

ON POINT!



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COVER

Afghan National Army Soldiers of the D-30 Artillery Battery, 4th Kandak, 2-205 ANA Corps, fire high explosive rounds during a culminating training event completing 16 weeks of partnership training with their U.S. counterparts of the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment and 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment at Forward Operating Base Wolverine, Afghanistan, July 4, 2012.

BACK COVER

(Photos by Capt. Marius Dinita, Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg and Sgt. Christopher McCullough, Combined Task Force Arrowhead Public Affairs) (Illustration by Spc. Mark Neace)

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Panjwai farmers learn valuable skills

Story and photos by Sgt. Matt Young, 117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment The Panjwai District Headquarters in Kandahar province hosted 19 local farmers during a four day Post Harvest Processing and Marketing Training Class with the graduation held here July 7, 2012.

The class was very important to their grape, raisin, pomegranate and tomato production in the Panjwai District, since Panjwai has become prevalent in its production of grapes.

Kandahar University instructor, Humadullah explained that the farmers were very enthusiastic and asked many thought provoking questions throughout the course.

"I really enjoyed the class, I learned new ways to cut and hang the grapes and how to take care of our tomatoes," said one of the farmers, "It was very helpful." The farmers learned the advantages of postharvest processing for their crops. They

learned how to properly harvest, sort and grade their grapes, raisins, pomegranates and tomatoes. The farmers also learned the proper ways to package their products for shipment to market.

"With the newly learned knowledge these farmers now have, we hope to see them use it to help grow their crops which in return will produce more product for the markets and will in return provide more money for the farmers and their families and help out the whole Panjwai District," said Humadullah.

At the end of the course each farmer was presented with a certificate and a supply kit. The kit included buckets, an orchard ladder, shears, lugs, gloves, helmets and safety goggles all which will greatly help improve the farmers way of farming their crops and ability to produce product.

The farmers were all smiles and eager to get out to their crops



Kandahar University instructor answers questions the farmers have during the Post Harvest Processing and Marketing class held at the Panjwai District Headquarters, July 7, 2012.

after receiving their certificates and supply kits.

"I would like to attend more classes here if they are about farming," explained one of the class members.

In the upcoming weeks there will be a Pest Management course as well as a Composting class for any of the local Panjwai farmers who want to attend.

"We try to provide weekly classes here at the district headquarters that will help the local farmers," said Capt. Varinka Ensminger a Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team member with Task Force Strongbow. "We look forward to working more with the District Development Assembly Chairman Haji Naik Mohammad and scheduling more classes in the near future."



After the graduation the farmers were able to collect their new supply kits which included buckets, an orchard ladder, shears, lugs, gloves, helmets and safety goggles all which will greatly help improve the farmers way of farming their crops and ability to produce product.

Combined Task Force Arrowhead Soldiers meet with Afghan villagers

Story and photos by Sgt. Matt Young, 117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

On July 6, 2012, Soldiers with Security Forces Assistance Team 19, Civil Affairs Team 616 and Bayonet Company 1-64 Armor, which are a part of Combined Task Force Arrowhead, conducted foot patrols to assess a school in the process of being built and the overall atmosphere in the Panjwai district of Afghanistan.

First Lt. Andrew Marsh and Spc. Brian Ludd members of CAT 616 met with Sperwan maliks, Haji Naik Mohammad and Khan Mohammad at Ghai Bana Baba School in Sperwan to discuss the finishing of construction on the school.

The school has eight classrooms and four offices. Each classroom

is large enough to fit up to 50 students. The majority of the walls are complete, but only half of the rooms have fully built roofs. There are no windows and piles of bricks all throughout the building. The school was constructed about a year ago, but construction stopped due to lack of funding.

“Haji Naki Mohammad has spent nearly \$30,000 of his own money to help with the construction, and wants International Security Assistant Force to help finish the school,” explained Ludd.

There are three other schools in Sperwan, but they are not in use due to Taliban intimidation.

“The school in Sperwan is a complicated situation,” said Ludd. “While the school itself is

close enough to Combat Out Post Sperwan Ghar and the Afghan Uniformed Police checkpoint to remain safe, there is no guarantee of protecting the students as they travel to school. “

The leadership of CAT 616 plans to have more meetings with Haji Naik Mohammad and Khan Mohammad and discuss the further construction and security of the school in Sperwan.

After meeting with the maliks at the school, the patrol moved across the road to visit the Afghan Uniform Police and see if they needed anything to better help them with their mission.

