



## NEWS

### US Marines save, heal Afghan IED victim

*By Cpl. Reece Lodder*

SAR BANADAR, Afghanistan -- Nine months ago, a quiet 15-year-old Afghan boy had the last normal morning of his life. As he walked along a road near his village in search of a day's work in March, Sayed Gul struck a 20-lb. improvised explosive device. The sound was unmistakable to Marines nearby at Patrol Base 00. A squad of infantrymen with 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion set out on patrol to investigate and found the mangled boy. The blast had blown off the lower half of his left leg, peppering what remained of the limb with shrapnel. The Marines treated the injured farmer's son as one of their own, calling in a medical



evacuation to transport him by helicopter to the Combat Support Hospital at Camp Dwyer for advanced care. While the horrifying events unfolded, Gul's father, Alai Noor, was away from home and unaware of his son's accident. "I was away when my son was hit by the IED, so I didn't know about it until the Marines had already taken him away for treatment at Camp Dwyer," Noor, from the Baluch Jan tribe, said. **(STORY)**

### Afghan police find huge opium stash in Helmand

*Defence News*



Afghan police mentored by British troops have discovered an opium stash worth millions of pounds, along with insurgent weapons, during an arrest operation in Helmand province. The wet opium and weapons seized by Afghan police Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) swooped on the address of a man suspected of illegally selling government-owned land in the bustling town of Gereshk, in the northern part of Nahr-e Saraj district. Inside, the police and their British partners from 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (1 PWRR) found several bags of wet opium. The Afghan counter-narcotics team were called in, and on further investigation the police found a room hidden

under a trapdoor - with dozens more bags of the drug hidden away underneath. The total haul weighed in at more than 175kg of wet opium - the first stage of processing poppy to make heroin. **(STORY)**

## CLC-6 engineers bolster Route 611 security forces during 'Eastern Storm'

By Sgt. Justin Shemanski

PATROL BASE NEW JERSEY, Afghanistan - Fresh off a foot patrol, an infantryman with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, stepped out of an expeditionary field shower facility only to traipse through a courtyard blanketed by the region's fine talcum powder-like sand where he was once again dusted with grime. The Marine let out a sigh of frustration as he continued his trek through the compound. "Pretty soon, you won't have to do that anymore!" yelled a combat engineer with Combat Logistics Company 6, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward). At that very moment, the engineers were building an elevated walkway through the compound to prevent the unavoidable displeasure. As of Nov. 24, the Marines and their counterparts within the company had spent countless hours over the last several weeks building and enhancing new patrol bases like PB New Jersey across the Upper Sangin Valley. It was all about providing top-notch support for the grunts. "We try to go above and beyond and give them as much as we can - shelves, benches, picnic tables [and] decking," explained Chief Warrant Officer 2 Justin Young, a native of Oregon City, Ore., and platoon commander for CLC-6's 2nd Engineer Platoon. "We treat them as the customer and build them what they need." **(STORY)**



## Zaranj shows promise to future of Nimroz province

By Cpl. Timothy Solano



ZARANJ, Afghanistan -- Leaders of the C-9 Support Operations section aboard Camp Leatherneck met with Nimroz province officials in Zaranj, Dec. 2, to discuss future development in the region as "Tranche II" remains in effect. "Tranche II," the second part of a four-phase operation in Nimroz province is an ongoing transition toward infrastructure and security development in the region. The significance of the changeover lies in the fact that it is being led by Afghan provincial leaders as coalition forces take a backseat and merely facilitate the newly empowered government. Zaranj, the capital of Nimroz province, is located in

the extreme southwest corner of Afghanistan and acts as a major hub for commerce between Afghanistan and Iran. In previous months the city was a primary exporter of illegal narcotics into Iran but has become more stable with an enforced governing presence. "All of the security they have provided down there, they have done 100 percent on their own," said Maj. Robert Howard, the deputy Nimroz provincial coordination team leader. "They train their own people, they pay their own people and they equip their own people. They have pulled all of this money out of hide and done all this on their own with very little ISAF assistance." **(STORY)**

## On post or patrol, Guard Force Platoon maintains security in Garmsir

By Cpl. Reece Lodder

GARMSIR DISTRICT, Afghanistan --

Against the backdrop of a piercing mid-day sun, a squad of U.S. Marines quietly patrols along a Garmsir road. A slew of guests walk evenly within their ranks, following their escorts through the bazaar. For the first of three times this week, the Marines of Guard Force Platoon, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, provide security for their guests to meet with local leaders at the district center here. This isn't their first task of the day. A few hours before, they posted security from guard towers around nearby Forward Operating Base Delhi, providing overwatch in the biting cold, shivering through five-hour, early morning shifts. It also isn't their last



duty of the day. Each is part of Guard Force's endless cycle of shifts on post, patrol and rest. Even during their rest time, each of the platoon's three squads remains ready to function as a quick reaction team. "Our operational tempo is rigorous and our schedule is always changing," said Sgt. Curtis Wolf, a 27-year-old Guard Force squad leader, and native of Bellevue, Mich. "The grind for our Marines is seven months of irregular sleep hours and not much off-time." **(STORY)**

