, the number of platoon-sized anti-IED route clearance packages beneath 372nd command grew from 15 to more than 30 and continues to grow.

“Literally, we’re spread over 40 different (combat outposts and forward operating bases) across the country, which makes it extremely difficult to manage,” said Army Command Sgt. Maj. Robert L. Stanek, the command sergeant major for the brigade, and a Lino Lakes, Minn., resident.

Initially, the 372nd was subordinate to Regional Command-East. As the 372nd became responsible for assets in RC-North, the brigade came directly under the command of the Afghanistan-wide International Security Assistance Force.

The command has adapted to the situation in part by traveling. The brigade’s commander, Army Brig. Gen. Charles D. Martin, is one of the few American generals in Afghanistan not stationed at one of the three largest bases in the country: Bagram, Kandahar and Kabul. Martin, who hails from Little Rock, Ark., regularly flies to remote areas to visit his far-flung troops to present medals and decorations.

Stanek tries to divide his time evenly between staying at FOB Sharana and traveling, but said his command responsibilities keep him anchored in FOB Sharana more often than he would like.

“If I get too far away, I come back and there’s a stack of this kind of paper-work waiting for me,” Stanek said, holding his thumb and his index finger about three inches apart for demonstration.

The mission of the brigade is broad and difficult to summarize, but two areas of work illustrate the scope of their work: expansion of FOB Sharana and partnership with Afghan civilians.

The 1,500-acre expansion of FOB Sharana will make way for an additional 4,000 Coalition troops as part of the “Afghan surge.” The area will include a post exchange, a dining facility and other buildings. The responsibility for bringing this about has fallen on the shoulders of the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Bn. 4, a unit based out of Port Hueneme, Calif., currently under 372nd command.

At times, they have worked 24-hour operations for weeks on end, said Army Maj. LaTonia M. Mahnke, the brigade intelligence officer who hails from Sun Prairie, Wis.

Another main area of focus is partnership with Afghans which comprises a number of projects. One of the largest of these is an engineer skills course taught by Soldiers of the 1092nd Engineer Bn., based out of Parkersburg, W. Va., at FOB Sharana.

“We are focused on developing skilled laborers as well as promoting (the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan), and we do this by sponsoring engineer skills workshops,” said Army 1st Lt. Ben Slood, the brigade civil military operations officer from Minneapolis.

The three-month long courses teach skills like carpentry, roadwork and plumbing. After two weeks of class work, students begin on various public work projects approved by the provincial governments.

After the students graduate, a job fair is held to help them find long-term employment.

Since the 372nd arrived, five classes of about 170 participants have completed the program.

“Since I’ve been here, it’s gone from being a provincial-level education program [to a point where] it’s now going toward being a program on the national level,” Slood said. “We’re creating an exportable package so that other regional command teams can build their own skilled labor programs.”

In total, the brigade has helped evaluate and approve approximately 3,000 public works and development projects each worth at least \$100,000, improving infrastructure providing Afghans with jobs Conner said.

Looking back since their arrival, Stanek is proud of what has been accomplished. 🙌

Operation Shamshir

Story by Army 1st Lt. R. J. Peek, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment

Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment conducted a joint air-assault operation with members of the Afghan National Civil Order Police and Afghan National Army soldiers in support of Operation Shamshir in eastern Ghazni province Aug. 6 through 9.

Operation Shamshir, held to disrupt insurgent activity, was also the first Task Force Iron Rakkasan operation to include soldiers from the 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 203rd Corps of the ANA. It helped establish a new relationship between U.S. forces and the Afghan soldiers.

On the first day of the mission, the forces air-assaulted into the area and immediately secured it.

The next phase of the operation was clearing several suspected insurgent safe havens. The Soldiers successfully searched and cleared the areas without incident.

After the area was secure, the leadership of each security element met with village elders to discuss the security conditions of the town and listen to any problems with which the elders needed assistance.

While U.S. forces were meeting with local leaders, ANSF took the opportunity to meet with the local people. One of the topics discussed was increased security the Afghans can expect to see in the coming months. The Soldiers also talked about security for the upcoming elections and the importance of the Afghan people’s participation.

Meanwhile, the ANCOP used their expertise and knowledge to interact with and help the ANA soldiers

integrate smoothly into the joint operation.

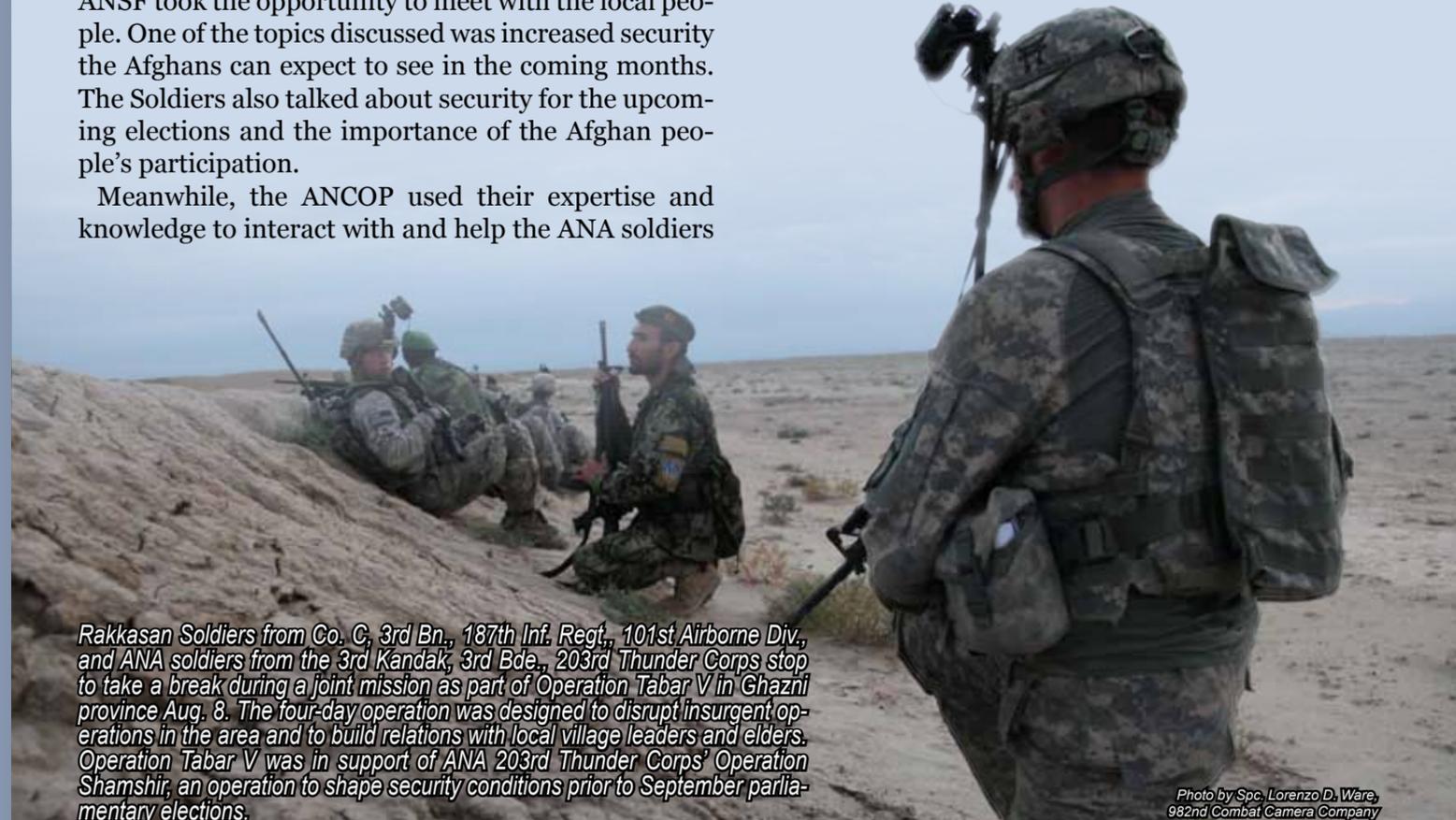
“We were glad we didn’t have a fire fight with the enemy,” said one Afghan policeman, who did not want to give his name. “It allowed us more time to work with these soldiers and help train them.”

