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## NEWS

### Afghan forces, Marines meet locals, drive back insurgency in Sangin

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Jacob Harrer



SANGIN DISTRICT, Afghanistan - Afghan soldiers from the Afghan National Army 4th Tolai, 2nd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps and Marines from Weapons Co., 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, met with villagers and searched for insurgent assets in Reygion and De Kahkesh Karez during Operation Southern Disrupt, here, recently. Over the past two years, Sangin has evolved from a hotbed of insurgency, littered with improvised explosive devices, to a relatively calmer district with minimal intimidation. "With all the success that we've had here inside Sangin, you don't see the enemy push all the way in anymore," said 1st Lt. Matt T. Perry, 2nd Platoon commander from Slidell, La. As the ANA and Marines

increased their presence in Sangin since 2010, the insurgents moved to the fringe of these villages to resupply, plan operations, and construct IEDs, added Perry. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

### 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines charge Alekhine's Gun

Story and photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Robert Storm

PATROL BASE HABIB, Afghanistan - Together with their Afghan National Army partners, the Marines and sailors from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines conducted operation Alekhine's Gun in Musa Qal'eh District, Afghanistan. The "Magnificent Bastards," as the Marines of 2/4 are known, launched a heliborne and motorized night raid into areas suspected of housing improvised explosive device production training camps and drug running operations. The raid was intended to disrupt these operations and search for high value personnel. "We used our night vision and speed to surprise them," said 1st Sgt. Adam Bala, 37, Golf Company first sergeant, from San Diego, Calif. "We obviously caught them off guard, there was some initial resistance but we overcame it quickly." During the operation, the Marines seized a deserted police compound as a command post and then searched all buildings in the city to find weapons caches. The speed and timing of the initial push was used to confuse and disrupt insurgents from effectively counter-attacking. Several enemy fighters abandoned their weapons and fled. Some of them attacked the Marines with indirect fire but friendly forces quickly overwhelmed them. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## UK soldiers help Afghan-led operation disrupt insurgents

U.K. Defence News



British soldiers from 2nd Battalion The Rifles (2 RIFLES) have helped Afghan security forces in an operation to clear insurgents from an area close to Gereshk in Nahr-e Saraj district, Helmand province. Around 1,000 soldiers and police from the Afghan National Security Forces cleared an area known as the Bowri Dashte to the west of Gereshk. The Dashte is open country with scattered settlements just outside the verdant Green Zone, which runs alongside the Helmand River. The forces - made up of 850 Afghan National Army (ANA) warriors and 80 Afghan Uniform Police - were joined by 250 British soldiers from 2 RIFLES and other regiments, who acted in an advisory role. British troops are deployed in three districts of Helmand province and Nahr-e

Saraj is the last where Task Force Helmand retains the lead for security following the transition of Nad 'Ali and Lashkar Gah. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## RAF Regiment leads operation against Taliban bomb-makers

U.K. Defence News

Members of the RAF Regiment have found and destroyed a large cache of Taliban IED-making equipment in an operation conducted alongside Afghan and US forces. Operation DISHATA PASHA (Pashtu for 'backfoot') was launched at dawn on Monday 6 February 2012, with RAF Regiment troops from II Squadron. The force also included warriors from the Afghan Army's 3rd Brigade of 215 Corps, and US Marines from II Marine Expeditionary Force. The troops deployed by US Osprey aircraft, with its unique tilt-rotor capability, and the operation resulted in the finding and destruction of a suspected insurgent IED cache close to Bastion Airfield in Helmand province. They also acquired a wealth of intelligence despite coming under fire several times. The operation took place in the dashte (or desert) south of Bastion Airfield, whose protection is the task of II Squadron, operating as part of 3 RAF Force Protection Wing. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Operation Shahem Tofan: Afghan Border Police, Marines extend reach toward Helmand border

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Reece Lodder



GARMSIR DISTRICT, Afghanistan - The thunderous clap of low-flying helicopters reverberates off an endless desert landscape. Inside the mechanical fortress, rows of Afghan Border Police and U.S. Marines stare out the open back hatch, calmly watching the wilderness rapidly retract beneath them. Hazy brown clouds explode skyward, masking the helicopters as they descend into the dust. Shadowy figures emerge and rush into a security cordon as the rotor wash dissipates. Within moments, they've established communication with their now distant headquarters. Any thoughts of the showy entrance quickly fade as members of the partnered force pick up bulky packs and begin moving to

their next position. A laborious hike leads them to a shallow bowl carved out of a sand dune, their patrol base during Operation Shahem Tofan (Eagle Storm) here, Feb. 10-13. In the barren Registan Desert near the former Forward Operating Base Rhino — the first U.S. position established in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom — ABP and Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, scoured dusty highways for smugglers and insurgents moving across the eastern desert into Helmand province. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## RCT-6 Marines continue to mentor Afghan National Army