Once the patrol finished talking with the AUP, they loaded up the trucks and headed to nearby



Capt. Steven Simmons, a soldier with Combined Task Force Arrowhead, greets local village children of Big Regai in southern Afghanistan on July 6, 2012.

village Big Regai to speak with the local villagers.

Upon arrival to Big Regai, Soldiers of CAT 616 spoke with Haji Sayed Mir in front of his compound, the village Mullah Haji Agha and another village elder from Big Regai.

“They mentioned that the Taliban rarely comes to the village because there is not enough resources for them to have food or a place to stay,” explained Ludd.

While this shows the limited capacity of the village, it conveniently keeps them safe from the Taliban.

There are approximately 50 families and each family owns an average of 15 sheep. The villagers

are farmers during the winter, but during the summer the farming slows down due to the lack of a canal system for their fields, which limits the amounts of crops that can be grown in the summer months.

All of the villagers mentioned that the largest problem here was their water. The water from their well is dirty and extremely salty according to them. CAT 616 retrieved a water sample from one of their well pumps and a SFAT 19 medic will be testing it for various issues. As of now, the villagers get their water from a distant well. “If the water test comes back with serious issues then we will have to send out the water procurement experts to conduct a more detailed assessment of the situation and determine how to

fix their water supply,” explained Ludd.

Soldiers from CAT 616 spoke with the village elders and explained to them they would try and help them out and told them about the shuras held at the Panjwai District Center where they could come and bring up these issues with their government.

“The village is pro Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and any help the GIRoA can offer to local villages, especially those efforts to fix critical issues, increase the legitimacy of the government and reduces the power of insurgency,” said Ludd.



Spc. Brian Ludd, a soldier with Civil Affairs Team 616, Combined Task Force Arrowhead, talks with a village elder of Big Regai in southern Afghanistan about their water problems on July 6, 2012.

Afghan Border Police station open for 24-hour operations in Spin Boldak

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
There are hundreds of Afghan Border Police checkpoints throughout southern Afghanistan. They all look relatively the same. With sand-filled barriers, green metal guard shacks, stacks of sandbags and at least one Afghan flag flying high. Checkpoint 9 along Highway 4 here, looks just like the rest, but there is something unique about this location.

It's open for business 24/7.

"They are the only checkpoint – currently – that we work with that conducts 24-hour operations," said Sgt. 1st Class Jason D. Taylor, platoon sergeant of 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. "It is good that they are out there 24/7, trying to set that deterrence in order to facilitate catching the Taliban or catching any illegal goods, whether it be bomb making materials or drugs coming through Highway 4 en route up to Kandahar."

As the cars and colorful 'jingle' trucks methodically line up at the

traffic control point, the border police and 1-17th Soldiers scrupulously search for contraband hidden under vehicle hoods, inside trunks, under floor mats and even on the very top of the vehicles.

"Our mission [is] to go out to Checkpoint 9 and conduct TCP operations with the ABP," said Taylor. "And to partner up and build our relationship further to allow them to eventually take over the sector completely so we can pull back."

Decked in their chocolate chip-patterned camouflage uniforms, the local ABP work diligently and professionally while searching vehicles, questioning individuals, handing out educational leaflets, and working shoulder-to-shoulder with their American counterparts.

"They're motivated, and they work extremely hard," added Taylor. "It's always a good experience to go out there and work with them."

As the day progressed, the doz-



A member of the Afghan Border Police at Checkpoint 9 inspects in back of a jingle truck along Highway 4 in the district of Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, July 5, 2012. This Afghan Border Police checkpoint is one of the few that operates 24/7.

ens of searched vehicles turned into hundreds, and it was quite evident that the ABP exercised a lot of initiative, relying less on direction and guidance from their brothers in the 1-17th.

"They are a good group," said Taylor. "I think we are moving in the right direction with the ABP, getting them well established to be able to take over for themselves in the next year."



A member of the Afghan Border Police searches a pickup truck at Checkpoint 9 along Highway 4 in the district of Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, July 5, 2012. This Afghan Border Police checkpoint is one of the few that operates 24/7.

Kabul college students make ID cards for Afghan police and villagers

Story and photos by Sgt. Matt Young,
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Here at the District Headquarters of Panjwai in southern Afghanistan, a small group of college kids from Kabul, Afghanistan were hired by DynCorp International, a global government services provider, to work in an identification card center supplying civilians and all of the Afghan police officers with ID cards.

