

NOVEMBER EDITION

WOLVES DEN



HOME OF THE 1ST STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 25TH
INFANTRY DIVISION
"ARCTIC WOLVES"

Volume I

Issue 3



COMMANDERS CORNER

**1/25 SBCT Commander
Colonel Todd R. Wood**

Arctic Wolves,

As we come into November and plan for winter, the CSM and I would like to thank those who continue to support the Brigade and make it possible for us to accomplish all that we have. We are thankful for the Soldiers who continue to drive hard and make things happen out here as well as the Families and support groups that continue to carry the load back home so that our Soldiers can focus on their tasks here.

November brings with it a change in temperature, landscape and operations however it is also a time for giving thanks to one another. It is no surprise that on the 11th day of this month we also pause to give solemn thanks in remembrance of those that gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. We are forever grateful for their dedication and sacrifice.

I am thankful to have this opportunity to witness the Arctic Wolves working with their Afghan partners, training and conducting operations every day and making a difference. As we look back and reflect on where the brigade was in June and where we thought we would be this November, we have far surpassed our initial goals and we continue to accomplish everything that we plan to do.

With the hard work that has been put into our partnership with the Afghan National Army and the local police, we are creating irreversible momentum that will carry on past our tenure here and drive the next unit that follows behind us. Our success is shaping southern Kandahar if not the country as a whole as we prepare to transition security operations over to our partners.

As we enter the winter months, we ask that Soldiers and Families remain vigilant and continue to be safe, be it on the village roads of Panjwa'i or the icy roads of Fairbanks. Thank you, again to each and every one of you who continue to demonstrate the true Arctic Wolves' perseverance and ability to overcome any challenge. You truly are...

**ARCTIC TOUGH!
ARCTIC WOLVES!**

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The Wolves' Den

Afghan and US forces save life of local Afghan soldier



Story By: Sgt. Thomas Duval

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - After months of class room exercises and hands on training, medics from the 5th Kandak, 205th Corps finally got the chance to put their training to the test.

On the morning of Oct. 11, ANA medics gathered inside a small compound on Camp Hero in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The agenda was routine. The soldiers were to spend the day with their U.S. counterparts practicing and perfecting their medical proficiency.

Like most mornings, this one started with a hand shake and a friendly hello, or in Pashto 'salaam'. Just a few short hours into the medical exercise the training went off script, as an ANA soldier collapsed. Falling to the ground without resistance, the body violently struck the ground. The loud thump triggered an immediate action by both Afghan and U.S. medics as they quickly rushed to his aid.

Kneeling by the life-less body, both medical teams worked shoulder to shoulder performing a head to toe sweep and checking vitals. "There's no pulse," yelled Spc. Joshua Swab a Beebe, Ark.,

native and combat medic assigned to saving lives with the 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1/25 SBCT, as he frantically ripped back the shirt with the help of his Afghan partners. Quickly the combined Afghan-U.S. team began to perform chest compressions, secured an airway, inserted Intravenous fluid, and conducted preventive shock measures. Together, the team provided advanced aid by the books and without hesitation. Within 90-seconds the Afghan soldiers' health improved. A pulse, faintly but reassuringly, began to get stronger and so did the confidence in the room. Once evacuated to the ANA aid station further aid was used to stabilize the health of the soldier. Afghan medical personnel have trained with International Security Forces to react, treat and provide aid to anyone in

any situation without delay. "Overall the ANA soldiers are doing well and we are very impressed," Swab said. "They are taking the training very serious and they are proving over and over that they are ready to take over once coalition forces leave." Swab continued, "this incident is just further proof of that." "Without the coalition forces we wouldn't be where we are today," said Rohullah, a Afghan soldier with the 5/205th. "We are working hard to improve our training to help improve our success by the 2014 drawdown of American troops," said 1st Lt. Dr. Muhammad Alim Rahmani, medical doctor with 5/205th. "We appreciate the coalition forces ... they are here to help us and the Afghan people." Rahmani said, that the incident, Oct. 11, was proof that Afghan medical soldiers are able to provide sufficient aid to its soldiers and the people of Afghanistan. On this rainy and slightly chilled October morning the Afghan forces proved once again that the training is translating to success whether it's on the battlefield or inside the secure confines of their ANA



ANA soldiers Join ANP in Shah Wali Kot

Story By: Capt. Michael Newman, 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment

SHAH WALI KOT, Afghanistan – Afghan National Army soldiers arrived at Forward Operating Base Frontenac in October to help Afghan Uniformed Police secure more areas inside the Shah Wali Kot district.