## Elementary school provides educational opportunity to Nawa children

By Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez



COMBAT OUTPOST REILLY, Afghanistan – Ekra Elementary School only has four benches for its 20 students. Camouflaged netting hangs over the students as a makeshift roof, and a four-by-four dry-erase board is barely enough to fit the day's lessons. Despite the Spartan-like conditions, Afghan children living near the makeshift classroom here are eager to learn. They come to class 45 minutes early, and like their Marine teachers, they've learned to adapt to their situation to continue their education. Female Engagement Team 13, currently in support of Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine

Regiment, opened the school to provide educational opportunities to children in the surrounding area. They currently hold classes at Combat Outpost Reilly every Tuesday and Thursday, while a new school is being constructed nearby. "We started the school because currently, there are no teachers or even a school for the kids in this area," said Sgt. Lauren Nowak, the FET-13 team leader and 27-year-old native of Fremont, Ohio. "Our linguist is certified by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to teach, so we thought it would be a good idea to open up the school." **(STORY)**

## Largest intake on UK-run Afghan police training course

*Defence News*

British soldiers training Afghan police have hailed the success of a training course that has seen its biggest intake ever. More than 200 Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) are on the current non-commissioned officer (NCO) course at the Lashkar Gah Training Centre, which is run by the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group (PMAG), headed by 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (1 PWRR). Experienced patrolmen from across central Helmand province are sent to the training centre to learn how to take command of police checkpoints in their districts. The training centre has been running the NCO courses for two years – which started with just eight students..

**(STORY)**



## Four join peace process in Helmand province

*Helmand Governor Press Office*



NAWA DISTRICT. Afghanistan -- Four persons, originally with insurgents in armed conflict against the government in Nawa district, put down their guns and joined in a ceremony signifying they were part of peace process in Helmand province Dec. 11. Helmand Governor Mohammad Gulab Mangal, police commander of 707 police zone, and Afghan Maj. Gen. Asmatullah Dulatzai, together with members of the peace council of Helmand province, religious scholars and several tribal elders participated in the ceremony. Mangal cited the efforts of tribal elders and members of the peace council to bring these four persons into the peace process and avoid fighting. He said

that many thousands do oppose insurgents and the insurgency in Helmand province. They are living a normal life and continue to do so while avoiding media attention.

## Foreign Secretary - we will not abandon Afghanistan

*Defence News*

British Foreign Secretary William Hague has said that a blueprint for the international community's long-term engagement with Afghanistan beyond 2014 was established at yesterday's International Afghanistan Conference held in Bonn, Germany. The conference was chaired by Afghanistan, hosted by Germany, and attended by 85 countries and 15 international organisations. Speaking after the conference, Mr Hague said: "Today, in Bonn, the UK reiterated, together with over 100 international delegations, the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan. We will not abandon Afghanistan; the sacrifices made over the last ten years have not been made in vain. Today's conference has sent a clear signal that Afghanistan's friends will continue to support her long after international combat troops have left the country. **(STORY)**



## Pennsylvania native influences future of Afghan Border Police

By Cpl. Marco Mancha



HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – It's no secret American forces are beginning to draw down forces in Afghanistan, but it doesn't mean their work is done. Marines all over Helmand continue supporting Afghan forces as they take the lead in security responsibility throughout the province simply by executing their jobs. Motor transport operators keep logistic convoys rolling, combat engineers clear key routes up and down the region, and infantrymen assist their Afghan counterparts in eliminating what is left of a dwindling insurgency. Irwin, Penn., native Sgt. Mitchell Lander is doing his part as an enlisted adviser to the Afghan Border Police for Border Adviser Team 1. **(STORY)**

## Virginia native sweeps for IEDs, leads Marines on deployment

By Sgt. Earnest J. Barnes

FIRE BASE FIDDLER'S GREEN, Afghanistan -- Lance Cpl. Jason M. McCormick, a field radio operator, received a surprise when he began training for his deployment to Afghanistan – he traded in his radio for a Compact Metal Detector and learned how to scan for improvised explosive devices. McCormick, a Manassas, Va., native with Headquarters Battery, is now on a seven-month deployment leading his fellow squad members with 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, on security patrols, a position the Marines call the “point man.” McCormick said he wanted to join the Corps since he was teenager, but had dreams of pursuing a passion of working on motorcycles. He began



a training program at a local technical college after graduating from Osbourne Park High School. Once he earned his certification, McCormick began working on motorcycles. “I felt that was something I should do; I was kind of stuck on the mechanic thing,” said McCormick. **(STORY)**

