

Regional Command Southwest

Round-up

Weekly PAQ Report

----- May 13, 2013 -----



NEWS

Training the trainer: ANCOF policemen take steps to teach their own

Story and Photos by Sgt. Bryan Peterson

LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan - Sergeant First Class Jamal Nasir knew the time would come when the Afghan National Security Forces would take the lead of security in Afghanistan. While serving as an Afghan National Army commando, Nasir said he saw the transition slowly unfold. Nasir fought alongside Marines in Helmand Province for four years and watched as they gradually shifted the responsibility of leading daily patrols to the Afghans.



Now, the time has come for Nasir to take the lead. As an explosive ordinance technician with the 7th Brigade Afghan National Civil Order of Police, Nasir has been given the responsibility to teach others within his unit.

Nasir and Sergeant Second Class Najibullah Rasooli are being evaluated as they teach the monthlong Explosive Hazard Reduction Course throughout May. At the end of the evaluation period, they hope to be certified as instructors and make the transition from solely knowing their job to teaching other police officers how to do their job. It's a role Nasir takes very seriously and is happy to accept. ([Read the STORY](#))

'Over the shoulder' advising: SFAATs take the next approach

Story and photos by Sgt. Bryan Peterson

SANGIN DISTRICT, Afghanistan - Late last year, Coalition Forces in Regional Command (Southwest) shifted from a "shoulder-to-shoulder" role in which they patrolled alongside Afghan National Security Forces. Now the service members from six contributing nations have taken on an advise and assist strategy.



From foot patrols and clearing operations to supply and logistics operations, the ANSF are in the lead.

The strategy, Security Force Assistance, was developed by International Security Assistance Force and approved by NATO in early 2011. The goal of SFA is that ANSF takes the lead for providing security for the population throughout Afghanistan by 2014. ([Read the STORY](#))

Retrograding Home: Redeployment a focus of effort as Afghanistan exit draws closer

Story and photos by Cpl. Lia Adkins

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan - In 2009, Camp Dwyer was a sprawling base which housed thousands of service members ready to fight. Most of them were the result of a 30,000 troop surge in Afghanistan introduced by President Barack Obama.

Four years later, the camp, located in the Garmser district of Helmand province, is a skeleton of what it once was. Millions of dollars of equipment used to fight insurgency once littered the base, but today there are few signs it ever existed. Empty lots surrounded by gated walls are primarily what remain here.

For the Marine Corps, these lots represent progress— transitioning from a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy to an increased focus on security force assistance. But for the Marines of Redeployment and Retrograde in Support of Reset and Reconstitution Operations Group (R4OG), each lot represents hours of hard work. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



In time of transition, Marines support Afghan advisors

Story and photos by Sgt. Ned Johnson

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— Military unit organization has been standardized over hundreds of years— divisions, regiments, battalions and companies.



Yet in 2013, the mission in Helmand province, Afghanistan, has forced a change from conventional warfare units to smaller units who advise Afghan National Security Forces.

These advisors are formed into Security Forces Assistance Advisor Teams that are much smaller than a Marine company. Without the standard setup of a battalion, these Marine teams require a different type of support. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Generation at War

Story by Sgt. Bobby Yarbrough

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - The violence in Iraq was reaching its pinnacle in 2004 when Chris Taylor received his deployment orders to Al-Anbar province. Marines had just bloodied their way through the first Battle of Fallujah and insurgency within the country was beginning to expand as sectarian clashes divided the nation.

At the time, Taylor was newly married and just learning how to balance his life with his wife Angela. He had recently graduated the Defense Language Institute as an Arabic linguist and was just getting settled into their new home in Jacksonville, N.C., when he found out his unit, 2nd Radio Battalion, was to deploy.

