



# The PHOENIX PATRIOT

*"...From the Ashes..."*

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## ANA and ANP Train Together at Battle Staff Course

Story and Photo By Lt. Cmdr. Frank Dukes  
209th RSAC PAO

### MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan –

A ceremony honoring the graduates of MPRI's 21 day Battle Staff Course was held February 7 in the area of the 209th Regional Command for 30 Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs).

"The NCOs were taught the basic skills needed to run operations centers," said Tom Wilson of MPRI. "These basic skills included map reading, reading and disseminating information from message traffic, reporting, and sharing

information. Officers were trained separately on the Military Decision Making Process, from receiving an order from higher through the production of the order."

Toward the end of the training, NCOs spent a day teaching the officers what they had learned. A three day Command Post Exercise was conducted at the end of the program to reinforce skills learned during the course. The ANA and ANP worked together to receive and execute the operation prepared by the instructors.

"This course proved to be an excellent way of reinforcing the need for officers and NCOs to trust each other's skills

and work together to achieve the desired goal," said Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Callanan, Command Sergeant Major for the 209th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC). "Trust is vital to the ANA and ANP conducting independent operations in the future."

Col. Judd Lyons, 209th RSAC Commander, was inspired by the success of the training and what it means for the future.

"It is one of the first of many joint training efforts between the ANA and ANP," Lyons said. "These two organizations can and will work together to provide a secure environment for the people of Afghanistan."

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## General Guidance

Warriors,

Task Force Phoenix has the most decentralized, geographically separated mission of any Brigade Combat Team in the United States Army. With the Task Force growing to over 9,000 in the coming months our ability to communicate becomes even more critical to our success. We must exploit all

available means of communication to get critical information to necessary people in time to make informed decisions.

Our ability to communicate with the Army and Police Soldiers we train is one of our most essential tasks. The Afghans watch our every move and our actions communicate more clearly than anything we say. As professional Warriors our responsibility is to be the very best role models possible, not only for the ANA and ANP, but for each other and our Coalition Partners.

We also need to communicate with our families and friends at home. They have sacrificed to support our mission and we need to acknowledge their contributions. They have established new standards for Humanitarian Assistance efforts and in the process changed the lives of thousands of Afghan citizens. Their efforts have helped save lives and improve medical care for children who had no where else to turn. Communicate with our families and friends how thankful the Afghans are for their support.

Communicating the success of the ANA and ANP to the Afghans, U.S. and International Media is also one of our primary responsibilities. We must always be honest in our communication and we must be proactive in telling the success stories of the Afghans. There are many accounts of courageous actions by brave ANA and ANP Soldiers. There are also many stories of ANA and ANP engaging in Nation Building, Humanitarian Assistance and Cooperative Medical Support. The Afghans are helping change their country. Only they can bring about permanent change to ensure a free future for their children and grandchildren.

Be sure to communicate our accomplishments, it is a critical aspect of our mission. Thank you for your service.

Douglas A. Pritt  
BG, USA  
Commanding



## On Point w/ the CSM

Warriors,

Many of us are starting to plan for our return to the States. Some people are already packing and shipping things home. In addition to all the logistical challenges we face, our return signals many personal challenges. We will return after a year in Afghanistan to our families and friends and a lot

of issues we are not used to dealing with.

This will be an extremely challenging time for many of us. We are leaving a routine where many decisions are made for us, such as where to eat, what to wear, who to interact with etc. We have spent the last year and a half conducting ourselves professionally and we must remember how to interact with family and friends personally. We must reintegrate ourselves into the work place, or in some cases, seek employment upon return.

These challenges may seem trivial and difficult to imagine while we are still in Afghanistan, but for some, the uncertainty of the return home can cause a lot of anxiety. We must help each other get through these times and seek help if needed. In country, we have chaplains, health professionals, legal professionals and personnel prepared to help us seek employment upon our return. Be aware of these resources and seek advice for yourself and your fellow Warriors when they need it. If we start to prepare ourselves for the return home and all the changes we will encounter it will make the transition much easier.

Once home, there will be many agencies available to assist with our transition. I urge everyone to take full advantage of anything you need to assist you. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of intelligence, proper planning and problem solving. In the months ahead, everyone needs to watch each other. This is the time when mobilizations see the most problems. If we stay alert and watch for potential problems, we will minimize risk. As we near demobilization it is important we support one another, look for signs of stress, and assist in alleviating that stress.