The only enemy activity during the operation was a pair of ineffective indirect mortar rounds fired at the lead security element on the first day.

“We expected to see more activity from the enemy while we were out there,” said Mohammed Ishali, an ANA soldier from 3rd Kandak, 3rd Bde., 203rd Thunder Corps. “The fact that the enemy was intimidated by us is just fine because it allowed us to interact with the elders and the local people.”

Overall, the four-day mission was a success and laid the foundation for future joint operations, said Army 1st Lt. Vance Gonzales, a native of Weddington, N.C., and executive officer for Co. A, 3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Reg.

“This is the first major operation we’ve done with this group of Afghan Army soldiers,” said Gonzales. “They proved their strength of mind and body with this long and tiring mission, and they performed well.” 🙌



Rakkasan Soldiers from Co. C, 3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Regt., 101st Airborne Div., and ANA soldiers from the 3rd Kandak, 3rd Bde., 203rd Thunder Corps stop to take a break during a joint mission as part of Operation Tabar V in Ghazni province Aug. 8. The four-day operation was designed to disrupt insurgent operations in the area and to build relations with local village leaders and elders. Operation Tabar V was in support of ANA 203rd Thunder Corps’ Operation Shamshir, an operation to shape security conditions prior to September parliamentary elections.

Photo by Spc. Lorenzo D. Ware, 982nd Combat Camera Company

Goodwill Across Afghanistan:

ISAF and ANSF Reach Out



Children at the Qultemor School receive a surprise visit from Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Rahman, Chief of Staff for the 209th Corps during a humanitarian aid mission in Balkh province July 27. Soldiers delivered approximately 800 backpacks filled with school supplies for the students.

Photo by ANA Sgt. 1st Class Nasir Hashimi, 209th Corps PAO

Tech. Sgt. Carolyn McIlvaine, a Westfield, Mass., native and Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team medical team noncommissioned officer in charge, hands out book bags to girls in the village of Kohesur, July 24. PRT Panjshir met with the Paryan District Development Assembly for women's affairs to discuss various projects and make a humanitarian drop to a girls' school in the Paryan district.

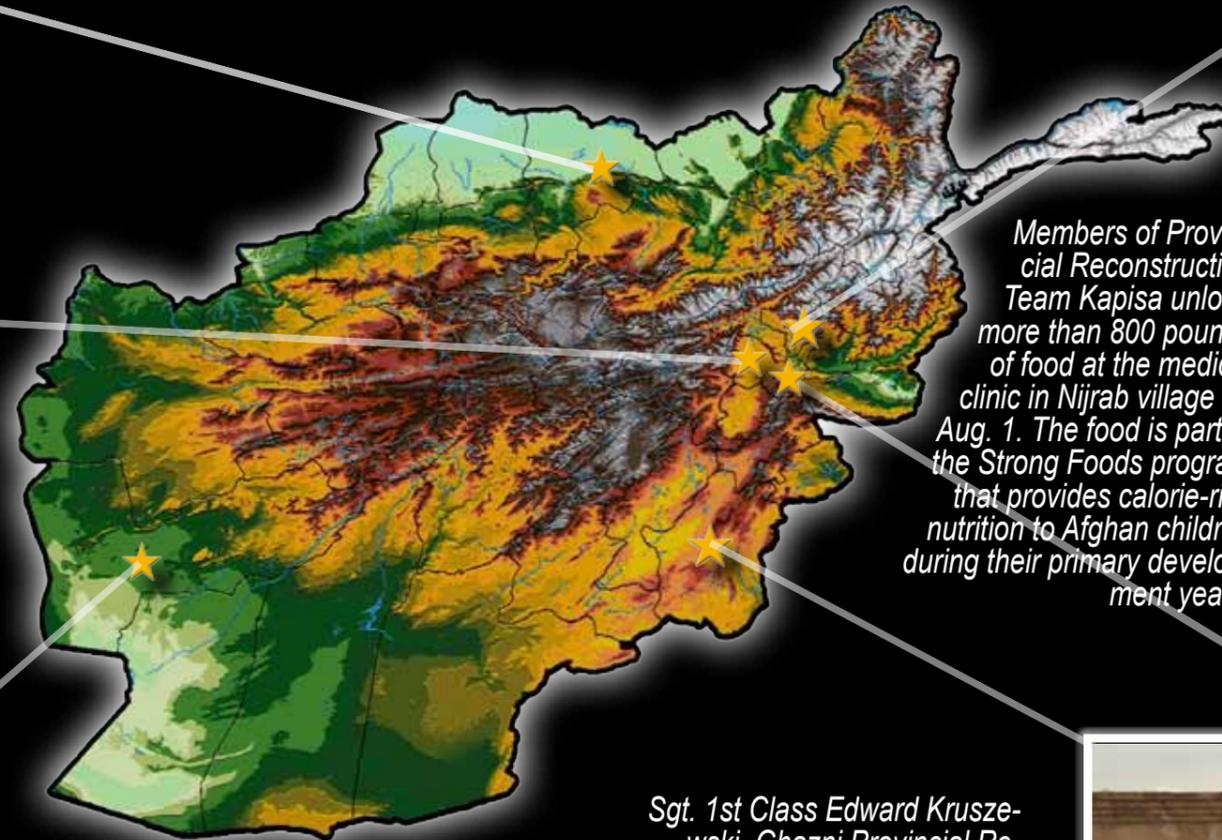


Photo by Air Force 1st Lt. Holly A. Hess, Panjshir PRT PAO



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Horace Murray, 982nd Combat Camera Co.

Army Maj. Steve Vetrano passes out candy to young Afghan boys at the Director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock training facility. Members of the Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team II made a trip to the Kapisa training facility, Mahmud-e-Rozi district, Kapisa province July 27.



Members of Provincial Reconstruction Team Kapisa unload more than 800 pounds of food at the medical clinic in Nijrab village on Aug. 1. The food is part of the Strong Foods program that provides calorie-rich nutrition to Afghan children during their primary development years.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joe Laws, Kapisa PRT PAO



Photo by Marine Sgt. Brian Kester, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force

A Female Engagement Team Marine (wearing a red head scarf) hands a backpack filled with school supplies to a female student July 28 at a school in Urayan village, Herat province. Coalition forces dropped off school supplies to the school and spoke to the children about the importance of an education. The students were thankful for the supplies and for coalition forces working with Afghan Local Police to provide security in Zerekoh Valley where girls were not previously allowed to attend school.