Angela was speechless. Taylor comforted his wife the best he could, but anticipation, fear, and excitement gripped his own thoughts. As a corporal, Taylor had never deployed before and didn't know what to expect. But as a young noncommissioned officer, he knew he needed to be in Iraq. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

VIGNETTES

Marine father deploys to Afghanistan, closer to his son

Story and photos by Sgt. Bryan Peterson

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Chief Warrant Officer 5 Brice Thomas thought once the war in Iraq came to an end, combat deployments would be a thing of the past for him given his 25 years in the Marine Corps, three combat tours and the drawdown in Afghanistan. But fate had a different plan.

Thomas arrived in Afghanistan in April after another Marine here redeployed on emergency leave. Though he wasn't seeking his fourth deployment, Thomas was pleased. He knew the deployment would bring him closer to a Marine who had been in his prayers – his son Lance Cpl. Brice Thomas, II, who arrived in November to Camp Dwyer in Helmand province for a yearlong tour.



Thomas knew they would be stationed at different bases in Afghanistan, but found comfort in the fact they both would be able to serve together in Afghanistan. Marines often develop strong relationships during deployments, combat and training exercises. While he and his son already have a solid bond, he said the deployment will have same impact on them due to the shared understanding of adversity. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Guinea Marine becomes US citizen

Story and photo by Cpl. Lia Adkins



CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan - Lance Cpl. Mamadou Balde's father, Al, always hoped his son would earn his U.S. citizenship. Balde, a maintenance mechanic with General Support 2 Platoon, Retrograde Operations Company, Redeployment and Retrograde in Support of Reset and Reconstitution Operations Group, finally earned his citizenship in a ceremony at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan, March 1.

Balde's journey to citizenship took patience, strength, and sacrifice. Balde was born in Guinea, a war-torn country in West Africa that has been in constant turmoil since gaining independence in 1958. For nearly 10 years, he and his two siblings lived with his grandmother and immediate relatives in Guinea until Al, who had immigrated to the U.S. in 1990, could build a better life for them.

"My dad wanted to get us away from all the constant fighting," said Balde. "I didn't really get to know him until I was almost 10 years old." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

VIDEO

3/4 Trains ANA on 60mm Mortar

Video by Cpl. Kowshon Ye

U.S. Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 7, train Afghan National Army soldiers on how to use the M224 mortar system on Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge in Kajaki, Afghanistan, May 6, 2013. The training included firing from the hand held, range estimation and immediate action drills. (U.S. Marine Corps motion imagery by Cpl. Kowshon Ye) [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



Hearts and Minds 101

Video by Cpl. Oscar Vasqueztorres



Army advisers train Afghan National Army soldiers on how to start a Psy Ops team. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

Zero One

Video by Cpl. Oscar Vasqueztorres

A Marine lieutenant takes some Afghan soldiers under his wing by teaching them how to use a computer. Includes sound bites from Lt. Dominic Chiaverotti, Communications Advisor. Also available in high definition. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



Train the Trainer ANCOP EOD

Video by Cpl. Casimir Krul



Service members train Afghan National Civil Order Police on Explosive Ordnance Disposal tactics in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Includes sound bites from Jamal Nasir, ANCOP IEDD Instructor and Lt. Col. Jason Drake, Commander, 7th Brigade ANCOP. Also available in high definition. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

Marketed/Republished Combat Correspondent Product

Marine Sgt. Jason A. Knuth talks to a KCDZ 107.7 FM Online reporter about his duties working in intelligence and being chosen Marine of the Week.

Marine Cpl. Damian G. Davis talks to a KCDZ 107.7 FM Online reporter, in Joshua Tree, Calif., about his current duties while deployed to Afghanistan.

Guinea Marine becomes US citizen — Story about Lance Cpl. Mamadou Balde, a Marine who immigrated to the United States from Guinea, Africa, earning his citizenship while deployed to Afghanistan. Posted in the Black Anthem News.

To see more news, videos and photos of Regional Command Southwest Marines, sailors, soldiers, airmen and our coalition partners, please visit our [Facebook](#) page by clicking here.