Steven C. Gates  
CSM, USA  
Command Sergeant Major

Fellow Patriots,

Every Soldier in the Army learns the concept of Battle Buddies during their Basic Training. This program has applicability for all warriors in every branch of service.

We rarely discuss the responsibilities in the Ultimate Basic Training Guidebook, but Sgt. Michael Volkin states that Battle Buddies should keep track of each other, maintaining accountability and watching out for each other. They should also be friends.

Battle Buddies are great for helping

bear the burdens of everyday stressors that can become overwhelming. Whether they make you laugh, or remind you to get to the gym, Battle Buddies put your needs ahead of their own.

Other aspects of being a supportive Battle Buddy include:

Encouraging your Battle Buddy to focus on wellness and healthy habits in all aspects of mental, physical and spiritual states.

Reminding your Battle Buddy to practice heightened levels of safety and situational awareness every day.

Develop the ability to determine signs

and symptoms of stress and be able to talk openly with your Battle Buddy about significant events in your life.

As a Battle Buddy, be resourceful and offer positive and proactive suggestions for seeking assistance. Be aware of resources readily available and advise your Battle Buddy to seek these resources. To be a good Battle Buddy, practice your listening skills and follow up on your recommendations.

Turn your stories from "There I was..." to "There we were..." And as always, be Always Ready, Always There, for your Battle Buddy.

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# Karez System Brings Much Needed Water to Kandahar



A karez type water system is operational again in Southern Afghanistan thanks to 205th Corps U.S. and ANA support.

Story and Photos By

Cmdr. Chad Snee, 205th RSAC PAO

**KANDAHAR, Afghanistan** – Southern Afghanistan has significant agricultural potential for the local populace and realizing that potential requires life-giving water. Looking over the dry, dusty landscape, one might easily conclude there is little or no water to be had. Not true, the water is there, often just a few feet below the surface.

In early February, construction and repair of karez systems near the villages of Khvosh Ab and Fatullah Kalay were completed and two more karez projects are scheduled to begin in Kandahar province, contingent upon receipt of funding.

For centuries, Afghan farmers relied on karez systems to water their lands. A karez is an innovative system of wells and underground tunnels that supply water to large amounts of land. Three decades of war and destruction have decimated Afghanistan's water infrastructure and

the 1999-2001 drought precipitated the failure of many karez systems due to neglect or the drilling of deep wells close to the karezes.

"Historically, the obstacle towards the agricultural development of southern Afghanistan has not been a shortage of water, but a lack of adequate control of the water provided," said Cmdr. John Pietkiewicz who works on karezes in the Kandahar province.

The beauty of a karez lies in its communal nature. Local communities control the maintenance of the karez and the sharing of the water.

"Since the proper function of a karez is dependent upon communal participation, rehabilitation of the karez and its attending aquifer will strengthen the local governance," Pietkiewicz said.

An integral part of karez management is the shura council of elders that represents the interests of the local tribes.

"The shura has controlled the use of water through management of half-hour shares allocated to farmers and providing a forum to resolve disputes," Pietkiewicz said. "This is a culturally assimilated system that has a built-in social foundation to ensure its survival."

Pietkiewicz said the karez system uses techniques that Afghan farmers have employed for generations exploiting ground water without any need of mechanical devices and keeping construction costs low. The karez system is sustainable because it adjusts to the level of available ground water and will not exhaust the aquifer that it taps. When properly maintained a karez can effectively supply water to as much as 2,500 to 3,000 acres of land. Improving irrigation through the use of this system is essential to improving agricultural output in Afghanistan.

"The agricultural sector is the mainstay of Afghanistan's economy and its regeneration is fundamental to the nation's recovery. Karezes provide water in a sustainable manner and have a legacy of community participation."

## AIT Brigade Held First NCO Promotion Board

Story and Photos By

Petty Officer 1st Class

Cheryl Medeiros KMTC PAO

**KABUL, Afghanistan** – The Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Brigade held its first Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) promotion board. The five-member Afghan National Army (ANA) promotion board consisted of Col. Wazeer, the AIT Brigade Commander and Board President, four ANA Sergeants Major from the AIT Brigade, and an ANA Master Sgt. as the board's recorder. The Board was formed for selection of qualified Sergeants First Class for promotion to Master Sergeant in the AIT Brigade.

During the promotion board proceeding, seventeen ANA Sergeants 1st Class appeared before the board and answered questions posed to them. The promotion board provides a fair process to select qualified senior NCOs for advance-

ment. Each of the interviewees was awarded points based on answers to the questions, military bearing and professional appearance.