Sgt. 1st Class Edward Kruszewski, Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs specialist, hands ISAF papers to Afghan children July 31 while on a mission in Ghazni City. Members of the PRT conducted a school assessment for a possible computer lab project.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. JT May III, Ghazni PRT PAO

UNIT SPOTLIGHT

342ND MILITARY POLICE DETACHMENT

Mission:

The unit mission is to provide law and order operational support to a mature theater of operations. We do this through military police investigations, traffic accident investigations, force protection, physical security, MP desk operations and provost marshal operations.

History:

The 342nd MP Det. was activated in September 2001 at Fort Devens, Mass., and immediately was defending our nation in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Since then the unit has deployed to the 2002 Winter Olympics, supported the Southern European Task Force, Vicenza, Italy and provided law enforcement support to Fort Hood, Texas in addition to two deployments to Operation Enduring Freedom.

Why We are the Best:

The 342 MP Det has proven itself on every mission ever asked of it. The unit derives its strength from its members, a diverse group of highly trained law enforcement professionals who bring real-world training and experience to the battlefield of Afghanistan.



Keeping America Protected: MPs Serve as Last Line of Defense

Story and photo by Spc. Jay Venturini, 304th PAD

Many servicemembers throughout Afghanistan dream of the day when their unit will get on the plane to take them home. However, before they can get on that plane, there are a lot of things they have to do to ensure they and their cargo enters the United States properly.

For the personnel redeploying through Bagram Airfield, the last people they will see before getting on the plane will most likely be customs personnel from the 342nd Military Police Company, from Fort Devens, Mass., who will inspect every item in every bag, from every person returning to the U.S.

"We know that most of the people coming through here are legit, and just want to get home, but it's because of the 1 percent that try to sneak things through (that) is why we have to be so strict," said Army Capt. Brien C. Durkee, 342nd MP Co. commander and Boston native.

The customs personnel routinely inspect more than 150 people per day, many of them with three or more bags.

Despite the large number of personnel and baggage, the inspectors remain vigilant as they understand they play a vital role in preventing potentially hazardous material from entering the U.S.

"We are the last line of defense for the U.S.," said Spc. David Barrette, 342nd MP Co. customs agent and Worcester, Mass., native. "If you try to take prohibited items back home we will find (them)."

The process starts with a detailed amnesty brief to the departing unit of what is allowed to go and what's not. Next, the unit is given 10 min-

utes to go through their bags and put prohibited items into an amnesty box without any repercussions.

"We give everyone the opportunity to get rid of prohibited items before their bags are inspected. No harm, no foul," said Army Master Sgt. Michael F. Plante, 342nd MP

"The excuses we hear range from the reasonable to the absolutely absurd. Most of the time the excuse is 'I didn't know it was there,' or 'I didn't know we couldn't have it.' Sometimes they will discretely say 'Can I just hand this over to you quietly.'"

Army Master Sgt. Michael F. Plante Co. customs noncommissioned officer in charge, and Weare, Mass., native.

After the 10 minutes, each person is given a full body scan before the bags are thoroughly checked.

Finally, to ensure the inspectors didn't miss anything, each bag then goes through an X-ray machine.

Some of the most common prohibited items found during inspections are unmarked pills, spring-loaded knives and more than one bootlegged DVD. However, more severe violations are also found such as live munitions and pornographic material.

"We see everything from live gre-

nades to sex toys, and everything in between," explained Plante.

Once a prohibited item is found, some people will try to make any excuse to stay out of trouble.

"The excuses we hear range from the reasonable to the absolutely absurd," said Plante. "Most of the time the excuse is 'I didn't know it was there,' or 'I didn't know we couldn't have it.' Sometimes they will discretely say 'Can I just hand this over to you quietly.'"

Another major factor when going through inspections is agriculture items.

Because Afghanistan has a much different climate than the United States, different wildlife and organisms inhabit the area and many would have a negative impact on U.S. agriculture. Because of this, absolutely no fruit, dirt, plant life or wildlife from Afghanistan is authorized to enter the United States.

If there is enough dirt to grab with your fingers than it can't go, explained Barrette.

The customs personnel will also often go to the departing unit's location to inspect the contents of their shipping containers.

With units redeploying on a fairly regular basis, it is vital for customs personnel to keep anything that would be detrimental to the United States out, and they take their job seriously.

"We understand what the outcome could be if we don't do our job properly," said Durkee. "That's why we are as detailed and thorough as possible and keep potentially harmful items out of the U.S." ❄

Combined Joint Task Force Paladin

52nd EOD Assumes Command of TF Paladin, Expands ANSF Partnership

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Jay Venturini, 304th PAD

Since 2006, Task Force Paladin has been the International Security Assistance Force's answer to the ever-adapting improvised explosive device fight.

TF Paladin's overall mission is to counter the influence of IEDs and IED networks throughout Afghanistan in order to protect the Afghan people, ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces from insurgent attacks and free them from future attacks.

Until recently, the task force has been manned by individual augmentees from every branch of service. However, due to the continually increasing number of personnel needed to conduct the mission, TF Paladin transitioned to the unit base solution, where an entire unit takes command and control of the task force.

The unit base solution officially took effect Aug. 14 as the 52nd Ordnance Group, headquartered at Fort Campbell, Ky., assumed command of TF Paladin.

With the arrival of the 52nd comes an already fully functioning team ready to continue the mission, said Army Col. Thomas Langowski, 52nd Ordnance Group and TF Paladin commander.

"When you are strictly individual augmentees, you will never train together, you will never have the luxury or benefit of going through battle drills with a headquartered unit before deployment," Langowski said. "With the unit base solution, the unit is trained and you already have a rhythm estab-

lished. Everyone is also already in tune to how the commander operates. There is no learning curve."

A major emphasis of the 52nd moving forward is to continue and expand the partnership with the ANSF, which includes the Afghan National Army and Afghan Nation-

"We will teach them to trust the science and forensics of taking evidence off of the battle field and be able to show them how to associate those IED events to the people that could have created them."

Army Col. Thomas Langowski

al Police. The goal is to give them the skills to not only defeat an IED but to also analyze past attacks in order to be more prepared for the next one, or even prevent it.

"We have to partner with them because at some point in the future we are going to leave, and the problems will not leave as we go," said Langowski.

TF Paladin started from scratch

when they first addressed ANSF counter-IED capabilities. The task force helped create a curriculum for ANSF troops to become IED experts.

Potential ANSF explosive ordnance disposal personnel are sent to the Afghan National Army Engineer School, EOD branch at Mazār-i-Sharīf, Balkh province, currently run by contractors.

The training they receive is broken down into two phases.

Phase one is a 12-week course during which students learn how to render conventional munitions, such as small arms or grenades, safe.

Phase two is a nine-week course designed to teach students specifically about IEDs – how they work, what to look for on the roads and how to destroy them or render them safe.

To date, 115 ANSF personnel have graduated from the course.

"The school is very important because we can't partner with the ANSF EOD guys until they are created," said Army Capt. George Hill, TF Paladin partnering officer in charge. "So, we are giving as much input and feedback as we can into getting the right people into the school so we can get them back to their units and start partnering with them."