The AUP have been conducting patrols, check points, community watch efforts, and air assault clearing missions throughout the district along-side soldiers from 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

SWK is one of the larger districts of Southern Afghanistan, which makes it difficult to have a constant security presence in all areas.

“This adds another great element to the fight and provides even more security to the region” said Lt. Col. David Raugh, commander of 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment.

The first ANA company arrived to Shah Wali Kot eager to work together with both AUP and International Security Assistance Force units.

“We are very glad to have everyone working together to fight the insurgents,” said Brig. Gen. Mohammad Salim Ehsas, commander of the 404th AUP. “It is important that we all work together since we all have the same goals.” Afghan Local Police play a big part in keeping the citizens of SWK safe.

“The ALP is a very good program because they know the area and the people better than we do,” Ehsas said. “We need more ALP and we are hoping the presence of the ANA will help with recruiting.”

Soldiers from 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regi-

ment train the ALP and now they will train the ANA as well on mine detection, basic rifle marksmanship, first aid and signal communications.

“We train all the time,” Raugh said. “That is what Soldiers do.”

The people of Shah Wali Kot already see ANA in their villages, on the roads and in the mountains. There are more ANA soldiers on the way in the very near future. ISAF is excited to have them here along side the AUP and will work with both partners to make SWK insurgent-free.



RUNNING WITH THE PACK



HALLOWEEN IN THE DESERT



Opahey's train ANA radio transmission operations

Story By: Sgt. Thomas Duval

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan, Oct. 12 - Communication on the battlefield is the key to success. That was the message shared by key leaders of the 5th Kandak, 205th Afghan National Army Corps and their signal company soldiers during a radio transmission course Oct. 11-12 at Camp Hero in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The Afghan National Security Forces lead the training event which focused specifically on the PRC-1077, a tactical radio man pack transceiver designed for short range two-way communication, and the OE-254 antenna. The radio and antenna training provides the ANA with the ability to communicate more proficiently across the battlefield.

ANA Capt. Aminullah, 5/205th Signal commander said the training is proving to be a valuable asset on the battlefield. Aminullah, attributes the success of recent missions, without the presence of coalition forces, to the quality of daily training his ANA soldiers are receiving.

International Security Assistance Forces, provided a helping hand to the ANA soldiers which often leaned on the experiences of the U.S.

forces to ensure they received the highest quality of training.

"The ANA soldiers' ability to communicate using the radios has improved dramatically," said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Canon, with the 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "They are more confident in their abilities to accomplish



the mission and they are doing an excellent job with learning and retaining the newest and most effective ways of communicating on the battlefield."

The ANA continues to encourage its soldiers to participate in advanced military training events like the radio training and advanced combat life saver courses in an effort to develop a 'more well-rounded' soldier said Aminullah.

Afghan National Security Forces continue to work with ISAF to secure more stable governance while ridding the area of the severely diminished Taliban presence in Southern Afghanistan.

SMA visits Task Force Arctic Wolves



Photo By: MC1 Farrukh Daniel

Sgt. Annie Fulkerson, with the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, asks questions about where the Army is going then listens to Sergeant Major of the Army, Raymond F. Chandler III, respond during his visit to FOB Masum Ghar, Afghanistan, 20OCT.

Bobcat Mine Clearing



Photo By: Sgt. Michael Blalack

Pfc. Alexander Betzer, an infantryman in 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, practices identifying anti-personnel mines at Forward Operating Base Mushan on Oct. 5.

Uncle re-enlists nephew during Afghanistan deployment

Story By: Sgt. Thomas Duval

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan, Oct. 15 – When the time comes for a Soldier to re-enlist, therefore extending his commitment to serve his country, it's often a happy and joyous occasion that many choose to enjoy with their families.

For Soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, being able to share in this moment with a family member is usually an impossible task. On a sunny and breezy Afghan Saturday evening in Kandahar, Afghanistan the impossible became possible and a wish was granted as Spc. Justin Slater, stood tall waiting to repeat the oath of re-enlistment, Oct. 15.