The names of the top six candidates were forwarded to Kabul Military Training Center and the Ministry of Defense. The Training Assistance Group AIT Brigade Command Sergeant Major, Roy Striley, was confident and pleased at the outcome of promotion board.

"There is no guarantee that these six candidates will be selected by the higher command to fill six E-8 positions in the AIT Brigade but just

getting the ANA AIT Brigade Officer Corps to allow the AIT Sergeant Majors and Senior NCOs to conduct a promotion board is a gigantic step forward for the Afghan National Army," Striley said.



(third from right) Cmdr. Jeffery Harrison, AIT Brigade Commander Mentor stands with Col. Wazeer, the AIT Brigade Commander and Board President and four ANA Sergeants Major



# Karzai Recieves Armored Hum

Story and Photos By  
Lt. j.g. Drew Gonterwitz

**POL-E-CHARKI, Afghanistan** – On February 1st, Afghan President Hamid Karzai visited the Afghan National Army (ANA) Garrison at Pol-e-Charki. While on base he toured many of the impressive new facilities recently constructed, and spoke at a ceremony marking the transfer of over 200 armored humvees from the U.S. to the ANA.

The new vehicles are vital to protecting the ANA from mines and explosive devices in the War on Terror in Afghanistan. The vehicles are a continuation of Task Force Phoenix's mission to make the ANA ultimately dependant and capable to defend the country of Afghanistan from terrorism. The new facilities provide increased means of improving military readiness and better technology for fighting terrorism within the borders of Afghanistan.

The President's first stop during his tour was at the new ANA TOC, or Tactical Operations Center. The building was completed last fall and continues to be one of the most impressive examples of ANA ascendancy. Once inside the TOC Karzai was given a briefing by the 201st Corps Commander,

Maj. Gen. Monir Muhammad Mangal where he briefed the President on the status of the ANA forces.

"Our Soldiers are bravely fighting the enemy and fighting for Afghanistan's future," Mangal said.

After the brief at the Tactical Operations Center President Karzai and his presidential entourage, some 30 vehicles long, traveled to the soccer stadium on Pol-e-Charki. There he inspected the base gym, complete with brand new equipment, and the obstacle course. The obstacle course was completed last month and is based on a standard U.S. Marine model. Marine Capt. Tony McNair, the Deputy Logistics Officer (G-4) for the 201st Corps, supervised the completion of the project. ANA Soldiers demonstrated to the President the correct procedure for climbing the walls and ropes of the new course.

With his tour of Pol-e-Charki complete, President Karzai's long convoy snaked it's way off of the Pol-e-Charki Garrison, traveled a few hundred yards down Jalalabad Road, and pulled into Depot Two, a transportation and logistics base. Waiting for the President was a large stage draped in green, red, and black, the colors of the Afghan flag. Many Afghan Military and Government officials joined the President

on stage, including General Wardak FULL NAME AP RANK, the head of the Ministry of Defense. Maj. Gen. Barry Durbin, Combined Security Transition Ccommand - Afghanistan Commander, was also present.

This gift from the U.S. provides the ANA with their first ever fleet of armored humvees. President Karzai expressed the gratitude of his country.

"I appreciate the support of the United States, President Bush, The Congress, and the U.S. Military. This event is only the beginning," Karzai said, "There is more to come."

Karzai inspired the Soldiers present with instructions for using their new humvees.

"We should use these vehicles properly to fight the terrorists," Karzai said. "We have had civil wars in the past, brothers fighting brothers; let us use these military vehicles to prevent another."

After Karzai spoke he toured static displays of military equipment, including rifles, tanks, military uniform items, heavy equipment, and the armored humvees. Painted in a unique ANA camouflage pattern the lines of armored humvees signified both the improvements of the ANA and the commitment of the U.S. to support Afghan Forces.





# Humvees for Afghan National Army



President Hamid Karzai addresses Afghan National Army Soldiers and at a ceremony to dedicate new armored humvees.



President Hamid Karzai inspects the new uparmored humvees Afghan National Army Soldiers will use in combat.



Karzai inspects ANA Soldiers upon arrival his arrival at Pol-e-charki Army base



# Local National Proud to Help Effort in Afghanistan



Besmel enjoys working alongside the Americans who are working hard to assist in rebuilding his home, Afghanistan.