Once ANSF troops complete the course and return to their home unit, a mentorship and validation phase takes effect as they partner with ISAF EOD teams out in the field.

"I can't stress enough that if we are going to be successful in this theater, partnership is the only way. We want to hand autonomy over to the ANSF and the only way we can do that is train our replacements. They are the future and they have to take control of their own destiny."

—Army Capt. George Hill, TF Paladin partnering officer in charge

The ISAF EOD experts ensure that their ANSF counterparts are confident and capable through joint missions before letting them take the lead.

"The goal is that they won't need us anymore, and they will be able to do everything on their own," said Hill.

Paladin is also working toward implementing an ANSF Combined Explosives Exploitation Cell lab where they break down IEDs to their basic components, analyzing how the device works and how it was put together.

"We will teach them to trust the science and forensics of taking evidence off of the battle field and be able to show them how to associate those IED events to the people that could have created them," said Langowski.

Another key mission for TF Paladin is ensuring that every ISAF servicemember understands and applies counterinsurgency principals and practices: to treat the ANSF troops with dignity and respect.

"We are coming to the realization that partnering with the ANSF is the only way out (of Afghanistan)," said Army Capt. Janine Robinson-Turner, TF Paladin deputy partnering officer. "That is why it is critical that Soldiers receive COIN training before they even deploy. If we can get commanders and Soldiers to believe in it then our mission here would be much easier."

A common misconception among ISAF servicemembers is that ANSF troops are uneducated and unwill-



ing to learn. That couldn't be any further from the truth, said Robinson-Turner.

"When you talk to ANSF, whether it is ANA or ANP, they are excited to work with us and are open minded," she said. "One thing we have to do is think outside the box when we are training or conducting missions with them, because they are very intelligent. We just need to understand that they don't learn like us."

"Once we realize they are intelligent and that they truly want to take care of their own people, we

will achieve great measures," she said.

As a new era begins for TF Paladin, one of the major goals is clear: to mentor and train the ANSF to be self-reliant in the fight against IEDs.

"I can't stress enough that if we are going to be successful in this theater, partnership is the only way," said Hill. "We want to hand autonomy over to the ANSF and the only way we can do that is train our replacements. They are the future and they have to take control of their own destiny." 🌟

STORY

SNAPSHOTS

Military Police Dogs Train to Assist ISAF, ANA



Photo by Spc. Richard Daniels Jr., TF Bastogne PAO

Army Staff Sgt. Sabrina Lindahl of Oroville, Calif., 230th Military Police Company, Task Force Bastogne, riles up Doly, a patrol narcotics detector dog from Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla., for bite-sleeve training at Forward Operating Base Fenty Aug. 13. Doly helps Navy Master-at-Arms Petty Officer 2nd Class Rodney Ericson of Anchorage, Alaska, locate any narcotics or contraband that Soldiers or Afghan civilians might possess.

Tribal Leadership Key to Security



Photo by Spc. Richard Daniels Jr., TF Bastogne PAO

A malik from the Shinwari tribe addresses fellow tribal, coalition forces and provincial government leaders during a tribal shura in the Shinwar district, Nangarhar province, Aug. 4. The shura was called to discuss ways that the tribe could work with Coalition Forces to improve security in Nangarhar province.

ANA Soldiers Learn NATO Weapons

An elite group of Afghan National Army 209th Corps Soldiers complete one of their last days of the NATO Weapons Fielding T3 (Train the Trainer) Course Aug. 8, which will enable them to independently instruct ANA soldiers throughout the northern provinces in Afghanistan on the mechanical fundamentals, familiarity and marksmanship of NATO weapons. The ANA is replacing their old Soviet-style weapons with six different types of NATO weapons including the M-16 rifle, M-240B machine gun, M-249 squad automatic weapon, M-2 .50 caliber machine gun and the M-24 Sniper Weapon System.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Casey Martin, Region Command-North Public Affairs Advisory Team

U.S. Troops, ANSF Rescue Civilians



Army Sgt. Robert Huff, of Erlanger, Ky., and Army Cpl. Patrick O'Rourke, Front Royal, Va., with the Military Police Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Spartan, rescue an Afghan child from encroaching flood waters in the Nari Shahi village in the Beshood District of Nangarhar province July 28. The flooding was caused when more than 6 inches of rain drenched the area in a few hours. The platoon was returning from a patrol in the district and stopped to help the villagers when they realized the danger of the situation.

Photo courtesy of Spc. Richard Daniels Jr., TF Bastogne PAO

Ghazni PRT Treats Wounded Soldiers



Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team members carry an injured soldier to a helicopter medical evacuation in Ghazni province, Aug. 3. The PRT was en route to a mission when they experienced a vehicle rollover. Medical treatment was provided by Ghazni PRT corpsmen, and combat life saving actions were applied by PRT members. The injured were stabilized, and walked away with non-life-threatening injuries due to the quick action, training and experience, and above all, teamwork of the first responders.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. J.T. May III, Ghazni PRT PAO

Laghman PRT Conducts 'Good Neighbor' Visit



A young Afghan boy speaks with Spc. Richard Brown of Greer, S.C., during a "Good Neighbor" mission, in which representatives of the Laghman provincial Reconstruction Team and Task Force Iron Gray visit villages in Laghman province close to the forward operating base in order to establish a good rapport with villagers.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Ave I. Pele, Laghman PRT PAO

ANA Showcase Field Artillery Skills

Afghan National Army 209th Corps soldiers showcase their field artillery techniques at Camp Shaheen, Aug. 4 as part of a demonstration prior to graduating from a 26-week training program. The Combat Support Kandak Training course instructs ANA Soldiers in areas including noncommissioned officer development, coordinating between combat support engineers, reconnaissance skills, to field artillery maneuvers.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Casey Martin, Region Command North Public Affairs Advisory Team

Coalition Forces Collect Ammunition



Photo courtesy of TF Lafayette



Soldiers of Task Force Lafayette, the French Brigade in Regional Command East, count ammunition brought to them by local civilians Aug. 4. Afghans told the soldiers where a large weapons cache was located and volunteered to bring the ammunitions to TF Lafayette. Almost 400 rockets, grenades and mortars were recovered.

FOB Ghazni celebrates Polish Army Day



Photo by Tech. Sgt. JT May III, Ghazni PRT PAO

Polish soldiers salute as their flag is raised during the Polish Army Day ceremony at Forward Operating Base Ghazni Aug. 14. The ceremony commemorated The Battle of Warsaw, which marked Poland's independence from the Soviet Union.

ANP Learn to Fight Without Deadly Force

Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Cornell (bottom), a Philadelphia native, and Army Sgt. Richard Yoon, a Fort Lee, N.J., native, both members of the Task Force Wolverine Embedded Training Team with Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, demonstrate combatives techniques Aug. 14. Cornell and Yoon taught U.S. Army Combatives techniques to Afghan National Police trainers so they can teach the skill to other ANP officers in each of the seven districts in Panjshir province.