## Marine watches birth of first child on day two of deployment

By Cpl. Katherine M. Solano



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Sgt. Bunnarath Gnoy, the heavy equipment chief with Alpha Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), knows what it is like to be away from family for long periods of time. He is currently on his fourth deployment. He and his wife of two years have perfected the art of long distance communication. But now, Gnoy has to learn how to parent from thousands of miles away. His first child, a son named Aiden, was born when Gnoy was in Afghanistan. It was day two of his unit's time in Afghanistan. The phone call came that his wife was going into early labor. “She was supposed to be due on the 24th so I didn't expect it at all,” said Gnoy, a native of Lowell, Mass. “I called the hospital and told them I was in Afghanistan and they got me right on the phone with her. I asked her to ask the doctors if she could use [wireless internet] in there. They said yes, so I was on the webcam, just watching. I got to see the whole thing.” Nine hours and a few dropped internet calls later, Gnoy was able to maintain a steady connection and witnessed, as firsthand as possible, the birth of his son. **(STORY)**

## Linguist serves with Marines, educates Nawa children

By Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez

NAWA DISTRICT, Afghanistan – She fights the war on terror in Afghanistan as passionately as the Marines in her Female Engagement Team. She makes sacrifices for America, just like any uniformed service member. She is Marzia Dawlatzai, a linguist with Female Engagement Team 13, currently in support of Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, and she is currently serving both Afghanistan, her native land, and America, her adopted nation. As a child, Dawlatzai grew up in Mazar e Sharif, and later moved to Kabul. Her family moved to the United States after the Afghan conflict with the Soviet Union, because her parents wanted to get away from the hardships of post-war Afghanistan.

“Because of safety and security reasons, my family found it hard to live in Afghanistan,” explained Dawlatzai. **(STORY)**



## EDITORIAL/OPINION

### ‘All I want for Christmas’ from Afghanistan

By Gunnery Sgt. Pauline Franklin

Editor’s note: the following is an opinion/editorial and does not directly reflect the official views of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Marine Corps. I miss so many things about my home in Jacksonville, N.C. I miss tucking my children into bed each night with a kiss. I miss the warmth of their hugs as I squeeze them tight and tell them how much I love them each day. I miss the peace of coming home to my husband at the end of a long day at work and the comfort of my hand in his as we walk down the street on an evening stroll, waving to neighbors as we pass by. I miss decorating my home for the holidays and baking in the kitchen, the smell filling my home with the scent of homemade bread or cookies. I miss visiting my parents in Clovis, N.M., and my husband’s family in Big Spring, Texas, when we can make it home for the holidays to share precious moments together. I am a Marine serving a year-long deployment in Helmand province, Afghanistan, but I am just one of many service members who will miss the holidays with loved ones back home. For many Marines here, this is their third, fourth or fifth deployment – others have deployed even more. We chose to join the military to answer a calling to serve our fellow Americans or to make a difference in the world, despite the sacrifices required to do so. **(STORY)**

## VIDEO

### Musa Qal'eh Wadi Crossing Opens, Connects Disjoined District

By Cpl. Clayton Vonderahe



MUSA QAL'EH, Afghanistan - Commerce and travel through the District of Musa Qal'eh just became easier with the completion and grand opening of the Musa Qal'eh Wadi Crossing, Dec. 9. The new crossing was officially opened to traffic by Helmand Provincial Governor Gulab Mangal, accompanied by the Regional Command Southwest Commanding General Maj. Gen. John A. Toolan Jr., and several members of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, during the event which drew a crowd of officials and elders from areas throughout the province to witness the progress and realize the potential of what the new bridge means to the region. “The symbolic

nature of this wadi crossing cannot be understated,” said Lt. Col. Bill Vivian, the commanding officer for 2/4. “Connecting Musa Qal’eh, which has been seen as an island of security to the rest of the province, I think this symbolizes that connection. This is really a crowning achievement, not only for 2/4, but for all the battalions who have fought here before us.” **(VIDEO) (STORY by Staff Sgt. Ryan Smith)**