"The guys working here enroll all of the police and local civilians in their government biometrics system, since they don't have social security cards or birth certificates," explained 1st Lieutenant Kevin Holmes with Strategic Forces Advisory Team 19, 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colo.

The college students working in



College students from Kabul, Afghanistan show how they make ID cards for Afghan police officers and local villagers in the Panjwai district of Afghanistan June 26, 2012. These ID cards are the police officers and villagers main form of identification. The ID card is linked to a database with their picture, fingerprints, retinal scans and personal information to identify each individual since they do not have social security cards or birth certificates here.



College students from Kabul, Afghanistan, show how they make ID cards for Afghan police officers and local villagers in the Panjwai district of Afghanistan June 26, 2012. These ID cards are the police officers and villagers main form of identification. The ID card is linked to a database with their picture, fingerprints, retinal scans and personal information to identify each individual since they do not have social security cards or birth certificates here.

the ID card center were eager and excited to show us what they had learned with the equipment and talk about their job.

One of the students explained that over the past three days they had made nearly 200 ID cards, considering that nearly matches the total numbers made for the whole area of southern Afghanistan it was no wonder they were all smiles when we came in to visit them.

The reason for such a good turnout of people coming in to get IDs, explained one of the students, is because the local police are bringing fellow villagers in and helping them enroll in the system. These ID cards are the only way to identify the Afghan people. It is a tremendous help to the Soldiers and Afghan police out on patrols when they come upon an Afghan villager who possesses an ID card. This is one of the easiest ways to help the Soldiers and

police differentiate locals.

The process is simple, once the newly appointed police officer or civilian enters the room he or she takes a seat in front of a camera which is connected to a laptop, answers a few questions that go into a form on the computer, has his picture made, his eyes scanned with a retinal scanner and has his fingerprints taken. After this process all the information is uploaded into a database and the officer is ready to take the trip to Kabul to pick up their ID card.

"I think it is great that the locals here in Panjwai are stepping up and coming in to get ID cards made, it not only helps them but it also helps the Afghan government and the soldier out there on patrol," said Holmes.

Afghan and American forces deliver humanitarian aid to Shorabak

Story and photos by

Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie

117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The 3rd Zone Afghan Border Police and units with Combined Task Force Buffalo successfully cleared and secured 120 kilometers of rugged terrain and unimproved roadways, enabling the safe passage for more than 60 trucks filled with humanitarian aid during Operation Buffalo Thunder II, June 26 to July 3.

“Shorabak is not an easy place to visit due to the terrain,” said Capt. Daniel Capozza, company commander of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. “But it will show the people of Shorabak that the government of Afghanistan is capable of making a presence here, which is huge.”

The mission started with the clearance of the extremely rough roadway from FOB Spin Boldak to the 5th Kandak headquarters at Shorabak. Soldiers of the 569th Engineer Company and 787th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company found and control detonated four improvised explosive devices during the operation.

“We’re moving through a desert with significantly unimproved roads and in most cases, no road at all,” remarked Maj. Gregory Sakimura, operations officer with the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. “There were less IEDs than we anticipated but, there were still several IEDs found.”

The 3rd Zone ABP retained control along the route by manning dozens of hasty and permanent checkpoints. These checkpoints not only made the roadway safe for CTF Buffalo and the ‘jingle’ trucks loaded with humanitarian aid, but also served to deter Taliban activity in the area.

The fleet of trucks, packed with approximately 600 tons of grain, arrived and was unloaded at the 5th Kandak headquarters in Shorabak, June 30 through July 1.

Brig. Gen. Haji Abdul Razziq, chief of police of Kandahar province, and Tooryalai Samad Wesa, provincial governor of Kandahar, said the humanitarian aid would be distributed to locals throughout the month of July.

This operation marked an unprecedented success for the Afghan National Security Force by taking the lead in planning, resourcing and executing an operation of this size.



Afghan civilians supervise the unloading of a tractor load of humanitarian aid during Operation Buffalo Thunder II at the district center in Shorabak, Afghanistan, June 30, 2012. During the eight-day mission, Afghan and American forces cleared more than 120 kilometers of rugged terrain and escorted approximately 60 truckloads of humanitarian aid for distribution to the people of Shorabak.

“The ABP had multiple battalions synchronized, operating together in close proximity,” said Sakimura. “It was a real step forward in their development and all for the benefit of delivering supplies to people that were in need.”