Next to Slater, standing on the constantly shifting gravel road outside of his office on Kandahar Airfield, stood his uncle Michael R. Pandol, a helicopter pilot for a government contractor and retired Army major, ready to recite the oath with his nephew.

"I knew I was coming up on my re-enlistment window and I thought why not have my uncle read the oath," said Slater, a nodal network system operator, with the 176th Signal company, Brigade Troops Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

"This is one of the greatest honors of my life."

"I came in the Army as an enlisted Soldier, served as a chief warrant officer, I've worn oak leaves and I have served for over 21 years, said Pandol.

"Our family has a special connection to the uniform and I couldn't be prouder of my nephew."



Slater said his uncle played a huge role in his original decision to join the Army in 2008, and has continued to mentor him since he deployed to Southern Afghanistan earlier this year.

Pandol, 51, was somewhat of a maverick in his day. During his military service the Key West native excelled as an Apache helicopter pilot with the 229th Attack Helicopter Regiment. Slater, 29, took a different approach as he joined the Signal Corps. Regardless of which path Slater chose to serve, his uncle says he's just excited to keep the family line of military service going.

According to Pandol, his nephew, Slater, is just one in a long line of family members to raise his right hand.

The Pandol and Slater family lineage has served in the military for more than four generations.



"I'm proud to be a part of a long family line," said the 21-year-old Slater.

The family line currently has Soldiers spread throughout Afghanistan with cousins and nephews in Qalat, Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

Pandol said he is very proud of all his nephews, cousins and his son who is currently serving in Helmand province, one of the most dangerous provinces in Afghanistan.

He added, that it's the service of the select few like his son and nephew which choose to serve in the military, that helps establish America as the number one fighting force in the world.

Slater said he hopes to follow in his uncles footsteps. He said he wants to make the Army a career and wants to become a Warrant Officer just like his uncle.



PRESIDENT VISITS WOUNDED SOLDIER

President Barack Obama visited wounded warriors including one of our own Arctic Wolves, PFC. Brian Pomerville. Brian was praised for his patriotism. Obama thanked him for his sacrifice and told him to keep up the good work and focus on rehab and then on to his life..whatever life has in store.

(Photo compliments of SSG. Joe Rusk.)

A Tale of two Jeremy's

Story By: SGT. Francis O'Brien

Charlie Company I-24 welcomes new commander

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Outgoing commander, Capt. Jeremy S. Medaris, transferred command to incoming commander Capt. Jeremy M. Teter in a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Eagle for Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Oct. 17.

Teter, aka “Jeremy Two” is a seven-year Infantry officer from Macon, Mo., who has worked as a planning officer for the past year providing missions to Medaris, aka “Jeremy One.”

The nicknames – Jeremy’s One and Two – were given by 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment commander, Lt. Col. Jeff Stewart. “We hold change of command ceremonies to recognize the accomplishments of the unit,” said Stewart in a speech to the unit and guests. “Charlie Company has consistently done a battalion’s share of work with a company-sized element.” Medaris, a Florence, Ala., native, will be moving to Kandahar Air Field for a new position with the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment. “I couldn’t be prouder to pass on such a capable unit to Captain Teter,” said Medaris. “He’s set up for success with the best executive officer and the most competent first sergeant I’ve come across.”

Executive officer, Capt. Joseph M. Lapointe, selected “Born in the U.S.A.” by Bruce Springsteen as the theme music for the pre-ceremony gathering and helped keep Jeremy’s One and Two on track.

An award ceremony for Charlie Company soldiers was held prior to the transfer of authority. Several Purple Heart Awards, Combat Action Badges and Army Achievement Medals were awarded. This is the third consecutive month of award ceremonies for the Fort Wainwright, Alaska-based Soldiers. “Charlie Company is the action arm of the battalion,” said Teter in a speech after accepting the unit guidon from Medaris. “We’re their combat power.” Teter was instrumental in the planning of “Operation Fairbanks” a recent U.S.-Afghan partnership mission successfully completed by Charlie Company of a road

previously subject to Taliban attacks between the provincial capital, Qalat, and the district capital of Mizan.

Afghan National Army soldiers have now taken over responsibility for manning checkpoints along the road and providing security.

