

# Regional Command Southwest

## Round-up

Weekly PAQ Report

----- Jan. 15, 2012 -----

## NEWS

### Women's center provides new opportunities for Afghan women

By Cpl. Meredith Brown

NOW ZAD DISTRICT, Afghanistan -- The Now Zad District Women's Center in Helmand province Afghanistan officially opened for business during a ceremony at the facility, Jan. 11. More than 100 local women and children attended. The center offers a safe place for the local women to congregate and work. Female Engagement Team 2, out of Forward Operating Base Now Zad, led the effort to open the women's center. Some renovations were needed to the compound in order to provide a positive and safe environment for the women to use the center, so the engagement team worked closely with the FOB's civil affairs group and other agencies to get the facility up and running. As an added incentive to use the center, sewing machines were purchased with civil affairs funds for the women to use, explained Sgt. Kathryn Comfort, Female Engagement Team 2 member. This allows the women to sew and make jewelry for their families and to sell at the local bazaar. Due to cultural restrictions, especially in rural areas of the province, women do not typically work outside their homes.



(Read the [STORY](#))(See the [VIDEO](#))

### UK and Afghan troops help open school in Helmand

Defence News



British soldiers and Afghan National Army (ANA) warriors have helped a crucial school open its doors for the first time in Helmand province. Staff at Khorgajat School, in Nahr-e Saraj district, have been able to start work this year after an eighteen-month struggle to get the school built finally came to an end. The build was co-ordinated by the local British Military Stabilisation Support Team (MSST), a tri-Service unit that co-ordinates reconstruction projects. The MSST ran a tender process for local contractors to build the school and, with a winner in place, construction got underway at a total cost of 500,000 Afghanis, or £6,500, donated through UK military charity the Afghan Appeal Fund. Now completed, the school boasts eight

classrooms, a headmaster's office, a teachers' staff room, including a store room, a night watchman's office, and toilets. There is also a large playground, and a well just outside the school gates, providing the children with plenty of water whilst they learn. A gravel path and a set of steps leading up to the school have been constructed, along with additional solar lights to illuminate the path. (Read the [STORY](#))

## Soccer field, symbol of hope for Kajaki Sofla children

By Cpl. James Clark

KAJAKI SOFLA, Afghanistan -- In the U.S., children gather in parks, along sidewalks and the front lawns of their neighborhoods. They wage massive water fights and play games of tag which last hours, relishing the pure, innocent joy that is childhood. Half the world away, the children of Kajaki Sofla have grown up with the harsh realities of life forced upon them at an early age. Yet even here, in a land that can at times be desolate and cruel – the innocence of childhood remains. The area, which until recently was home to a number of Taliban sub-commanders has seen many changes since Operation Eastern Storm began in October, when the men of 1st Battalion, 6th Marine



Regiment conducted a large-scale, helicopter-borne insertion aimed at routing insurgents from the valley.



Now, 3 months after the outset of the operation, the children of this small oasis, tucked between the mountains, can be seen playing soccer on a sparse patch of dirt, within Patrol Base Pennsylvania, the headquarters, for Company B., 1/6. In lieu of tended grass and bright orange cones, they play with goals made from scrap metal and wire. Marines and members of the Afghan National Civil Order Police stand by to coach and referee, while village elders rest on the rocks or piles of sand constituting sidelines. Felber Field, where the daily soccer games are held, was named after Lance Cpl. Brian Felber, who was critically wounded in an IED strike shortly after the

company arrived in Kajaki, explained Capt. Paul Tremblay, company commander, Company B. In an effort to both build rapport and keep the positive momentum they had gained, the Marines of Company B thought to bring some small measure of joy to the children they saw every day while out on patrol. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Afghan children enjoy Open Day at Kandahar Airfield

Defence News

Hundreds of Afghan schoolchildren met RAF personnel at an Open Day held by the Afghan Air Force at Kandahar Airfield. Around 500 excited youngsters took advantage of a rare opportunity to visit the flight line and get a closer look at an RAF Tornado GR4 aircraft. And some of them spoke to crews from 12 (Bomber) Squadron, normally based at RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, about their own military ambitions. Shamamood, a teacher at a Kandahar children's school, said: "The older children are very interested in becoming pilots. We have not had any go through yet, but it is early days. Maybe it will prove successful in that way in the next few years." The equipment on display from Afghanistan, the USA and the United Kingdom was soon swamped by enthusiastic children who asked lots of questions about what it was like to fly. They were accompanied by other local people and prominent elders. The RAF personnel were delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the event and fielding questions was the Officer Commanding 12 (Bomber) Squadron, Wing Commander Jim Frampton. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## ANA soldiers graduate combat medic course

By Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez



CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan -- The Afghan National Army in southern Helmand has added newly certified combat medics to its ranks. Twenty-one soldiers with various kandaks, or battalions, of the 1st ANA Brigade, 215th Corps, graduated from the brigade's inaugural combat medics course during a here, Jan. 7. Throughout the five-week course, instructors taught the eager ANA soldiers preventative medicine, supply procedures, patient aftercare and clinic operations and procedures, using hands-on, practical application methods. "We also taught the soldiers how to treat patients at the point of injury," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Israel Rosa, a medical advisor

with the Regimental Combat Team 5 embedded training team and 26-year-old native of Stanton, Texas. In addition to on-scene combat lifesaving techniques, students learned how to request a medical evacuation and provide continued care en-route to the next echelon of care. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Major route construction projects near completion in Helmand

By Sgt. Justin Shemanski

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan -- Marine engineers with 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) have nearly completed two major route construction and improvement projects in Helmand province. As of Jan. 3, elements of the Okinawa, Japan-based 9th Engineer Support Battalion completed the road surfacing phases of Routes Red and 611, which each provide north and south passage on their respective sides of the Helmand River. Additional measures are now being put into place over the course of the next month to ensure their permanence, while also marking total project completion. "We'll continue minor improvements along both routes, including culvert emplacements," said Capt. Christopher Kaprielian, a native of San Mateo, Calif., and operations officer for 9th ESB. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Operation Tageer Shamal: Afghans, Marines extend presence west of Helmand River

By Cpl. Reece Lodder



GARMSIR DISTRICT, Afghanistan -- The heart of Garmsir district is safe. Over the past five years, coalition forces have operated with Afghan National Security Forces to defeat the insurgency in the central Helmand River valley. Driven from the green zones, or populated areas, of districts in southern Helmand, enemy fighters have sought refuge in bed-down locations west of the Helmand River. This area on the outskirts of Garmsir district has been, until now, nearly untouched by Afghan and coalition forces and the Afghan government. During Operation Tageer Shamal (Shifting Winds) Afghan forces and Marines with

3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment cleared the area of insurgent activity, weapons and improvised explosive device-making materials, here, Jan. 4-8. From their position of overwatch, Marines with 3/3 are working to transition lead security responsibility of Garmsir to Afghan forces and the district government.

[\(Read the STORY\)](#) [\(See the VIDEO\)](#)

## Teamwork fits new blade on Huey in Afghanistan

By Cpl. Brian Adam Jones

CAMP BASTION, Afghanistan - Marines with the Gunfighters of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 consistently use a proven method to get their aircraft back in the fight – teamwork. In a representation of that method, several Marines from the squadron came together Jan. 8 to manually lift a rotor blade into a UH-1Y Huey helicopter undergoing repairs. “We don’t have an overhead hoist in the hangar so that’s how we have to do it,” said Gunnery Sgt. Aaron Jameson, the squadron’s quality assurance chief, and a native of Lynden, Wash. “Everyone out here is putting everything they have into our mission.” The squadron, deployed from Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., wields the only Marine Corps attack helicopters in Afghanistan. The Gunfighters employ a lethal tandem of UH-1Y Huey and AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## The Coast Guard raids Afghanistan: a look at the RAID Team and what it does

MC3 Class Monique LaRouche



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – The crew of three Coast Guardsmen collect their tools, grab their coffee and head for the parking lot. Hammers, measuring tools, silicone, rivet set, spray paint and a drill are loaded in the back of their pickup as they start out for another day of inspections. Once at the inspection sight, the U.S. Coast Guard Redeployment Assistance and Inspection Detachment Team are greeted by a Marine sergeant dressed for the cold winter morning wearing head gear and gloves. He rattles off numbers and points in the direction of

the cargo containers to be inspected, and the team of Petty Officer 1st Class Nelson Del Valle, Petty Officer 2nd Class Douglas Williams and Petty Officer 2nd Class Albertico Vargas moves out into the yard of large, steel containers. The RAID Team inspects shipping containers for hazardous materials and seaworthiness. The team assesses an average of 300 U.S. government owned and leased containers a month. The large blue, grey and red metal boxes, faded by the sun and damaged by innumerable journeys overseas, must be physically and visually inspected to make sure they can complete the trip safely. The team reviews documents with the container and verifies that the hazardous material being declared is properly labeled, and the quantities being shipped are within the limitations. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## VIGNETTES