Afghan units included the 4th Kandak, 5th Kandak and the Quick Reaction Force Kandak of the 3rd Zone ABP, supplying more than 210 policemen strategically mounted and dismounted throughout the district.

CTF Buffalo consisted of Soldiers and airmen with the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division; 569th Engineer Company, 223rd Engineer Battalion; 787th EOD Company; Security Force Assistance Team 5; and Alpha Company, 502nd Military Intelligence Battalion. Overall, roughly 125 service members participated in the operation.

Local government and soldiers help provide much-needed relief to Panjwai locals



First Lt. Andrew Marsh of the Civil Affairs Team 616 attached to 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, and the Panjwai District Gov. Haji Faizal Mohammand hand out humanitarian aid packages to displaced locals outside of the Panjwai district headquarters here in southern Afghanistan July 5, 2012.

Story and photos by Sgt. Matt Young

117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

On July 5, 2012 at the district headquarters of Panjwai, the District Governor Haji Faizal Mohammand along with Haji Mahmood the Mayor of Panjwai and U.S. Soldiers stationed here, stood outside the gate ready to deliver humanitarian aid packages to a selected group of local villagers who have fallen on hard times and/or have been forced to leave their villages due to insurgent activities in the area.

“This morning we handed out 60 packages to displaced citizens here in the Panjwai district,” said 1st Lt. Andrew Marsh, the Civil Affairs Team 616 Team Leader, with 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. “The packages contained tea, cooking oil, sugar, salt and rice.” The packages contents will be enough to supply one Afghan family with

food for a month.

“I think that the people clearly need our help, they don’t have access to a lot of food or a stable economy to have jobs so they can actually purchase the food they need,” said Marsh.

The local maliks, also known as village elders, came together and created a list of the people in their area who were in need of these humanitarian aid packages. The list was then sent to the district governor to be looked over and approved.

Once it was approved, the supplies we gathered and word was put out for the families to send one representative to come and collect their aid package.

These humanitarian aid distributions help give a positive impact on the local villagers from

not only the U.S. Soldiers but their local government officials as well.

“Every Monday a shura is held here at the district headquarters for the village elders to come speak about any security concerns the villages are having along with new ways to create jobs for the local villagers to help build their economy so that they will have jobs to be able to put food on the table for their families,” explained Marsh.



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Christine Rosalin



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matt Young



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matt Young



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Christine Rosalin



U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Daniel Bohmer



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Christine Rosalin



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matt Young

Soldiers get 'coined' by ISAF commander at Spin Boldak

Story and photos by

Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie

117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Marine Gen. John R. Allen, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, recognized Soldiers here for their achievements during a command visit, July 12.

Allen presented ISAF commander coins to six Soldiers surrounded by their friends and fellow service members during a mid-day ceremony here.

Spc. Austin Coffed, from Corfu, N.Y., received a coin for his efforts as an infantryman and radio telephone operator with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division.

"Coffed's technical and tactical

proficiency as the platoon RTO and demonstrated performance while in country has earned him a recent waiver to specialist," said Capt. Matt Gilroy, personnel officer for the 1-17th Infantry here. "He was also selected by the current commander to perform the duties of company RTO for the incoming commander."

Spc. Dallas Davidson, of Fort Stockton, Texas, received recognition for his efforts advising the Afghan Border Police during Operation Southern Strike II while part of the Security Force Assistance Team 8.

"During a search of a village by the ABP, their commander lost control of his element as it was split into two groups," said Gilroy. "Spc. Davidson was able to get

the commander's subordinate to a U.S. radio and coordinate with an interpreter, allowing the ABP commander to control his men through the mentorship team, enabling the mission to continue."

Spc. Victor M. Ley, from San Diego, received a coin for serving as the driver of the lead vehicle for his platoon during Operation Buffalo Thunder II. Ley is an infantryman with Alpha Company, 1-17th Infantry.

"He drove 240 kilometers with a mine roller through restrictive terrain and enabled 2nd Platoon to accomplish their mission," said Gilroy.

Sgt. Robert Murray, of Winston Salem, N.C., received a medallion for conducting six recovery



Marine Gen. John R. Allen, commander of the International Security Assistance Force, presents his coin to Sgt. Robert Murray of Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, during a command visit at Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, July 12, 2012. Murray, of Winston Salem, N.C., was recognized for his work during two vehicle recovery missions while here and at Combat Outpost Lakaray.

missions in two months while here and at Combat Outpost Lakaray. Murray is the non-commissioned officer in charge of the combat repair team with Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1-17th Infantry.