## Story and Photos By Lt. Janette Arencibia

**KABUL, Afghanistan** – Every warrior at Task force Phoenix will recognize Besmel, Sh as the friendly face that greets them at the Camp Phoenix laundry. Besmel has worked for KBR since 2002 when he was hired as a plumber in Bagram. In March of 2003, he was promoted to an interpreter's position. As a supervisor, he was responsible for seventy-seven other local nationals.

Besmel has been associated with Camp Phoenix since the beginning



Besmel hands a laundry receipt to a Task Force Phoenix Soldier. Besmel is well known by members of Task Force Phoenix for his smile and pleasant attitude.

as he was one of the KBR employees that assisted with the clean up of the area before construction began to establish Camp Phoenix.

"We found a lot of snakes while we were cleaning up and getting ready to build Camp Phoenix," said Besmel.

Besmel is very proud of his involvement in the establishment of Camp Phoenix and loves working with U.S. Soldiers and civilians.

"I love talking to and making new friends with everyone," Besmel said. "Then I am sad when one group leaves and I have to make new friends."

In addition to Besmel's friendly personality and outstanding ability to manage others, he is a great student. He completed 12 grades of formal education and was the top

ranked student among 250 others. He also studied math and science privately for two years. Besmel was accepted at the Kabul Medical University but could not go to school because he needed to work to support his family.

When he learned that KBR was hiring local nationals, he applied and was happy to work for KBR and earn more money than he could with other employment available in Kabul. He hopes to continue working for KBR and advance in his career with the company. In his current position, he manages the people he works with and provides excellent customer services to the residents of Camp Phoenix.

Besmel has received numerous accolades from both the leadership and the warriors of Task Force Phoenix and was recently presented with a certificate of appreciation from General Pritt.

"I enjoy working with the strong and friendly people so that we can stay together and be together," Besmel said. "I always try to greet people who come here whether they are having a good day or not."

Besmel is a friendly face in a sometimes unfriendly place, and is very proud to be working alongside other people who believe in building his home nation, Afghanistan.



Photo By Sgt. 1st Class Tom Roberts

More than anything, Besmel hope that all of the people in his country will be able to live in peace and happiness together in the near future.

# Soldiers Benefit from Re-enlisting During Deployment

Story By 1st Lt. Amanda Straub  
photo by US Army

**KABUL, Afghanistan** - Twenty-two SECFOR Soldiers from 2-18 Field Artillery recently had a unique opportunity to re-enlist while on deployment and received congratulations from the Sergeant Major of the Army, Jack L. Tilley.

Staff Sgt. Shannon Dee Hanks, career counselor for 2-18th, set up the ceremony when Tilley visited as part of the Christmas USO (United Service Organizations) show in Kabul, Afghanistan.

"It's not every day you get to meet the Sergeant Major of the Army," Hanks said. "To have him here congratulating everyone, giving everyone a coin – it was like, 'Wow!'"

Hanks said he has seen a surge of Soldiers wishing to reenlist while on deployment. The Soldiers receive a practical benefit by getting their re-

enlistment bonuses tax free and they make a poignant statement re-enlisting in the face of the turbulence of combat.

"They always want to show their patriotism," Hanks said. "Getting recognized by the Sergeant Major of the Army just made their day."

The Soldiers involved in the reenlistment ceremony came from three different camps around the Kabul area, Camp Dubbs, Camp Alamo, and Camp Phoenix.

"This isn't an opportunity we get



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack L. Tilley congratulates SECFOR Soldiers on their re-enlist at Camp Phoenix.

very often, to get a mass reenlistment, especially with guys from different camps," Hanks said. "I've got to give props to the command. They showed that they place emphasis on retention by making this happen."

## Karzai Opens New Forward Operating Base for 203rd



Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan, attended the Camp Clark opening ceremony to cut the ribbon on the new FOB.

Story By Lt. Cmdr. Tracy Less  
203rd RSAC PAO

**GARDEZ, Afghanistan** – The newest Afghan National Army (ANA) Forward Operating Base (FOB) officially opened its doors in Khowst on, Jan 17, 2007.

This opening represents another step in the ANA expansion process aimed at extending the reach of the Afghan central government by delivering security and appreciably accelerating long-term stability across Afghanistan. Camp Clark, as it is unofficially known, is in the province of Khowst, close to the border with Pakistan where hundreds of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters are believed to be hiding.

Senior ANA officers, U.S. coalition leaders, local elders and mullahs attended the opening ceremony for the new FOB. Chief among them was Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who had the honor of cutting the ribbon at the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) and then raising the Afghan flag to signify the official opening.