Photo by Air Force 2nd Lt. Jason Smith, Panjshir PRT PAO

Kentucky ADT Visits Fish Farm



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Sean Mateo White, Panjshir PRT PAO

Army Lt. Col. Jeffrey Casada, Kentucky National Guard Agribusiness Development Team leader and London, Ky., native, and Army Staff Sgt. Joshua Hancock, ADT member and Monticello, Ky., native, both members of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, speak to a local Afghan who designed and built his own fish farm in the village of Duabi, in the Paryan district of Panjshir, without any financial assistance. The mission of the Panjshir PRT is to assist with projects that foster economic growth and development, which is the backbone of a self-sustaining economy. The Panjshir PRT hopes to see more independently funded projects in the future.

ANA, ISAF Conduct Joint Operation



Photo by Spc. David A. Jackson,
65th Signal Company, Combat Camera

Afghan National Army and International Security Assistance Force Soldiers with Task Force Iron Gray clear and search houses in Hendor village as part of Operation Badpesh Kam Dergiin in Laghman province Aug. 10. The objective of the operation was to disrupt insurgent operations in the Gahuch valley area.

First Demo Farm Started in Kunar



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Nathan Lipscomb,
Kunar PRT PAO

Army Sgt. Jason Stevens, an orchardist with the California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team, looks at the soil of the Chowkay district demonstration farm July 19. The farm is the first of its type built by the ADT in Kunar province and will be used to show local farmers alternative methods of planting to help increase crop production in the area. "This demonstration farm is the first of several facilities we are launching throughout Kunar province to show farmers things that they can do to grow more abundant, healthier and profitable crops," said Army Col. Eric Grimm, commander of the ADT. "Things like planting corn in furrows to get each stalk more nutrients will increase the productivity of their land, and allow them to use some land to grow forage to feed to their livestock."

ANA Grows with 900 New Commandos



Photo by Navy Chief Petty Officer Julian Carroll,
NATO Training Mission Afghanistan

A squad of new Afghan National Army commandos march to the front of the formation to receive their certificates during a graduation ceremony held at the completion of the program. More than 900 Afghan Soldiers completed the extensive course to graduate and wear the red beret of the ANA commandos.

Get the rest of the story

CJTF101.COM

Czechs Provide Water, Hope to People in Logar

Story and photo courtesy of Logar province PRT

In the dry and inhospitable climate of Afghanistan, a kareez, an irrigation system that makes water accessible to remote locations, is one of few ways to provide people with water for personal use and irrigation. The Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team will assist Logar citizens in the restoration of these traditional irrigation systems.

"If we didn't have water, we would die," said Haji Qaman Gul, a native of Chinarey village in Logar, where the Czech PRT will reconstruct a kareez to bring water from the foot of the mountains to the village.

His words are simple, but accurate: water means everything here.

Nine out of 10 people in Logar province subsist on agriculture; therefore, a functional irrigation system is fundamental for local residents.

Thirty years of war has had a hard impact on the kareez systems, used for irrigation by Afghan farmers for centuries. According to statistics from the Food and Agriculture Organization, more than 40 percent of irrigation systems were

destroyed during the conflicts in Afghanistan.

Water management is one of the top priorities of the Czech PRT. Restoration of the kareez will consist of weir and flood protection, wall construction, and irrigation canal repairs.

"[The] kareez is, in its principle, [a] perfect water structure; therefore, it makes no sense to implement any modern water transport systems here. It is a system proved by centuries, and used to get water from inaccessible places to people and, by its simplicity and utility, suits local conditions perfectly," said Radovan Chládek, civil engineer of the Czech PRT.

Almost half of the kareez in the area were destroyed by conflicts raging in Afghanistan. The men who previously took care of them died in war, or the kareez were destroyed by Russian soldiers because Mujahideen soldiers hid in ducts leading into the tunnel.

"Unstable ducts will be reinforced by steel concrete staves, [and] the kareez tunnel will be restored and cleaned up, and [the] water reten-

tion tank will be reconstructed," Chládek said as he described the principle of kareez improvements.

In the Suleman Khel village in Khoshi District, only a few kilometers away from Chinarey, a similar reconstruction just ended.

Bearded men in turbans, children in torn and dirty clothes, young men with embroidered caps, and even a couple of women, veiled with colored headscarves and half hidden behind the wall, met at the stone reservoir to gather water from the kareez.

A few hundred meters behind their clay houses, known as qalats, toward the mountains that rise above Suleman Khelem there are at least four control ducts through which the kareez can be accessed.

"More water means that we can grow more fruits, vegetables and more grain. What we grew on the field until now was hardly enough for the family. But bigger harvests can be sold, and we can earn money," explains Naqibullah Muddaqir, one of the farmers. "Now we can cultivate more soil," he added while pointing to the bright green field that contrasts with the grey, infertile side of the landscape. ☺



View of a Logar kareez as seen from above

Establishing Afghan Justice

Story by Air Force 1st Lt. Amy Abbott, Kunar PRT PAO

At a public trial held in the Governor's compound in Asadabad, July 27, and attended by more than 200 people, Hafizullah Said Wali was convicted of impersonating an Afghan National Police officer, installing a false checkpoint along the main road from Asadabad to the Pech Valley and robbing travelers. Wali received a sentence of 20 years, with 20 days to appeal the verdict.

One robbery victim testified Wali was among the men who had stolen 550,000 Afghani, 650,000 Pakistani rupees, \$370 U.S. dollars and 50 Euro from him. Police found a briefcase with the money along with police uniforms in the 24-year-old Wali's room in a house in Watapur district.

Five additional suspects, known insurgents based in Watapur district, will be tried in absentia if they do not surrender to police. Wali is currently serving a 12-year sentence for the attempted assassination of the Kunar Prisons Director; he was convicted at the first public trial in Kunar, held in March.

According to Abraham Sutherland, Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team Rule of Law representative, the trials highlight the importance of reducing corruption and inspiring the trust of the people.

"Kunar officials are working hard to establish an expectation of justice by holding regular scheduled, publicized and public trials in all criminal cases in Asadabad," said Sutherland.

The case was brought by the national security prosecutor's office and presided over by a panel of three judges; Asadabad Primary Court Chief Judge Amin Ashraf, Asadabad Primary Court Public Security Division Chief Judge Saraj u Din and Public Security Division Assistant Judge Khalilullah. Wali and his brother, who was acquitted of all charges, were represented by one of Asadabad's newly appointed public defenders Mohammad Taheer.

A second trial was held immediately afterwards where a man was convicted of purchasing fuel and cell phone credit with counterfeit Pakistani rupees. He was represented by Public Defender Malwai Mohammad Hashem and given 1 1/2 years.