During Operation Buffalo Thunder II, "his maintenance and recovery experience greatly impacted the success of the mission," said Gilroy. "He recovered and directed the recovery of eight mired vehicles in rugged terrain, enabling the Buffaloes to reach their objective."

Spc. Daniel Reis, from Levittown, N.Y., received recognition for being the lead driver with Route Clearance Package 27, which is part of 1st Platoon, 569th Engineer Company, 223rd

Engineer Battalion.

"His attention to detail and continual drive to improve his skill made him a key asset within his platoon," said Gilroy. "His actions cleared several IEDs [improvised explosive devices] from the most dangerous routes in our AO [area of operations] and saved countless lives."

Spc. Carol D. Sielawa, of Grand Rapids, Mich., received recognition for her duties as the maintenance clerk and female engagement team member for Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron of the 126th Cavalry Regiment, part of the Michigan Army National Guard.

"She implemented the use of the

latest female engagement team tactics, techniques and procedures within her team," said Gilroy. "Spc. Sielawa conducted eight missions resulting in the capture of a dozen high value targets."

The awarding of commander coins, also called challenge coins, dates back to the age when enlisted Soldiers were not authorized the presentation of medals. According to legend, an officer would separate the ribbon from a medal, presenting the latter half to a soldier for a job well done. In modern times, coins denote membership to a specific unit and are often awarded to service members for special achievements.



Marine Gen. John R. Allen, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, presents his coin to Spc. Carol Sielawa of Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron of the 126th Cavalry Regiment, Michigan Army National Guard, during a command visit to Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, July 12, 2012. Sielawa, from Grand Rapids, Mich., served simultaneously as the unit's maintenance clerk and member of their female engagement team.

STT-SFAT mentor ANA to employ an Afghan solution to an Afghan problem

Story by Sgt. Chris McCullough
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

Part 2 of 2 - Working together with the security force assistance teams (SFATs), of which there are many, is something called an STT - Stabilization and Transition Team. The STT is a team-led asset designed in part for use by the battle space owner - often times a brigade combat team - to help manage the numerous SFATs throughout their battle space, explained Sgt. Major Joseph Marra, the STT senior noncommissioned officer-in-charge/senior advisor for a 48-man STT largely made up of Iraq and Afghan war veterans from the New York Army National Guard. The NY STT's job is to work closely with and support the numerous SFATs throughout 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division's battle space in both Zabul and Kandahar provinces.



Stabilization and Transition Team members Sgt. 1st Class Leonard Claus (far left), Col. Eric Weber (middle left), Maj. Luis Marquez (middle right) and Lt. Col. Brian O'Keefe clear a building in an urban operations exercise during their pre-deployment training here in February. The team, which departed here for Afghanistan, Feb. 29, will be mentoring Afghan National Army soldiers and police officers to create local police in areas where the Taliban has influence. (Photo provided by Master Sgt. Roger Gonzalez)

"What we are doing is working behind the scenes with the SFAT teams and the lieutenant colonels that are out there, trying to assist them in any way we can; whether that's setting up meetings or going to meetings that they attend with key leaders to support them and show that support. It's all about making this area stable by securing it, supporting the government and assisting the forces to transition into taking over the lead in the fight against the Taliban," explained Marra.

The NY STT does this by spreading their Soldiers throughout Regional Command South. In turn, this has allowed the STT to assist the SFATs in many aspects; the most important being to act as a conduit between the brigade and the SFATs.

"They have the rank and the knowledge to assist the SFATs and ask the correct questions so they can make sure they're doing what they're supposed to do and ensure there is some connectivity between the brigade and the SFATs," said Marra.

In addition to providing support to the various SFATs, the New York STT also provides mentorship to the Afghan National Security Forces. Such mentorship involves evaluating their skills and ensuring they are meeting their mission requirements such as ample food, water, ammunition and other supplies. While they assess the ANSF's abilities, Marra points out that their job is to advise and assist.

"As far as mentoring, if they need assistance with other assets, they ask for it (and) we see if we can do it and try to work in that manner (but) it's their ballgame," said Marra. "We're there just to try and help them gain the confidence and the professionalism that will be necessary for them to secure their own country."

In due course, it's up to Marra's team, and others like it throughout Afghanistan, to help ANSF step out on their own, which will in turn "show the people that the new government is working and that their lives are better than before," said Marra. Part of that involves showing the Afghan people that their new government works and is there to make them feel safe, which is why the STT-SFAT

mission is so important.