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Ed Galo

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELARAM II, Afghanistan - Since their arrival to Afghanistan, Marines with the Embedded Training Team, Regimental Combat Team 6 have been training and partnering with their counter parts from the Afghan National Army's 3rd Tolay, 1st Kandak. The Marines' mission is far from simple. Their daily tasks include supervising, advising, and training the ANA in order to assist them in becoming self sufficient and able to operate alone, once the United States and other partner nations leave Afghanistan. "Today we went on a mobile patrol to Delaram I, an ANA compound," said Staff Sgt. Johnny Arnold, senior enlisted advisor, from Seymour, Texas. "I talk to their sergeant major daily," Arnold added, who acts as a mentor to the tolay (American equivalent to a company) staff. "We have a decent relationship. I sort of advise him on what to do and let him know we're there in case they ever need anything." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Never a Bridge Too Far: Combat Engineers increase mobility in Garmsir

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Bryan Nygaard



GARMSIR, Afghanistan - During the last week of January, fifty-five Marines of Bridge Platoon, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) traveled nearly 80 miles through the central portion of Helmand province in order to reach Combat Outpost Rankel, a small base located in the district of Garmsir, Helmand province. Their mission consisted of removing a medium girder bridge and replacing it with a more permanent and cost-efficient structure that would increase the mobility of the Marines and Afghans in the area.

However, getting to the bridge site was half of the battle. The Marines convoyed from Leatherneck to Rankel in armored vehicles carrying more than 100,000 pounds of construction equipment and building materials, on roads that were often unpaved. The convoy was held up several times by stuck vehicles and threats from possible IEDs (improvised explosive devices). As a result, the convoy took nearly 5 days to reach a destination that would normally take 30 minutes by helicopter. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Serving America: MWSS Marines earn their citizenship in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Thousands of immigrants from nations across the globe become American citizens every year. Only a few have the honor to fight for their adopted nation before earning the right to become a citizen of the United States. Even fewer have the courage to join the Marines Corps in that fight.

Three Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, all coming from different walks of life, were naturalized as American citizens here, Feb. 10. These Marines became American citizens in a foreign land, during a time of war; a unique experience, and one that further illustrates their commitment to their adopted nation. With the promise of liberty and great opportunity not available in many other countries, America has long been a destination for those seeking for a better life. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Working dogs are Marine's best friend

Story and photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Robert Storm



PATROL BASE HABIB, Afghanistan - A rifle may be a Marine's best friend in combat, but a close second goes to the military working dogs that go out with the Marines of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines every day. "The Marines are very pleased with my dog, TTroy," said Cpl. Derrick Magee, 21, dog handler, from Vineland, N.J. "He helps keep us alive and I keep him happy, emotions travel down the leash, the dog can tell how you feel and will feel and act in the same way, so you have to be positive." TTroy was bred at Lackland Air Force Base and is identified as part of the puppy program by his double consonant first name. The puppy program takes 2 military working dogs and breeds them. "I guess they figure

that two successful dogs will give you more successful puppies," Magee laughed. "All the K-9 corps for every service is trained at Lackland, so that's where they breed them." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Afghan soldiers take over new patrol base

U.K. Defence News

Nearly 300 members of the Afghan National Army have taken command of a new patrol base in Lashkar Gah district, Helmand province, built with the assistance of UK forces. Patrol Base Jahan Zeb, which was built by Afghan contractors over four months, has been officially handed over to 280 warriors of the 4th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 215 Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA). Lieutenant Colonel Ian Mortimer, Commanding Officer of The Queen's Royal Hussars Battle Group, officially transferred command of the base to Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Karem Khan, commanding officer of the Kandak, during a short ribbon-cutting ceremony. The fully air-conditioned and comfortable accommodation is far superior to that which the warriors usually live in and will provide security to the Lashkar Gah district and to the vital Route 601 in the area.



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

## NMCB-4 transfers authority of Camp Krutke to NMCB-11 in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Jonathan Carmichael



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 4 transferred authority of Camp Krutke to NMCB-11 in an afternoon ceremony on Camp Krutke, a part of Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, Afghanistan on Feb. 13, 2012. Cmdr. La Tanya Simms, commanding officer, NMCB-4 and Cmdr. Lore Aguayo, commanding officer, NMCB-11 exchanged salutes before a flag detail replaced NMCB-4's battalion colors with NMCB-11's to signify the official transfer of authority. Guests of honor were Commanding General, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), Brig. Gen. Michael Dana and Assistant Chief of

Staff C-7, Col. Kurt Kempster. Also in attendance were service members representing II Marine Expeditionary Force, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 3, 30th Naval Construction Regiment, Task Force Leatherneck and 14th Engineer Battalion. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## VIGNETTES