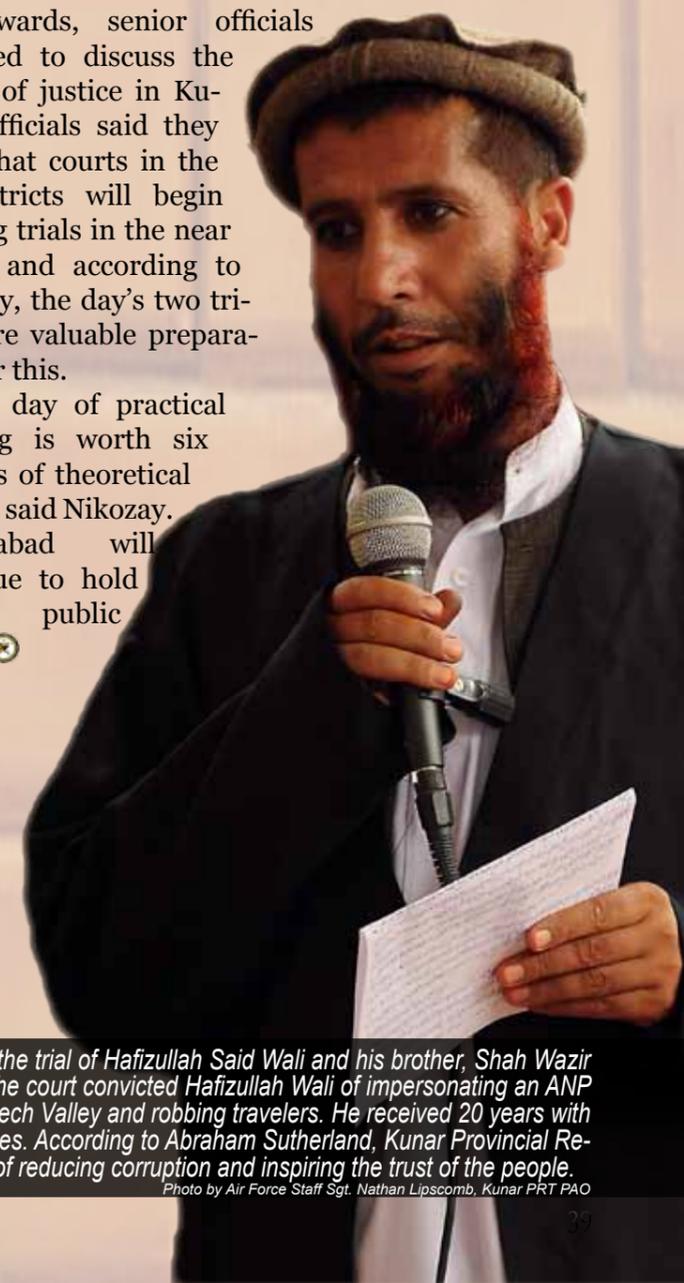
According to some of the spectators, through use of a translator, making the trials public helps show that the government will not stand for corruption and will hold people accountable for their actions.

The trials were attended by numerous provincial-level officials from both the justice sector and several line ministries, as well as judges, prosecutors and investigators from Kunar's 14 districts including Kunar Provincial Governor Fazlullah Wahidi, Kunar Province Chief Judge Saed Alam Nikozay, Kunar Province Chief of Police Gen. Khalilullah Ziayee and Afghan National Police Criminal Investigation Division Chief Col. Abdul Ghafar.

Afterwards, senior officials gathered to discuss the future of justice in Kunar. Officials said they hope that courts in the 14 districts will begin holding trials in the near future and according to Nikozay, the day's two trials were valuable preparation for this.

"One day of practical training is worth six months of theoretical study," said Nikozay.

Asadabad will continue to hold weekly public trials. ☺

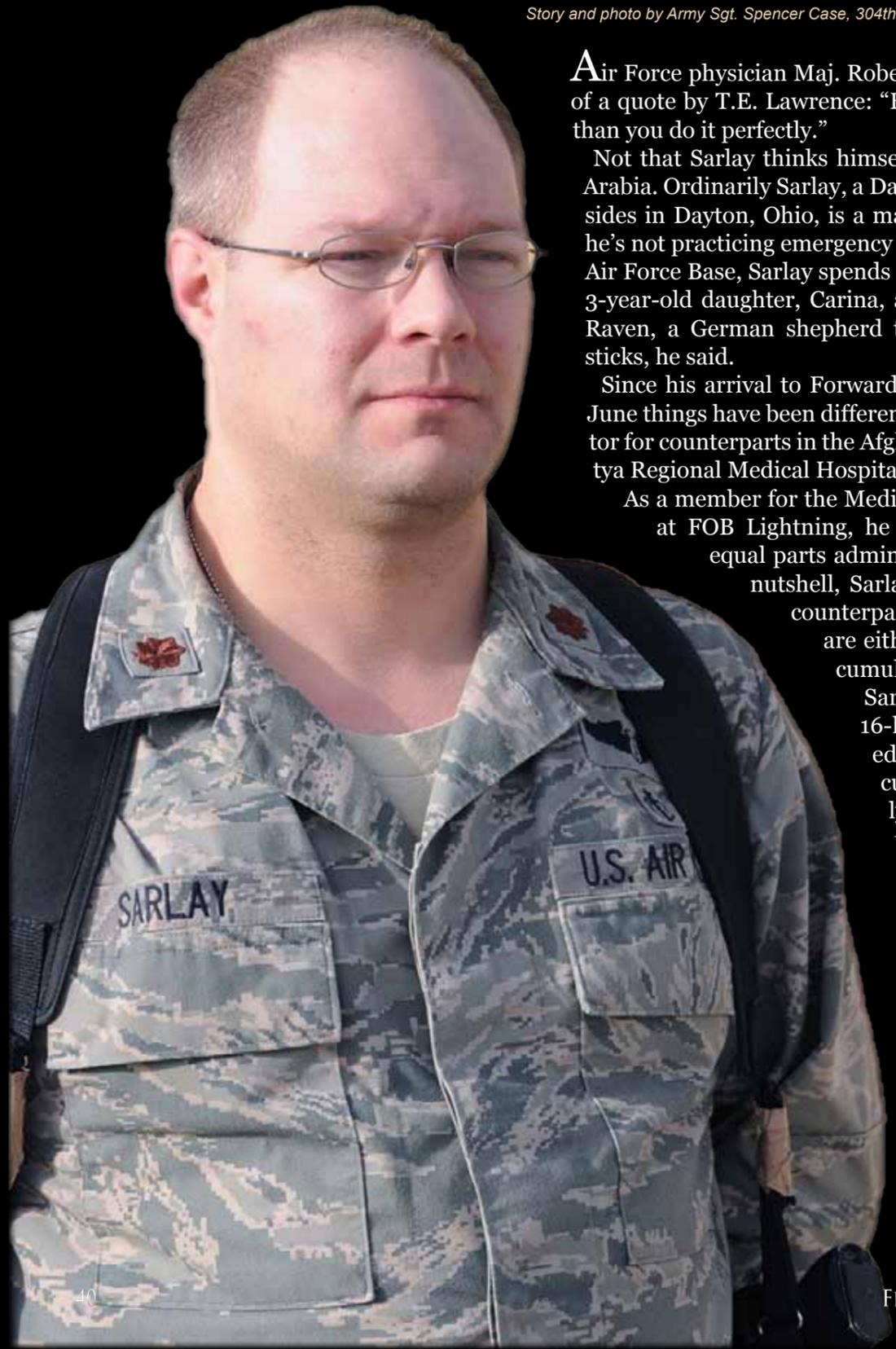


Mohammad Taheer, Kunar provincial public defender, presents his case during the trial of Hafizullah Said Wali and his brother, Shah Wazir Said Wali, at the governor's compound in Asadabad, Kunar province July 27. The court convicted Hafizullah Wali of impersonating an ANP officer, installing a false checkpoint along the main road from Asadabad to the Pech Valley and robbing travelers. He received 20 years with 20 days to appeal the verdict, while his brother was found not guilty of the charges. According to Abraham Sutherland, Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team rule of law representative, the trials highlight the importance of reducing corruption and inspiring the trust of the people.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Nathan Lipscomb, Kunar PRT PAO

WARRIOR PROFILER

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Spencer Case, 304th PAD



Air Force physician Maj. Robert Sarlay Jr. has become fond of a quote by T.E. Lawrence: “Better the Arab do it tolerably than you do it perfectly.”