The grand opening provided the ANA a chance to shine considering all the dignitaries and representatives of the Afghan Cabinet who were present for the ceremony. Leading the pack was Minister of Defense, General Abdul Rahim Wardak, as well as the Chief of Staff of the ANA, General Bismullah Khan, and the 203rd Corps Commander, Maj. General Abdul Khaliq.

"This FOB is an \$84 million dollar investment in the future of Afghanistan," said Lt. Col. Mark Winters, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps Embedded Training Team (ETT) Team Chief. "From it, the 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps will be able to serve the people of the Khowst Province and beyond, providing them safety and security for years to come."

Known as a "super" FOB for both its size and its unequaled first class construction, Camp Clark is setting the standard for future building. The FOB is constructed to hold an entire infantry brigade, consisting of five kandaks (battalions) and a garrison kandak. It has a massive power plant, with five generators providing power to the facility. The dining facility can seat a thousand Soldiers at one time. As the distinguished visitors noticed, the FOB probably has one of the better constructed helicopter landing zones in the country and first class maintenance buildings.

The camp took just over a year to construct and was completed in October 2006 by Flour Corporation. The ANA began occupying the facility in November 2006.



# Featured Patriot - Petty Officer 2nd Class Samantha Haffner

Story and Photo By  
Petty Officer 1st Class  
Cheryl Medeiros KMTC PAO

Petty Officer 2nd Class, Samantha Haffner is just one of the many Navy Individual Augmentees who has accepted her latest career challenge as a Storekeeper in Afghanistan with an open mind and found it to be a very rewarding experience.

Haffner was born in Libby, Mo. and graduated from high school in Post Falls, Idaho. She has found that she enjoys the challenges faced by logistics goals and tasks in the Navy.

Haffner is an active duty member from Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit (CNATTU) stationed at Whidby Island Naval Air Station, Wash. Her command is responsible for specialty aviation rate A-School and C-School training. She reported to the command a year and half ago and will return after her mobilization for the remaining period of her assignment.

As a dual-military member, the challenges of being married to another sailor can be overwhelming at times. Like finding a home for their pets when her husband is deployed at the same time.



SK2 Samanth Haffner continues her community service during her deployment by helping an Afghan girl with a new hat and toy.

Her desire to join the Navy is a family tradition. Both grandfathers served during the Korean and post-Korean War eras, and three of Haffner's uncles also served. What Haffner enjoys most about the Navy is the opportunity to travel and all of the friends she has met. Her almost four years residing in Sicily were the most rewarding.

In keeping with the family tradition, Haffner's younger brother, who is also a Storekeeper, joined the Navy in March

2006. He is also stationed at Whidby Island with a VAQ air squadron. Two weeks ago he arrived at Bagram Air Force Base, here in Afghanistan. Haffner is excited about the possibility of getting on a convoy to visit him, while her mother is in constant prayer for both of her children deployed to the same area of operation.

Haffner's most rewarding experiences in Afghanistan was participating in two outreach programs and getting to know her fellow staff at the Kabul Military Training Center's Central Issue Facility (CIF).

In her opinion, the biggest challenge for US forces here is changing the way of life for the people here in Afghanistan, after having experienced war and poverty for so long. She wishes that the children could attend school without fear of retribution.

As a female, she feels that she has been openly accepted by the members of the Afghan National Army that she comes in contact with. According to her experience, they are mostly curious about the independence that American females have and are somewhat intimidated by their supervisory role and the fact that they carry a weapon.

## Sound Off - What Did You Do For Your Sweetheart for V-Day?



"I sent flowers to my wife at her office."

**Master Sgt. Sean McGinnis**  
203rd RCAG  
Harrodsburg, Ky.



"I sent a card and some money, he has been good."

**Staff Sgt. Ranada Gaines**  
J-1 Office  
Washington D.C.



"I sent a card to my wife."

**Staff Sgt. Robert G. Sealey**  
SECFOR  
Lake View, S.C



"I am sent my husband a card. We don't have chocolate here."

**Sgt. 1st Class Kathy Wilburn**  
Support Operations Office  
Gresham, Ore.



"I wish I had a sweetheart, I am looking for one."

**Staff Sgt. Robert Legette**  
SECFOR  
Latta, S.C.

The Phoenix Patriot is also available online at the Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V website:

<http://www.taskforcephoenix.com/>