"The people have to feel their government is protecting them or else they'll simply side with whoever has the most power in the area," Marra said.

U.S. President Barack Obama and other International Security Assistance Forces leaders, in coordination with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, have stated that they endeavor to return nearly all ISAF forces home by the end of 2014.

However, with matters in Afghanistan changing weekly - even daily - leaders from all parties are left not knowing what the remaining 30-plus months of the Afghan War will hold. The only one thing that is for certain is that going forward security force assistance teams are going to be the best bet to helping Afghan National Security Forces move ahead and provide the means to a secure and peaceful Afghanistan.

"We're looking for an Afghan solution to an Afghan problem," said Marra.

That is why, even though Marra's STT has only been in country four months, already they are working hard to lay the groundwork for the next group. Marra explains they have been working diligently to ensure that the next group doesn't have to start over from scratch.

"As soon as they get in country, and they're settled in, they can



Stabilization and Transition Team member Sgt. 1st Class Leonard Claus (left), from Schaghticoke, N.Y., discusses Afghan customs with a former Afghan National Army officer during cultural awareness training here in January. The team, which departed here for Afghanistan, Feb. 29, will be mentoring Afghan National Army soldiers and police officers to create local police in areas where the Taliban has influence. (Photo provided by Master Sgt. Roger Gonzalez)

start working with their (ANSF) counterparts," said Marra. "They (won't) have to get their equipment here because we are the first ones to start this type of an operation this large."

The shift of responsibility throughout Afghanistan will occur as Afghan National Army and Police show themselves ready to assume responsibility on their own with little to no International Security Assistance Forces support. That is why the SFATs are so important. They are pivotal to ensuring the ANSFs everywhere are ready as the transference of security is handed off from ISAF to ANSF in 2013, as stated by Afghan President Hamid Karzai earlier this year.

"The SFAT teams that are here now come at an important time in this newly formed government's

life," Marra went on to say. "We're here to offer the assistance that can really make the difference. Sometimes (when) you're a soldier you don't always see the opportunity to make a difference because you're one of many. These (SFAT) teams will have the opportunity to see the cause and effect of them being there and assisting these people because we have the measures and the products available to measure these things."



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie



U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Daniel Bohmer



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matt Young



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matt Young



U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Daniel Bohmer



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Christine Rosalin



U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Daniel Bohmer

The female in Female Engagement Teams: who they are and why they do it

Story and pictures by
Sgt. Chris McCullough
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

Throughout Afghanistan, platoons of male soldiers from the Afghan and American forces conduct daily patrols. Over the course of the patrols there always exists the possibility of encountering women, given they make up nearly half the population of Afghanistan. The male soldiers are prohibited from looking at or talking to these women due to Afghan cultural norms which disallow as much. So in order to engage the female populace the American Army has established Female Engagement Teams.

FET is a program that was started by the U.S. Marines Corps and has been around for nearly a decade. It is comprised of volunteer female members of appropriate

rank, experience and maturity to develop trust-based and enduring relationships with the Afghan women they encounter on patrols. Having such a team at its disposal has given American forces an added tool in reaching out to the Afghan population in advance of the scheduled troop reduction in 2014.

Two such soldiers from Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1-14 Cavalry Regiment located at Forward Operating Base Sweeney in southeast Afghanistan, explained what FET means to them and why they volunteer to work outside their normal military occupational specialties.

"I wanted to make a difference," said Pfc. Jacqueline Buschman. "I wanted to get out and see what

the Afghan people were living like (and) help out in any way I could."

"I volunteered because I heard about the culture and I wanted to make a difference in the women's lives," Spc. Heather Ray, another FET team member, added.

Ray goes on to explain how the women in a village, though not often seen by outsiders, have considerable influence on their husbands, children and their community as a whole. It's Ray and Buschman's hope that by sitting down and talking with these women that they will be able to encourage the wives to influence their husbands to stay clear of insurgent affairs and focus instead on bettering their families and their villages.

"By just sitting down and talking



Spc. Heather Ray and Pfc. Jacqueline Buschman, 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, and their female interpreter, return from a meeting with some Afghan women in the village of Akhvond Qalay, Afghanistan, May 8, 2012. Women account for nearly half the population of Afghanistan and have considerable influence on Afghan society so it is important for Female Engagement Teams, such as the one Ray and Buschman make up, to develop trust-based and enduring relationships with the Afghan women they encounter on patrols.

with them (we're) showing them ... that we do care and that we're here to help them," said Buschman.