Not that Sarlay thinks himself a modern-day Lawrence of Arabia. Ordinarily Sarlay, a Dallas, Texas native who now resides in Dayton, Ohio, is a man of less exotic tastes. When he’s not practicing emergency medicine at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Sarlay spends time with his wife, Betsey and 3-year-old daughter, Carina, and plays catch with his dog, Raven, a German shepherd that fetches logs rather than sticks, he said.

Since his arrival to Forward Operating Base Lightning in June things have been different. Sarlay now works as a mentor for counterparts in the Afghan National Army at the Paktya Regional Medical Hospital.

As a member for the Medical Embedded Training Team at FOB Lightning, he describes his current job as equal parts administration and diplomacy. In a nutshell, Sarlay’s job is to help his Afghan counterparts overcome bad habits that are either culturally ingrained or accumulated over 30 years of war.

Sarlay, who is used to working 16-hour days that the uninitiated would find grueling, said his current assignment is “Mentally and emotionally much more taxing than any other assignment I’ve ever done.”

“It’s easy for me to do patient care because I’m well-trained and well-versed,” he said. “It’s much more difficult to develop processes for the ANA.”

At 7:30 a.m. Aug. 15, Sarlay entered a conference room for the morning report. Sarlay’s mentee, Ashahidullah Akbury, the chief of clinical staff, displayed an x-ray photo-

“It’s unlike any other assignment I’ve ever had and probably ever will have.”

Air Force Maj. Robert Sarlay Jr.

graph showing a bullet embedded in the abdomen of an Afghan soldier and proceeded to explain the treatment that had been administered.

About an hour later, Sarlay accompanied Akbury and some other doctors during their patient rounds, where he will occasionally offer advice.

“They are developing an Afghan standard,” Sarlay said of his counterparts. “Their medical care will not be what you’d expect in the U.S. What we are trying to do is get them up to a level of care that is sustainable for them.”

Sarlay’s formal duties are only the tip of the iceberg, he said; the lion’s share of his work is done on the informal side, where he expends effort trying to gently and diplomatically coax his counterparts into adopting standards that doctors in the U.S. take for granted.

“It’s a lot of sitting and drinking chai and talking about why it’s good to have standards,” he said.

The standards include things like keeping proper records for patients. As the political situation in Afghanistan decayed so did Afghan doctors’ record-keeping habits until proper documentation began to be seen as a burden rather than a necessary part of success.

“I’ll ask them, ‘what if you go to Kabul and don’t come back, will (the other doctors in the hospital) know what was done with this treatment?’” he said. “They’ll say ‘because we all talk together in the morning.’ And I’ll say, ‘But what if one morning you don’t?’”

In the course of his planning and administrative work, Sarlay has occasionally had the opportunity to practice hands-on medicine.

For instance, a few weeks ago the hospital received an Afghan Border Policeman who had to be treated for blast lung injury, a bruising of the lungs caused by being in close proximity to a high-explosives detonation. With Sarlay’s help, the hospital staff learned how to use a ventilator machine to keep patients alive.

In the last year, the hospital also added an intensive care unit with six beds, which allowed them to manage patients with more serious injuries, Sarlay said.

“They’re slowly progressively improving,” Sarlay said of his Afghan counterparts. “When you’re here

for six months you don’t necessarily see it, but when you talk to people who have been here two or three years ago you do.”

He later added, “We don’t necessarily see the fruits of our labors—other people will—and ultimately the Afghans will be the beneficiaries.”

One person who has seen it is Air Force Lt. Col. Bernard L. Vanpelt, a pharmacy mentor with the METT who has been at FOB Lightning since March.

“We’ve seen progress with providers becoming more proactive with regard to trauma issues,” said Vanpelt, who hails from St. Louis and is stationed at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. The addition of an Intensive Care Unit since Vanpelt’s arrival is one such improvement.

Vanpelt added that Sarlay’s efforts are helping the practitioners improve.

“By his being in that leadership room with the doctors, he’ll have an impact—indirectly mind you—on how the doctors understand and adhere to the newly established standards,” he said.

Sarlay completed medical school through the military’s Health Profession Scholarship Program at the University of Texas at Houston. After his internship at Houston, he received his first job as a doctor with 9th Bombardment Sqdn., 7th Bomb Wing at Dyess, Air Force Base, Abilene, Texas in 2000.

After five years as a flight surgeon he was transferred to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base where he worked doing emergency care. He completed a one-year remote service tour in South Korea and returned to Wright-Patterson, where he was mobilized for his current deployment to Afghanistan.

He looks forward to returning home to Dayton in about six months, where he will resume his practice of emergency medicine. He also hopes to be selected for the residency in a two to three year aerospace medicine program. The program would allow him to be board certified to evaluate the health of pilots, among other things.

“(Afghanistan’s) unlike any other assignment I’ve ever had and probably ever will have,” Sarlay said. ☺

A Little Heart Gets Warm Welcome

Story and photos by Air Force 1st Lt. Katherine Roling, Ghazni PRT PAO



Medical personnel from the 655th Forward Surgical Team and Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team read an ultrasound for 3-year-old Samiya's heart while her father holds her hand Aug. 12 at Forward Operating Base Ghazni. Left to right, the members were Air Force Capt. Rinel Hernando, 655th FST clinical nurse; Navy Lt. Cmdr. Zaradhe Yach, the Ghazni PRT senior medical officer; and Army Lt. Col. Matthew Martin, the commander of the 655th FST and a trauma and general surgeon.

When Abdul Karim couldn't find a doctor in Afghanistan to care for his 3-year-old daughter, he came to Forward Operating Base Ghazni Aug. 11, where members from the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team and the 655th Forward Surgical Team took little Samiya under their wing.

Samiya was diagnosed with large pericardial effusion, which is where fluid builds up around the heart and puts pressure on the organ. This can lead to a condition called cardiac tamponade, which can stop the chambers of the heart from being able to fill and pump out blood.

The first day, U.S. providers performed a pericardiocentesis at FOB Ghazni to drain the fluid around

her heart. The next day, Aug. 12, they followed up with a 20-minute procedure and drained more fluid after an ultrasound illustrated the dark collection of fluid that still squeezed her heart. Samiya's father and 11-year-old sister, Sadea, were there to provide the little girl comfort and a steady hand while medical personnel worked on her tiny frame.

"This probably came from an infection she got that irritated the heart, and that made the fluid buildup," said Army Lt. Col. Matthew Martin, the commander of the 655th FST and a trauma and general surgeon from Olympia, Wash.

"She had trouble breathing and she was coughing a lot, and her

heart wasn't functioning as well as it should," Martin said.

When the fluid squeezes the heart, it has to work harder, and after a while the heart just stops, he said.

Karim, the father who supports his family of 10 as a taxi driver, resides in Returnee Village, which is just outside Ghazni City. It is a town formed by people who are displaced from various regions in Afghanistan and even Pakistan, usually for economic or security reasons.