### Atlanta Marine sees truth through war

By Sgt. Earnest J. Barnes

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan -- Modern cinema often portrays human life in a manner that seems too surreal, with large explosions and quick timelines that turn hours into a matter of minutes. Sergeant Mamadee Toure recalled growing up in Monrovia, Liberia, seemed like an over-dramatized movie in slow motion, but it was a childhood that led him to what he is doing today. Toure, who now calls Atlanta home, is the maintenance management chief for Headquarters Battalion (Forward). His experiences growing up with war taught him one of the greatest lessons of his young life. Toure said he was



approximately six years old when civil war broke out in his country. He said seeing dead victims of battle was common and came to dislike the reality that was his life. "Have you seen the movie "Blood Diamond?" Some of the stuff that happened in that movie is so raw -- the killing and the brutality. I know it is acting, but that is how it really was," said Toure as he compared his childhood to a film. "Kids were drugged and forced to fight. Child soldiers were everywhere. I cried through it because it brought back so many memories." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Texas corpsman serves with Marines, mentors ANA medics

By Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez



CAMP GARMSIR, Afghanistan -- Marines and sailors with Regimental Combat Team 5 are gradually shifting to an advisory role, vital to the success of Afghan National Security Forces, and the overall mission of coalition forces supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. One service member playing a critical role in the partnering mission in southern Helmand is U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Israel Rosa, a corpsman and medical advisor with the RCT-5 embedded training team. Since joining the Navy in 2006, Rosa has deployed on multiple tours, training military medics in Iraq, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. He joined RCT-5's current deployment as a late addition, bringing his valuable experience to the team. One of Rosa's current

roles is advising the Afghan National Army, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps surgeon. "The brigade surgeon is responsible for the command, control, and administration of all the doctors and medics within the kandaks (battalions) that fall under brigade," explains Rosa, a 26-year-old native of Stanton, Texas. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Great grandfather earns the French Fourragere, great grandson wears it

By Cpl. Johnny Merkley

FORWARD OPERATING BASE GERONIMO, Afghanistan -- A person would be hard pressed to find an organization with the history and traditions as rich as those of the United States Marine Corps. One Marine who holds the Corps' history and traditions especially close to his heart is Cpl. Linton C. Sangster, a 21-year-old native of Cleveland, Ga., and a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense specialist currently serving here with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment. Sangster enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2008 to uphold a family tradition passed down by his two grandfathers and his great grandfather, Pfc. Linton C. Fendley, who served with 2/6, also known as



"The Ready Battalion," during World War I. Sangster stumbled upon his family heritage when he was digging through a box of family photos and discovered his great grandfather fought with 2/6 at Belleau Wood, one of the most famous battles in the history of the Marine Corps. The Battle of Belleau Wood was fought in France in the spring of 1918. During the engagement, Marine forces fought so fiercely that they earned the nickname Teufel Hunden, "Hounds from Hell" or more commonly translated as "Devil Dogs," from their German adversaries. The battle was eventually won by U.S. forces, but not before the Marines sustained the highest rate of casualties from a single battle until that point in the Corps' history. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## VIDEO

### In their voices: Afghan elders speak about transition

By Cpl. Tommy Bellegarde



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan -- In both English and Pashto, elders are speaking out about transition. Haji Ahmad Shah, a block elder for the Marjah district, speaks about the changes he has seen in Marjah in his video interview for a series titled "In their voices." The series provides personal accounts of the areas prior to coalition forces arriving, as well as current conditions, and allows the public to hear directly from Afghan community leaders, security officials and local government officials. Deputy District Governor Mohammad Rasoul Barakzai, deputy district governor of Marjah, talks about Marjah before coalition forces arrived and the progress and development

since insurgents were forced out of the area. This video is part of a series called "In their voices," a compilation of video interviews with key leaders in several areas of Helmand, to include Sangin and Marjah. The series provides personal accounts of the areas prior to coalition forces arriving, as well as current conditions. The "In their voices" series allows the public to hear directly from Afghan community leaders, security officials and local government officials. This unprecedented effort is being provided to inform the public on the key issues of security and development in the province. Several print articles will also be linked to the series to provide further background on the progress the Afghan people have experienced in Helmand as well.