Their concern is not solely limited to the female populace. Battle Company's FET will often reach out to the children in a village as well. It gives them and their mothers a break, however brief, explained Buschman.

"One day we sat down and did coloring books with them. Some of them knew what it was. Others had no idea," Buschman added.

When asked if they felt they were making a difference, Bushman explained how influential they can be because they are able to engage the families in a way their male counterparts cannot.

Their job as FET members is part soldier and part diplomat.

"Anytime we get a chance to interact with the locals, we're going to make a difference," said Buschman.

Buschman and Ray go on to add that while they have accomplished much up to now, they still have several months left before their deployment is through and hope to use that time to further influence Afghans, both female and male, throughout the district they operate out of. They realize the demands, as well as the difficulties, of their job but they fully embrace it because their job as FET members enables them to engage the Afghans and show them that they are here to help in a way the soldiers they go on

patrols with cannot.

"The infantry doesn't see what we see," said Buschman. "They don't get to go inside the houses; they don't get to see how a family interacts with us. It's something you could take for granted ... but then you go and visit with the family and you're like 'this is why I'm doing this, to learn and to help them in any way we can."



Staff Sgt. Peter Adames, left, and Spc. Heather Ray on patrol together during a command visit to Hokumat-e Shinkai Bazaar, Jan. 17, 2012. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough, Combined Task Force Arrowhead Public Affairs)

Afghan artillerymen graduate with a bang

Story and photos by
1st Lt. Christine Rosalin
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Instead of launching fireworks this Independence Day, members of the Afghan National Army fired high explosive and white phosphorous smoke rounds using a D-30, or Soviet 122 mm howitzer, during a culminating training event at Forward Operating Base Wolverine, Afghanistan.

The culminating event concluded 16 weeks of partnered training with their U.S. counterparts, which led to over 50 soldiers of the Afghan Army's 4th Kandak, D-30 Artillery Battery, graduating from a D-30 Gunline Procedure Course of the ANA School of Artillery July 4, 2012.

"This training provides their Army with more legitimacy and reduces their dependence on coalition forces," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Collette, Fire Direction Center instructor, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade. "It also inspires confidence in (the) Afghan Army and the civilian population sees their own army shooting artillery and it builds support."

The goal of this partnership mission is to build indirect fire capacity and enable long-term success of Afghan National Security Forces.

"It is also creating Afghan

solutions to Afghan problems by providing Afghan troops with Afghan fire power," said Collette. "This training seriously benefited the Afghan army overall. Field artillery is essential to any modern army because of its ability to deliver effects into a huge battle space, albeit high explosives, smoke, or illumination."

They fired illumination shells and provided light effects for night-time operations in their area two weeks after we finished training in Tarin Kowt," said Collette.

Additionally they picked up the concepts faster and faster as the training went on, added Collette. "We were constantly surprised



Fire for effect! Soldiers of the Afghan National Army's 4th Kandak, D-30 Artillery Battery, fire high explosive rounds during a culminating training event completing 16 weeks of partnership training with their U.S. counterparts of the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment and 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment at Forward Operating Base Wolverine, Afghanistan, July 4, 2012.

by how easily they understood all the concepts, because certain concepts seem to baffle Americans going through the (field artillery) school house."

The concepts in the program included map reading and plotting points, determining the battery location without a GPS, determining distance and direction to a target location, mathematics and interpolation, reading a tabular firing table and radio communications with the observers, said Collette. "We also instructed how to correct for charge temperature, how to use illumination and smoke shells, and how to issue to fire commands to the gun-line efficiently."

Initially, the ANA soldiers seemed uncertain of either us or the training that we were giving them, but over time they seemed

to enjoy themselves, said Collette. "We engaged them in a lot of conversation using broken Dari and they seemed to warm up to us pretty quickly. We were surprised to find that a lot of them spoke a ton of English to the point that we could almost teach a class completely in English to certain soldiers...we treated them with respect and simply talked to them and we had great success."

Our follow on unit, the mentor team from the 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Lewis, will continue to mentor and teach them more advanced concepts of field artillery when we're gone, said Collette.

"My unit, 1-37 FA, has partnered up in this program for about a month now," said Sgt. Joshua

Oberlies, howitzer section chief, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regt. "The mentorship roll we have with the ANA will allow for them to pass what they learn to their own soldiers in the future. The ANA's ability to be able to train and certify their own soldiers as Artillery men is our ultimate goal here."