His frustration began when the Ghazni Provincial Hospital misdiagnosed Samiya, saying she had a big heart, based on an x-ray diagram. The hospital lacked the per-

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Zaradhe Yach, a family nurse practitioner and the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team senior medical officer from Santa Cruz, Calif., helps drain fluid from around Samiya's heart while her father provides comfort to the 3-year-old Aug. 12 at Forward Operating Base Ghazni. Samiya was diagnosed with large pericardial effusion, which is a condition where fluid builds up around the heart and puts pressure on the organ, an effect called cardiac tamponade.

sonnel to do an ultrasound, and so he searched for a second opinion.

"She had a fever, she was anxious, she was crying a lot, and she was also coughing," Karim said, recalling his daughter's discomfort.

The second doctor that Karim met was at a private hospital; he properly diagnosed Samiya and sent her to Ataturk, a public hospital in Kabul.

Samiya stayed at Ataturk for 10 days on IV antibiotics and had a sputum study that ruled out tuberculosis. She was then discharged when the hospital said they could not do anything further to help.

The search for treatment continued at a French hospital in Kabul, but they required 100,000 Afghanis, equivalent to \$2,190 USD, in advance. A doctor there saw Karim's dismay at the price he could not afford, and referred him to the Ghazni PRT.

The clinic, a PRT project that treats local Afghans, was where he met Dr. Masoud, a licensed Afghan doctor who currently works with the PRT.

Masoud called in Navy Lt. Cmdr. Zaradhe Yach, the PRT's senior medical officer from Santa Cruz, Calif., and she got a chance to see the echocardiogram that illustrated the fluid around Samiya's heart. "Dr. Masoud said that on



(Karim's) taxi driver salary, working long days, he makes maybe 10 dollars a day," Yach said.

Yach went through a phone list of hospitals in Afghanistan that were known to take charity cases, but the lines were not working. Unable to reach anyone, she alerted the 655th FST on the base about Samiya's condition.

The loss of life, limb, or eyesight is the criteria for the FST to care for someone, whether they are coalition forces or local nationals.

"In this case, this little girl likely would have died if this intervention hadn't happened," Yach said.

She spoke with Martin, who agreed to take care of her that day. His crew and Yach drained the fluid after an ultrasound and an exam.

"It was impressive, in a shocking way, how her heart was even continuing to function," Yach said.

"She was in early signs of heart failure, with fluid in her lungs and shortness of breath."

For now, Martin hopes to stop the condition by draining the fluid and administering medication.

"Ideally, this drain solves the problem and we're going to follow her over the next week or so, and then we'll take the drain out," Martin said. "We put her on some medication to hopefully stop her from building up more fluid.

"If the fluid builds back up on its own, then we'll need to do an operation to actually open up the sac around her heart and get all the fluid out," he said.

The father could not say thank you enough to the medical personnel.

"The only thing I can say is thanks a lot," Karim said. "It's a big relief for me." ☺

Safety Watch

Safety is no Accident

Safety is an integral part of every-day operations in all branches of the military.

It has been proven through extensive studies that organizations that have a well-designed, consistently implemented, highly visible and supervisor-enforced safety program have lower rates of employee loss time, property damage, and significantly better production rates than those that use the old "seen but not heard" approach to safety.

In the military this is called setting standards, protecting the force and engaged leadership.

Safety programs are designed to prevent or reduce property damage, injury or death of persons, and the obtaining of data to assist in the prevention of similar incidents in the future.

An analysis of all reported accidents in the RC-East Area of Responsibility for calendar year 10 has shown three reoccurring contributing factors. Let's take a quick look at these factors:

Complacency: Complacency happens when we continuously repeat the same activities or routines.

Routinely following correct standards and procedures greatly reduces the risk of an accident. Cutting corners or modifying approved standards and procedures greatly increases the risk for an accident.

With repeated activities over an extended period of time we tend to assume things. We assume that the chamber of our weapon is empty, or that since we have been driving the same route for three months that we won't have an accident.

A recent example of complacency contributing to an accident was during a Soldier's class on how to prop-

erly clear a M4 rifle. The Soldier had routinely cleared his weapon hundreds of times since deploying.

Unfortunately, this one time the individual forgot to drop the magazine. This resulted in a negligent discharge and a gunshot wound to the foot. Lesson: Don't assume anything!

Failure to follow standards: There are several standard operating procedures, policy letters, operation orders and regulations that specifically address safety.

Despite this readily available and detailed information, almost every accident investigation finds failure to follow standards as a contributing factor. In some cases the individual(s) involved were either not aware of the standards or approved procedure, opted to take shortcuts, or ignored them completely.

Standards have been researched, tested and reviewed before being sent to the field for implementation. They save lives. Completing tasks "by the book" often takes longer and can be perceived as overkill, but each step plays a role in the overall task at hand.

Removing any one step significantly increases the risk of an accident. Recently, a driver of a Mine-Resistant Ambushed-Protected vehicle was backing up at an excessive rate of speed without a ground guide. He failed to see another vehicle behind him and hit the vehicle causing significant damage to both vehicles. Lesson: Know the standard, follow the standard! We've always done it this way is not an excuse.

Failure to enforce standards: The safety program is the Commander's program. By regulation, regardless of branch of service,

each unit must have a designated Safety Officer or NCO. It is everyone's responsibility to run the safety program based on the Commander's guidance, but it is everyone's responsibility to identify unsafe practices or situations and make on-the-spot corrections.

Too often, people contact the Safety Office to report an unsafe incident they observed stating that we need to correct the situation. If possible we will correct the issue, but often several hours have passed and it is too late.

If you know it is wrong at the time you observe it, take immediate action, don't wait. If you see a safe action, acknowledge it. A few words of recognition goes a long way. Lesson: Take appropriate on-the-spot corrective action and reinforce positive acts.

Resources: There are many sources available to assist you in the prevention of accidents.

Using Composite Risk Management in all of your activities and operations will assist you in identifying and mitigating risks.

The US Army Combat Readiness Center web site <https://safety.army.mil/> is a great source for anything related to safety programs, safety training, and other safety related assistance.

The CJTF Safety Office can assist you for RC-East related issues at DSN 431-4213/3016.

For safety issues specifically related to Bagram Air Field contact the Base Ops Safety Office at DSN: 431-4212. Make safety a priority.

As always, be safe.

*Rod Lowell,
Senior Safety Director, CJTF-101/RC-E*

94.1 FM



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PHOTOS

From the Field



Army Sgt. James Lawrence, 190th Military Police Company, keeps an eye out for unfriendly or suspicious activity outside the perimeter of Camp Sabalu – Harrison, Parwan province.



Dave Plavcan, civil engineer with the Afghanistan Engineer District-North, inspects the aeration pond of a waste water treatment plant at an Afghan National Army base being constructed in Kunduz.



Two German Tornado aircraft line up for take-off at the Camp Marmal airfield in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Your photo could be featured next month! Entries need to include Who, When, Where, and What, also your Branch, Rank, Full Name, Job Title, Unit and FOB.



Photo by Spc. David A. Jackson, Joint Combat Camera Afghanistan

Afghan National Security Force Soldiers relax Aug. 2 after night operations in the towns of Badmuk and Bachancha, Nuristan province, as part of Operation Azmaray Fury.