[\(See the latest VIDEO: Council Chairman in Marjah/English\)](#)

[\(See the latest VIDEO: Council Chairman in Marjah/Pashto\)](#)

[\(See the latest VIDEO: Security Chief in Marjah/English\)](#)

[\(See the latest VIDEO: Security Chief in Marjah/Pashto\)](#)

### Helicopter Squadron 464: We are the 911 for the force

By Staff Sgt. Ricardo A. Gomez

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan -- Lt.Col. Alison Thompson, commanding officer, HMM 464, narrates a production covering the Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464's mission in Helmand Province. The video highlights the squadron's missions including assault support to coalition forces where HMM 464 executed over 140 named operations, tactically inserting and extracting Marines. The squadron has also moved supplies and personnel throughout the theatre. Thompson credits her Marines for the hard work behind the squadron's success, "Give these Marines a spoon and they will move a mountain and every single day we move a mountain to launch these aircraft." Included is a stunning segment of a downed helo pick up and transport shot by Staff Sgt. Ricardo A. Gomez. "We are the 911 force for the 2nd MAW and greater Helmand province. Anyone who needed something lifted, they gave us a call," Thompson said. [\(STORY\)](#)



## Marine, Afghan Leaders Gather for Lead Security Transition Ceremony

By Cpl. Daniel Wulz



ZARANGE, Afghanistan --Marine Corps and Afghan leadership from Regional Command Southwest for a ceremony to mark the transition of lead security in Zaranj, Nimroz province, Afghanistan from coalition forces to Afghan forces. The ceremony featured several key speakers including Maj. Gen. John A. Toolan, commanding general RC(SW). Coalition forces' security personnel will work closely with the security forces in Nimroz, said Toolan, adding that where there is a need, we will fill it. "Nimroz province has been operating on its own for a long time," Toolan said. "Today was verification that the Afghan security forces are able to do the job." The

event also featured a ceremonial flag raising and colorful images of the ceremony. [\(See the VIDEO\)](#)

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## SPECIAL: OUR DUTY TO PROTECT

*During the years Marines have worked with our Afghan partners, our goals have been to assist the Afghan people with establishing peace for the first time in thirty years, the foundations of good governance and economic development. In this special section of this week's Round-up, we present stories that chronicle our protection, humane treatment and resultant progress the people of Afghanistan have experienced as a direct result of the U.S. Marine Corps presence.*

### Soldiers practice Pashto, protect the people

By Spc. Edward Garibay

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Language barriers can make it difficult for units deployed to Afghanistan, but one unit is fighting against that barrier by using the local language and achieving positive results in the process. Pashto is the main language spoken by villagers in southern Afghanistan and that is why most of the Soldiers of 3rd Platoon, Mad Dog Troop, 4th Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, have taken it upon themselves to learn a basic form of the language during their deployment, said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Dustin L. Carroll, the unit's platoon sergeant. "When you use their language, it shows you accept them," said Carroll, a Forest City, N.C., native. "It breaks that ice. You throw it out there and usually they're more receptive." One of the main benefits of speaking Pashto is the ability to connect with the Afghan people directly, said U.S. Army Sgt. John M. Davis, a team leader for 3rd Platoon, Mad Dog Troop, 4th Squadron, 2SCR. He can be seen on patrol speaking Pashto to just about everyone he comes into contact with. [\(STORY\)](#)



## Afghan Uniformed Police graduates ready to protect people of southern Helmand province

By Staff Sgt. Andrew Miller



REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER SOUTHWEST LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan --The people of Afghanistan saw their country take another step forward toward continued security and stability as more than 220 Afghan Uniformed Police graduated here, Sept. 7. These graduates, hailing from Marjah, Nawa and Garmsir districts, will be the newest faces of Afghan security forces as they begin their duties protecting the citizens of southern Helmand province. RTC(SW), which will soon change its name to Lashkar Gah Police Training Center, has been operating for almost three years. "I've been instructing here since January, and this is the sixth cycle that I have personally

graduated," said Police Constable Gordon Morrison, an AUP police adviser from Perth, Scotland. "There are usually around 200 who graduate from each class with only an eight percent attrition rate." The AUP course is eight weeks long and is taught by both Afghan and foreign instructors. The foreign instructors, like Morrison, focus on criminal investigation techniques, marksmanship and counter improvised explosive device courses. Additionally, AUP students are taught basic policing skills, vehicle checkpoint procedures, police station security, and self-defense skills. Most of the curriculum here is taught with a heavy emphasis on practical application. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Marines protect Afghans during firefight in Marjah