## MCPON visit sailors, Marines at Camp Leatherneck

By MCC L.A. Shively

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan -- Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West visited with sailors and Marines at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Dec. 8, to bring them up to speed on important issues and spend time with his troops. West began the day with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four, eating breakfast with nearly 70 fellow chiefs in the chief's mess and discussing issues that ran the gamut from retirement pay to women on board submarines. He cited pay changes since he first enlisted in 1980 that had already taken place, such as moving from "final pay" to "high three," and that Department of Defense officials were meeting and considering proposals such as moving into a 401(k) for retirement among other investment models. "I don't see any big changes in the near term," West assured his audience, "but we're still studying it." He said he was convinced that change would come in the future and recommended sailors keep themselves informed of topics on Capitol Hill, so they could make knowledgeable decisions when voting. **(INTERVIEW by Cpl. Bryan Nygaard) (STORY)**



## FET 8 Organizes Children's Shura at FOB Jackson

By Cpl. Meredith Brown



Petty Officer 2nd Class Kimberly Ryan stands in an open crop field surrounded by children. Greetings of "salaam alaikum," which translated means peace be unto you, are said as she high-fives the locals. Smiles spread across the faces of the children and laughter rings out through the brisk morning air as the sailor attempts Pashtu, the language spoken in the area. Ryan, the team leader for Female Engagement Team 8, continues greeting the children before a hand reaches out and will not let go. Her eyes follow the hand up to the face of an elderly woman, recognition lights up in her joyful eyes. The woman is Janet Bibi, a leader in the local area who serves as the chairwoman at the women's shura at Forward

Operating Base Jackson. The attendance at the women's shura meetings have been down because Bibi was ill, explained Ryan, 25, a native of Norwich, Conn. There is now hope attendance will grow after finding her again. **(VIDEO)**

## FET Teaches AUP CLS

By Cpl. Meredith Brown

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Kimberly Ryan, team leader with Female Engagement Team 8, alongside three fellow Navy corpsmen also attached to Female Engagement Team 8 and a Police Advisory Team, with assistance from the rest of FET-8 and the team's interpreter, gave a Combat Lifesaver course to 10 members of the Afghan Uniformed Police over the course of a week. The troops graduated from the course aboard Forward Operating Base Jackson, Sangin district, Helmand province, Dec. 4. Three of the AUP graduates will continue on to take the instructor portion of the CLS course. **(VIDEO)**



## MEDIA COVERAGE/Interviews

### A Marine's Christmas Song:

[WJBK-TV](#) (Detroit, MI)  
[WFXT-TV](#) (Boston, MA)  
[Fox News](#) (National)  
[Huffington Post](#) (National)

[Navy Lt Chaplain James Allen](#)  
[Yuma Sun](#) (Yuma, AZ)

[LCpl Juan Escobedo](#)  
[KXAN-TV](#) (Austin, TX)

[LCpl Juan Escobedo](#)  
[KXAN-TV](#) (Austin, TX)

[CWO4 Kenneth Glass](#)  
[Wellsville Daily](#)

[Cpl Austin Miles](#)  
[WTKF-FM](#) (Eastern NC)

[Petty Officer 3rd Class Linda Booth](#)  
[Radio Lia](#)

[GySgt Todd Zynda](#)  
[Fox Sports Radio](#) (National)

[LCpl Juan Escobedo](#)  
[KXAN-TV](#)

[Michigan native makes name for himself in Marine Corps, Afghanistan.](#)  
[The Holland Sentinel](#) of Holland, MI

[Michigan native makes name for himself in Marine Corps, Afghanistan](#)  
[The Commercial Record](#) of Saugatuck, MI

[Michigan native makes name for himself in Marine Corps, Afghanistan.](#)  
[Local Observer](#), Saugatuck, MI

[Linguist serves with Marines, educates Nawa children](#)  
[www.daylife.com](#) for Boulder, CO

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

[Cpl. Michael Danzlopez](#), Queens, NY  
[Sgt. Joshua Taylor](#), Sneads Ferry, NC  
[SSgt Christopher Huffaker](#), San Simon, AZ  
[GySgt Daniel Cintron](#), Camp LeJune, NC  
[Capt. Afinju McDowell](#), Brooklyn, NY  
[Cpl. Jared Beard](#), Hillsboro, NH  
[SSgt. Juan Morales](#), Mount Dora, FL  
[Cpl. Rickey Anspach](#), Sterling, IL  
[LCpl. Samuel Williams](#), Laurinburg, NC

[Cpl. Cory Smolinski](#), Independence, OH  
[Sgt. Aaron Simpson](#), Lompoc, CA  
[Cpl. Robert Miller](#), Salisbury, MD  
[LCpl. Jake Conerly](#), Gonzales, LA  
[PFC Clark Grover](#), Colorado Springs, CO  
[LCpl. Thomas Miller](#), Potsdam, NY  
[Cpl. Andrew Martin](#), Sacramento, CA  
[LCpl. Tanner Weber](#), Federal Way, WA  
[Capt. Walter Spain](#), Richmond, VA

## MERRY CHRISTMAS