### Arkansas sailor serves 411-day active duty tour

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan - Day in and day out, reservists from every service are making sacrifices for their families, friends and their country. One Navy reservist's current active duty tour has kept her away from home for 411 days. Petty Officer 2nd Class Nanetta Good, an operations specialist with Destroyer Squadron 40 attached to Regimental Combat Team 5 and native of Crossett, Ark., was activated Dec. 29, 2010 for her current deployment. Good enlisted in the Navy in 1994, serving on active duty until 1999. She has been a reservist for 12 years since then. Even during her youth, Good always knew that she wanted to join the military to serve her country. "I grew up in Arkansas," said Good. "I remember doing the Pledge of Allegiance... I guess I've always been patriotic." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



### Boy Scout contacts former troop leader in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Spc. Chelsea Russell



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Behind the desk of British Royal Navy Capt. Stuart Borland, deputy chief of stability operations for Regional Command (Southwest), is an oversized portrait of George Washington. As a native of Portsmouth, England, Borland said his passion for American history and its founding father is sometimes viewed as an oddity by his fellow countrymen. Ever since he volunteered to participate in the Navy's Personnel Exchange Program 19 years ago, Borland's military career has been closely interwoven with America and its history. As part of the exchange program, a U.S. Navy officer is sent to work with the Royal navy in the United Kingdom while an officer from the Royal navy is sent to work with the U.S. Navy. Borland

also served with U.S. forces during a tour in Iraq. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

### A Marine's Journal – 1st Lt. David Morgenstern

Story and photos by Marine 1st Lt. David Morgenstern

In Bangor, Maine there is a group of people that greets each flight carrying deploying or returning U.S. troops. I first met a few of them in March 2010 when, as a new second lieutenant in the Marine Corps, I passed through on my way to Afghanistan. There was a greeting line of maybe a dozen or more, each shaking the hand of every single Marine and sailor – several hundred on our flight alone. For whatever reason, I vividly recall the feel of one elderly veteran's hand as he shook mine: his skin was dry and slightly cooler than mine, his grip firmer than I expected and reassuring. His mouth was saying thank you for serving, but his handshake said I made it and so will you. It was to the former that I had difficulty responding. Usually I answer "thank you" with "no problem," "don't mention it" or "no worries." None seemed appropriate under the circumstances, and I'm sure I mumbled something like "you're welcome it." In all the time since, when people thank me for my service I still almost always flub the response. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## **VIDEO**

### **Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest - A 3 Part Series**

*Videos by Marine Cpl. Meredith Brown*



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - A look back into the history of the Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest, why it was founded and where it is at today. U.S. and coalition forces at the Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest trained more than 2,500 students in various courses throughout the past year. As the students graduate and return to their units, the successes in the field are not small in numbers. As U.S. troops prepare to withdraw from Afghanistan, the future of the Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest is slowly being put into Afghan hands.

**(VIDEO: History of the Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest)**

**(VIDEO: JSAS: A Model for Success)**

**(VIDEO: Future of JSAS: Afghans Teaching Afghans)**

### **Commanding General Reflects: Parts 1-3 of a 6 Part Series**

*Videos by Marine Cpl. Marco Mancha*



Second Marine Division (Forward) is releasing a new six-part series today entitled "Commanding general reflects on Helmand." The series of intimate interviews with the commanding general of 2nd Marine Division (Forward) highlights the challenges and successes the Marines and sailors of the division made during their tenure as the ground combat element of the Marine Air Ground Task Force and Regional Command (Southwest) during the last year.

**(VIDEO: Commanding General Reflects on Helmand Part 1 of 6)**

**(VIDEO: Commanding General Reflects on Helmand Part 2 of 6)**

**(VIDEO: Commanding General Reflects on Helmand Part 3 of 6)**

## **UAV Training**

*Video by Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Symonds*



The U.S. military has a wide range of tools in its arsenal. Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Symonds has a birds eye view of one of the tool used to help soldiers stay safe. The Puma is a small UAV unmanned aerial vehicle can be assembled with just a two man crew. **(Watch the VIDEO)**

## **MEDIA COVERAGE/Interviews**

**Major General Glenn M. Walters interview with WTKF-FM , Jacksonville, N.C.**

**MSgt Fredrico Williams interview with Fox Sports Radio, National**

**UWG Professor Plays Key Role in Afghanistan - University of West Georgia**

**Marine 'Bastards' Do A Magnificent Job - USA Patriotism**

**Marine 'Bastards' do a magnificent job - Marine Corps news Room**

### **SHOUTOUTS**

**Lance Cpl. Joseph Streeby, Princeton, W.V.**

**Lance Cpl. John Shaffer, Wavoryl, N.Y.**

**Marine Cpl. Steven Finlayson, Detroit, M.I.**

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