By Pfc. Andrew Johnston

MARJAH, Afghanistan -- Marines and sailors with Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, engaged enemy insurgents in a firefight while conducting a census patrol in Marjah, Aug. 16. A group of Afghan children weaved up and down the road riding their bicycles through a small herd of livestock cheering, "Americans good, Taliban no good!" to a squad of patrolling Marines and sailors. The squad smiled and waved to the children as they veered down a path steering the evenings patrol towards a group of farming compounds. The squad announced their presence, house by house, and asked the



head of each household to come outside and reveal their names and number of occupants. Out of nowhere, loud cracks of gunfire ripped through the air. The squad's objective quickly changed from collecting census data to fighting the Taliban and protecting civilians. Over the past year, ISAF forces have collected census data from local Afghans in order to distinguish friends from foes. The data Cpl. Daniel B. Wyss, a squad leader with Golf Company, 2/9, and his squad collects plays a vital role to their area of operation, keeping the area out of Taliban control. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

# Repetitive yet reliable, vehicle checkpoints protect Afghans and Marines

By Cpl. Reece Lodder



SAR BANADAR, Afghanistan -- A short distance off a dusty Afghan road, two U.S. Marines brave the chill of an early winter morning as they await a flood of local traffic. Lance Cpls. Jesus Oliver and Andrew Penwitt are unusually chipper for this early in the morning, with an increased level of alertness from a four-hour shift of standing watch in a guard post. A motorcycle exhaust mutters in the distance and interrupts their quiet chatter. They're in business. Oliver perches atop a mound of dirt and waves a red flag, signaling for the driver to stop. Simultaneously,

Penwitt walks onto the road to greet the Afghan man with his best attempt at Pashto. His vocabulary is limited, but Penwitt pairs simple phrases with hand signals to ask the man to dismount his motorcycle for a search. After countless hours of observing and searching, these Marines have become masters at conducting vehicle checkpoints. Their efforts are matched by the remainder of the 81mm mortar platoon from Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Marines battle Taliban, protect locals

By Cpl. Ned Johnson

SANGIN, Afghanistan -- When the Marines of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 2, set out on patrol, Aug. 3, a simple civil affairs mission turned into an on-going firefight. The task was to provide security during transport of a civil affairs team to talk to the locals about how Marines could help them, said Staff Sgt. Jesus Suarez, a platoon sergeant with Company K, 3rd Bn., 7th Marines. Just a few minutes after the locals said their village had not seen fighting in a year, insurgents attacked with small arms and machine gun fire. "We had a main effort push into the village and start conducting key leader engagements," Suarez said. "That was when we got attacked by enemy forces." The Marines immediately found protection for nearby villagers and returned fire. "The [insurgent] element was probably a squad size element," said Derek Hopkins, a mortarman with Company K, 3rd Bn., 7th Marines. After fighting continued for several minutes, Marines used fire superiority and movement to gain advantage over the enemy. Once the firing stopped, the Marines continued on the mission. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## 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. "I'm grateful for the help of the Marines. I'm a poor man, and I could do nothing about my son's injuries." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## RAS aids Afghan girl with healing touch

*By Sgt. Dorian Gardner*

CAMP DELARAM II, Afghanistan -- A group of nomad Afghans approached Camp Delaram II seeking medical attention and to their delight, a corpsman didn't hesitate to provide that attention here, March 9. According to Petty Officer 3rd Class Paul Ward, a corpsman with 2d Low Altitude Air Defense, a small contingent came across the wandering family during a routine patrol around the outer perimeter of the base. "The interpreter said the girl had a cut on her hand," said Ward. "When I first saw it, I was taken back. It was pretty infected, swollen twice its size." The laceration was caused by a machine used to crush grain. After 20 days without medical attention, the girl's hand became swollen and infected, according to Sr. Chief Kenneth Willburn. If they had waited any longer, Sepsis would have set in, Willburn added. As a result of possible Sepsis, a form of blood poisoning, her internal organs would begin to systematically shut down. After they shut down, the girl would eventually die. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Marines, sailors win hearts and minds by healing