"When we leave here we want the ANA to be fully capable of stepping up and conducting their own training in order to facilitate their mission requirements," said Oberlies.

The performance of the ANA during the certification process proved this goal is possible. "We believe that this is a reachable goal and look forward to our continuing partnership with them."



Soldiers of the Afghan National Army's 4th Kandak, D-30 Battery, calculates target adjustments while one of their U.S. counterparts of the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, verify the data during a culminating training event, July 4, 2012, at Forward Operating Base Wolverine, Afghanistan.

Chaplain's Corner

One of the most popular "movements" in the health and fitness world is the concept of a "Detox Diet." The idea of removing the accumulation of harmful substances from the food you eat, the stress you feel, and the environmental toxins are beneficial. In fact, eating a super-clean diet and taking proper supplements for a ten to forty day period can restore a healthy internal environment and promote good health. You'll most likely experience increased energy, reduced aches and pains, better digestion, and fewer illnesses. Capturing and removing toxic substances and replacing them with healthy things are solid life practices. They don't happen automatically without being intentional.

The Bible gives plenty of instructions for detoxifying your life. In this verse, the apostle Paul hits it hard: "purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit." Purifying the

body includes paying attention to what we eat and drink, staying away from harmful things like smoking or drugs, getting proper exercise and enough rest, and not engaging in immoral sexual behavior. Purifying the spirit includes our words, thoughts, attitudes, actions and desires.

Clearly, detoxification is not a passive process. We have to act. We put filters on our computers to block viruses, filters on home heating systems to remove dust and allergens, and oil filters on cars to remove the junk so the car performs and lasts.

It's one thing to stop doing hurtful things, to remove temptations and put up boundaries. But living a holy life requires us to replace the bad with good, and replace the "do nots" with "dos." If one tries to give up sweets without replacing them with a healthy alternative, or tries to quit smoking without replacing it with a good habit, the bad habits will return with a



vengeance. Wrong thinking must be replaced with right thinking (the positive, the possible and the pure). Criticism must be replaced with encouragement. Anger must be replaced with love and tenderness.

A Life Detox is a perfect way to purify yourself from everything that contaminates your mind, body and spirit.



Arrowhead Remembers



Sgt. Juan Navarro

Sgt. Juan Navarro, born in Texas, joined the US Army in July 2008 as an Infantryman. He went to basic training and AIT at Fort Benning, Ga. He was assigned to 1-23 Inf. in Nov. 2008. Sgt. Navarro deployed with the Tomahawks in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Aug. 2009 to June 2010. In Mar. 2012, he deployed again with the Tomahawks in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal (ISAF), the Meritorious Unit Citation, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and Driver's Badge. He is posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

His awards include the Army Commendation Medal (2OLC), Army Achievement Medal (1OLC), Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense

He is survived by his father, Victor Navarro, his mother, Christina Pantosa, and by his Apache Company family.





Spc. Sterling W. Wyatt

Spc. Sterling W. Wyatt was born on 4 September 1990 and grew up in Columbia, Missouri. After joining the Army on 5 November 2010, SPC Wyatt attended Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Benning, Ga. Following Infantry OSUT, Spc. Wyatt was assigned to 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wa., and served as rifleman and a machine gunner for 1st Platoon, Charlie Company.

Spc. Wyatt's military awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal,

National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, and Combat Infantryman's Badge. Spc. Wyatt died on 11 July 2012 in the village of Zendanon in Zharay District from wounds suffered in an improvised explosive device attack.

Spc. Wyatt is survived by his Father Sterling Wyatt, Mother Sheryl Wyatt, and Brother Chandler Wyatt.



Sgt. Michael Eugene Ristau

Sgt. Michael Eugene Ristau was born on 20 December 1986 in Cascade, Iowa, and joined the Army 5 November 2010. Following Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Benning, Ga., Sgt. Ristau was assigned to Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wa., and deployed to Iraq with the Regulars in June 2006 and December 2012.

Sgt. Ristau's military awards include the Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal (2OLC), National Defense Service Medal,

Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal (ISAF), and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. He is posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal and the Purple Heart.

Sgt. Ristau is survived by his wife Elizabeth Ristau, sons Bradley and Hyle Ristau, parents Randy and Suzanne Ristau, and siblings Chris, Jesse, and Halle.





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On Point!