My goal, said Teter, is to partner more with the Afghan National Police in the upcoming year -- to train with them and get them ready to operate independently.

Since the unit doesn’t always get to partner with the same ANP units, we sometimes have to focus on teaching the basics to new units.

“But we’re looking forward to going on actual missions with the ANP,” he added. Charlie Company, affectionately nicknamed “C Nation” by Medaris in a nod to the Cena Nation fans of WWE wrestler Jon Cena, is known as the Centurions and has adopted a Roman gladius, shield and helmet as their symbols.

Their motto, “strength and honor,” was popularized by the blockbuster action film, “Gladiator.”

Members of Combined Team Zabul from the Romanian Army and Virginia Army National Guard 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were in attendance as special guests for the transfer of authority ceremony.



COP life: 'Quiet is a good thing'

Story By: Staff Sgt. Lindsey Kibler

COMBAT OUTPOST LION, Afghanistan - Deep in the village of Do'ab, near the tip of the Horn of Panjwa'i, lies Combat Outpost Lion; the month-old COP is where Pfc. Sky Nosaka, of Trinidad, Colo., now calls home.

Nosaka, a medic with 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, arrived in Afghanistan in May. He spent the past five months working as a medic in the clinics at Kandahar Airfield, Forward Operating Base Zangabad and COP Mushan before, ultimately, setting up shop at COP Lion as a line medic.

The COP offers little of life's perks he experienced at KAF, like hot meals, daily showers and the privacy of a bathroom stall, but he wouldn't have it any other way.

"I like Lion a lot better than the other places I was before here. Things are a lot more serious down here," explained Nosaka.

"I wanted to be a soldier. I especially wanted to come to Afghanistan and feel like I've made a difference," he said.

Nosaka had a desire to be a line medic with an infantry company and, while it wasn't a guarantee he would be assigned to a line unit once he graduated Advanced Individual Training, he said he was happy to find out he would be joining the 1/25th at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. With half of his first deployment completed, Nosaka said he is thankful it has been somewhat quiet.

To date, he has only provided medical treatment to local Afghans. Medics are often exposed to the horrors of war while treating the wounded and are expected to expertly perform under pressure.

"It's easier, in a sense. Medics will tell you that if it's one of your own guys, it's harder, and I don't doubt that," he said. "With the local nationals, we see gunshot wounds and amputations.



They respond well to having us treat them. I think they are starting to trust us, and are appreciative of what we can do for them."

In his down time, Nosaka likes to make life at COP Lion as comfortable as possible for him and his battle buddies.

Up bright and early, he spends his time cleaning the Role I aid station he both works and lives in.

He can be found cooking hot meals on a makeshift grill—a hole in the ground filled with charcoal—or working on his carpentry skills by building shelves and a horse shoe pit.

He doesn't mind getting dirty, he said.

"I lived in the woods growing up, so this is all sort of the 'norm' for me," he joked.

While it may be too quiet for some, he is looking forward to spending the rest of his deployment away from the busier life normally experienced at larger FOBs and bases.

In his line of work, he said, "quiet is a good thing."



'Operation Oreo Cookie'



Story By: Spc. Gary Chessa, 1-5 Inf.

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan-- When students open their history books twenty years from now they will undoubtedly read about many popular military operations currently taking place across Iraq and Afghanistan.

They probably won't read about a very popular operation among the U.S. Army Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment.

The delicious and chocolaty cream filled mission is called 'Operation Oreo® Cookie'. During this operation, the deployed Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division received a large shipment of Oreo® cookies, compliments of a church group based in Alpharetta, Ga.

The Soldiers were overwhelmed with joy as the more than thirty cases of Oreo® cookies were shipped to and unloaded at Strong Point Tarnak earlier this year. The Soldiers contributed the success of the dessert-based operation to the supportive and grateful

Americans who they fight to defend.

The program itself was born into fruition by a chance encounter. In 2009, the Senior Minister of Alpharetta 1st United Methodist Church, Dr. Don Martin, was on an

airplane and met a young serviceman who was returning from 18 months duty in Iraq. When asked what he missed most while away, the young Soldier immediately replied "Oreos®, Double Stuffed!" Dr. Martin promised him that his church would make sure all his buddies in Iraq would be showered in Oreos®.