*By Gunnery Sgt. Bryce Piper*



HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- U.S. Marines and sailors conducting counterinsurgency operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan, conducted a Community Health Initiative in Kakar village, March 1, and a second CHI in Aminollah Kariz village, March 2. Marines and sailors with Battalion Landing Team 3/8, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Regimental Combat Team 8, and Afghan Dr. Rahmat Gul from Gereshk Hospital working with a local national non-governmental organization examined and treated patients and distributed vitamins and medication to residents of Kakar and surrounding villages, March 1. They repeated their efforts in Aminollah Kariz,

March 2. "The goal here is to establish relationships between the local communities and local docs," said Navy Lt. Kurt Eifling, battalion surgeon for BLT 3/8. "These relationships make a huge difference to get follow-on care to the people who need it, a series of visits that will be more meaningful." In Kakar, Marines and sailors began setting up the health initiative, including private examination booths, a pharmacy table and waiting area, early in the morning at a patrol base previously established by BLT 3/8's Company I.

[\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## ANA, Marine partnership establishes combat medics course

By Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez

CAMP GARMSIR, Afghanistan -- As a squad of Afghan National Army soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, patrols a dusty road, chaos ensues. A Marine advisor calls out that a simulated improvised explosive device exploded, and points to two Afghan soldiers, who fall to the ground as mock casualties. Several ANA soldiers immediately set up security, as another soldier rushes to aid the casualties. Within 10 minutes, the trainee has performed a combat life saver triage, and the casualty is being evacuated to the nearest clinic in an Afghan ambulance. The carefully controlled chaos is part of the final exercise for the inaugural 1/215 combat medic course here, Dec. 31. "The course will be able to help us train soldiers to become medics and support our medical section," said Maj. Abdul Baqi, the surgeon in charge of medical operations with 1/215. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)[\(See the VIDEO\)](#)



## Marines, sailors provide medical care to Afghan women, children throughout northern Marjah

By Cpl. Megan Sindelar



MARJAH, Afghanistan – Due to cultural sensitivities, medical treatment for Afghan women is extremely difficult, forcing them to travel to the Helmand provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, or even crossing national borders into Pakistan. To improve the quality of life and health care for this sect of Afghan society, a team consisting of female Marines and sailors embarked on a ten-day mission throughout northern Marjah, Afghanistan, July 5, to provide medical care to the Afghan people. With the medical engagement consisting of female medical personnel, this was the first time most of the visiting Afghan women received medical care. The team, including a Marine

female engagement team from Regimental Combat Team 7 and medical personnel from Combat Logistics Battalion 5, set up medical tents for approximately two days each at four Marjah locations. The medical officer and corpsman treated 97 patients, primarily women and children, who traveled to each medical site from their homes. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Marines facilitate veterinary care for Afghan farmers

By Sgt. Scott Whittington

GARMSIR DISTRICT, Afghanistan -- The expression "goat rope" usually refers to something unorganized, but service members here helped local farmers with their roped goats, sheep and cows with free medical treatment. Marines from 4th Civil Affairs Group, attached to 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 3, hosted the project for Afghan livestock, Oct. 9, in the Garmsir District center. "It's not just something nice to have," said Capt. Micah P. Caskey IV, civil affairs officer. "This is the people's livelihood." More than 60 farmers, and one local veterinarian, brought 717 animals — sheep, goats and cows — to the market to get complimentary veterinary



treatment to treat and prevent worms and illnesses. Two military animal doctors from the U.S. Army and British Royal Army provided their assistance for the civil action project. U.S. Army Capt. John M. Winston III, one of the two veterinarians, thought the clinic "was fantastic." The 28-year-old from the 993rd Medical Detachment Veterinary Services is a Cairo, Ga., native. "We directly engaged with and helped the Afghan people," he said. This project is another prime example of cooperation between the Afghan government, Afghan national security forces and the International Security Assistance Force, according to Caskey.