For the last 3 years, the church has collected Oreos® during the annual Patriotic Sunday in honor of the men and women who serve this great nation.

A local newspaper published a story which spurred the Alpharetta community groups to take up collections

of Oreos® and funds to cover shipping costs. The Oreos® began pouring in, and now it is a tradition that the church anticipates every 4th of July. Mary Ann Gilbert met Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Leota at a 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment annual reunion she attended with her husband.

Leota agreed to be her contact in Iraq that first year to distribute the Oreos®.

In 2009, Alpharetta Methodist shipped over 1,400 packages of Oreos® to Diyala Province, Iraq just north of Baghdad. In 2010, the Oreos® were sent to the Marines in Afghanistan and this year to the U.S. Army Soldiers at Strong Point Tarnak in Afghanistan.

Authorized programs like these are an exception to the Joint Ethics Regulation's gift policy and provide an unexpected one from Operation Oreo® Cookie.

The Soldiers of the battalion were reminded that they continue to be supported by Americans back home as the Soldiers were given a gift of Oreos® and perhaps a midnight snack.



US-Afghan partnership bears fruit:

Story By: Sgt. Francis O'Brien

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The stalls of fruit vendors along Highway One in downtown Qalat are filled once again with pomegranates, thanks to the success of the joint U.S.-Afghan National Army "Operation Fairbanks," a mission to reopen the road between Qalat and Mizan and liberate it from Taliban control.

Operation Fairbanks may have been one of the few modern military actions specifically scheduled to coincide with harvest season.

"One of the primary factors in our planning of the mission was getting that pomegranate harvest to market," said Capt. Jeremy M. Teter, Charlie Company commander, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, and a Macon, Mo. native. Previously, farmers were forced to pay a tax to the Taliban.

Their ability to get product to market tax-free is a much needed economic boost to the region, he added. Much like the pomegranate harvest itself, the seeds of Operation Fairbanks, which concluded Sept. 21, are bearing fruit.

The seeds - recently built security checkpoints along the road manned by ANA soldiers - have borne fruit in the form of increased economic development from a bountiful pomegranate harvest thanks to early rains and unusually warm weather.

"The warm weather means that the fighting season isn't ending at its traditional time this year," said Teter. "But because of our efforts and that of the ANA, we haven't seen any increase in insurgent activity." "It used to take four to five hours to get from Mizan to Qalat. Now it takes only one hour," said Mizan District Gov. Mohammed Zareef.

"The people of the Mizan district can start businesses and conduct business every minute of every day now. All the people of Mizan say thank you for the checkpoints and bringing security to us."

One of the new businesses that has grown in the fertile soil of the new economic climate is a pomegranate taxi service.

"A local taxi company just started up to take all the pomegranates to market," said 1st Lt. Scott J. Harman, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Virginia Army National Guard electronic warfare officer. "I think the driver is a female."

U.S. soldiers were pleased to see their hard work on behalf of the Afghan people bearing fruit.

"The Afghan people just took advantage of the newly open road and ran with it," said Sgt. 1st Class Janis M. Albuquerque of the 116th IBCT Civil Affairs Office.

Economic security is an issue that has been raised by the U.S. State Department local government meetings, especially in relation to the Mizan district – one of the poorest of Zabul province.

"Because the road is safer to travel, the people of Mizan are getting much better prices for their goods," said Maj. William RO'Neal of the Virginia Army National Guard 116th IBCT

"And thanks to the good work of the ANA soldiers, new projects are coming to Mizan." A shura between Zabul's provincial governor, Mizan district governor and Mizan district elders, representing a significant expansion of the



presence of the government of Afghanistan was held Sept. 29. Some attendees had never seen a government official before or had the opportunity to hear Zareef speak.

"My plans include stores and shops so they can make money," said Zareef. "Soon, I will be bringing big changes between Mizan and its relationships with the other districts."

Operation Fairbanks was led by Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, from Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

Their mission was to clear and secure Route Chicken, the primary road between Qalat and Mizan, of any improvised explosive devices and build four checkpoints for Afghan National Army soldiers.

ANA soldiers are stationed at the checkpoints for a nine month tour of duty patrolling the area and providing security.

**Have photos or a story
ideas? Email us!**

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"ARCTIC WOLVES"

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