[\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Solar energy project provides new opportunities for shop owners in southern Afghanistan

By Cpl. Meredith Brown



NAWA DISTRICT, Afghanistan – A single solar panel is mounted above a shop, a wire runs from the panel into the shop and attaches to a car battery, providing the only source of power for the shopkeeper. The storeowner operates a small photography studio, where he takes photos in his shop and prints them out for his customers. Situations like this are common for the shopkeepers in Nawa district who do not have a central power source. Many residents throughout the northern half of Helmand receive their energy from the hydroelectric power plant located at the Kajaki dam. However, the power supply does not reach Nawa, which is located in the southern

portion of Helmand province. Now, with the help of a solar energy project in the district, there is a new opportunity for the shopkeepers in the Nawa bazaar. Nearly 150 shops in the bazaar will be able to receive steady power from the project. Capt. Brandon Newell, Expeditionary Energy Liaison Officer for Regional Command Southwest and a native of St. Amant, La., says this is the first type of large-scale solar hybrid project in Helmand to date. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## A beacon of progress: new bridge highlights development in Helmand

By Cpl. Jeff Drew

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Helmand province, Afghanistan – An opening ceremony for the newly constructed wadi crossing in Musa Qal'eh, Helmand province, today serves as a shining beacon of the progress evident throughout Helmand province. The wadi crossing is a bridge across a riverbed that is often impassible in the rainy season, and it connects the district center with neighboring communities, opening access to local markets and towns, improving commerce and facilitating travel year-round. The crossing, composed of two 60-meter spans, is considered vital for surrounding towns. Its completion exemplifies the partnership between the Government of the Islamic



Republic of Afghanistan and International Security Assistance Force agencies working together to provide local solutions, and GIRoA's growing capability in governance and development, according to Maj. Frank Diorio, executive officer of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, which is currently located in Musa Qal'eh. The wadi crossing is the most recent in a series of successes throughout Helmand province, made possible, in part, by sustained improvements in security via a growing and confident Afghan security force and a determined GIRoA working with local elders, all of which supported by U.S. Marines and other coalition forces. This continued progress of critical infrastructure development contributes to the ultimate goal of transitioning the reigns of security to Afghan forces. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

# Operation Eastern Storm returns commerce, residents to Kajaki Sofla Bazaar

By Cpl. James Clark



KAJAKI SOFLA DISTRICT, Afghanistan – Columns of mopeds, caravans of pack animals, and an endless stream of trucks, tractors and trailers heralds the return of local residents to the Kajaki Sofla District. The area was nearly a ghost town when the Marines of 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, and Afghan soldiers inserted during Operation Tofan Sharq (Eastern Storm). In recent days, however, there has been a slow, but steady return to normalcy as the insurgent threat in the area has been systematically eliminated. The goal of this major offensive operation is to force the Taliban-led insurgency in the Upper Sangin Valley region out of Kajaki. Coalition and Afghan National Security Forces pushed north from Sangin along Route 611, clearing insurgents out of the area along the way and securing the road leading to the once-terrorized village. The offensive has allowed local residents to return to their homes and brought commerce back to the local bazaar. The bazaar, a major hub for the local community, is a clear indicator of the operation’s success thus far. The number of people shopping and selling their wares, the reception Marines and ANSF members receive when they pass through, and the number of

local residents who hang around when coalition forces are present, serve as indicators of the improved conditions. [\(STORY\)](#)

## Patrolling, Police, Poppies: Marines, Afghan police connect with locals while on patrol

By Lance Cpl. Daniel Wulz



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Every day Marines from Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, stationed at Combat Outpost Rankel in Helmand province, Afghanistan, patrol the village of Safar and the area that surrounds it. Marines and Afghan Uniformed Police conducted land assessments and security patrols after surveying AUP checkpoints, April 16. The goal of patrolling with the local AUP is to supplement the relationship between Afghan police and the community, as well as gain information about insurgent activity. “The patrol turned out very well,” said Staff Sgt. Brendan G. Flynn, the staff non-commissioned officer in charge of Police Mentor Team

Safar, Echo Company, 2/1. “We learned from the people that the Taliban is pushing out letters trying to get money and support. The most successful patrols I have are the ones where we gain information. Marines don’t have to kill someone or blow something up to have a good patrol.” The Marines’ focus in their many patrols is establishing the presence of the AUP by helping Afghan forces build outposts of their own. This helps the police to build respect and trust within the local community, and eliminate threats from improvised explosive devices. Part of eliminating threats in the area of operation includes removing the means by which insurgents make money. [\(STORY\)](#)

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