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NEWS

Marines, sailors with Bravo Company conduct security patrol in Helmand province, Afghanistan

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— Enemy insurgents continue to operate in Helmand province, Afghanistan. To mitigate this threat, infantry units conduct security patrols to build relationships with locals in the surrounding area of Camps Bastion and Leatherneck, and to rid local routes of improvised explosive devices. Marines and sailors with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, donned their gear, mounted in Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and convoyed approximately three hours south of Camp Leatherneck for a 24-hour security patrol, Aug. 23-24. "I feel it was successful," said Cpl. David Calle, a native of Miami, Florida, and assistant patrol leader with Bravo

Co. "Today we got to talk to a couple locals and build rapport with them for future operations. The more people we can talk to the better our relationship will be while working with them, which gives us a better chance to find hidden IEDs in the area." ([Read the STORY](#))

ANA soldiers graduate first Afghan operated instructor training course aboard Camp Shorabak, Afghanistan

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas

CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan—Soldiers with the Afghan National Army graduated from a six-week instructor training course at the Regional Corps Battle School aboard Camp Shorabak, Afghanistan, Aug. 20, 2014. The graduation was significant because it was the first instructor course entirely operated by Afghan instructors without any influence by coalition forces. "This was the first instructor class completely run by the ANA," said Maj. Randall Parker, the 215th Corps Security Force Assistance Advisor Team operations officer with RCBS. "This is what we have been teaching them to do." More than 30 soldiers graduated the instructor training course that covered in-depth knowledge of several subjects such as basic instructor classes, advanced weapons training and generator repair. Each class was taught by an Afghan master instructor. ([Read the STORY](#))



ANA opens new trauma center, brings improved medical capabilities to Helmand province

Story by Staff Sgt. John Jackson



CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army’s Surgeon General Maj. Gen. Mussa Wardak visited Camp Shorabak to celebrate the opening of the Afghan Army’s newest medical facility, Aug. 21. Maj. Gen. Wardak along with Maj. Gen. Sayed Malouk, the commander of the 215th Corps, ANA, and Brig. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo, the commander of Regional Command (Southwest), cut the ceremonial ribbon, signifying the opening of the Camp Shorabak Trauma Center aboard the ANA base in Helmand province. The facility, which will provide a significant increase in the ANA’s ability to care for sick, wounded and injured patients, features modern medical equipment, an emergency room, an operating room, an

intensive care unit and general patient ward rooms. “Now we have a lot of new and better equipment,” said Dr. Hamed Jalazai, the officer in charge of the Camp Shorabak Trauma Center. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

Supply Marines with Marine Expeditionary Brigade – Afghanistan retrograde excess gear aboard Camp Leatherneck

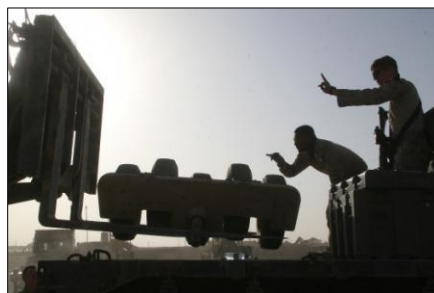
Story by Cpl. Cody Haas

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— As Marines prepare to shift full security responsibility in Helmand province to Afghan National Security Forces by the end of 2014, they are also concentrating on getting all of their gear and equipment out of Afghanistan. Nine Marine Expeditionary Brigade - Afghanistan Marines consisting of one supply officer, one supply chief, four supply administration clerks, one warehouse chief and two warehousemen account for Marine Corps-owned items before retrograding and shipping them home. “This is our first deployment as a unit,” said Sgt. Andrea Robb, the Theater Provided Equipment clerk with MEB-A. “Marines were attached to the unit from within the Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group approximately two months before we deployed.” Each Marine has a specific job and they help each other out when needed in order to get the job done. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 1 conduct retrograde operation in Helmand province, Afghanistan

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— As the U.S. footprint throughout Afghanistan begins to shrink, the extra gear and equipment needs to be retrograded back to the States by a unit capable of moving large items in a timely fashion. For Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 1, it is their mission. Service members with CLB-1 conducted a retrograde operation aboard Patrol Base Boldak, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Aug. 14, 2014. The CLB-1 Marines and sailors mounted in Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles before sunrise and convoyed approximately two hours from Camp Leatherneck to PB Boldak to retrograde tactical gear and equipment. “We used (Tractor, Rubber-Tired,

Articulated Steering, Multi-Purpose vehicles) and (Logistics Vehicle System Replacements) for the air conditioning units and containers,” said 1st Lt. Tracey Fetherson, a platoon commander with Motor Transportation Company.

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

Marines with Weapons Company conduct security patrol in Helmand province, Afghanistan

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — Enemy insurgents continue to operate in Helmand province, Afghanistan, in the area surrounding Camps Bastion and Leatherneck. In order to mitigate this threat, patrols are conducted to clear the surrounding area of all suspicious individuals and threats. Marines with 1st Platoon, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, conducted a security patrol on the outskirts of the coalition bases, Aug. 15, 2014. “Today’s mission was a success,” said Cpl. Connor Tapley, a machine gunner with Weapons Co. “We were able to discourage local nationals from coming too close to base by showing a known presence in the area. First Platoon consists of two sections. One section conducts security patrols around base and the other section is part of an internal quick reaction force for the base. The sections rotate every two weeks to counter complacency.” [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



ISAF medical advisors laud Afghan National Security Forces in Helmand province

Story by 1st Lt. Garth Langley



CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan — The Taliban announced the start of the 2014 fighting season May 12, 2014, and their campaign sought to disrupt the transfer of power during the presidential elections and incite violence against the Afghan National Security Forces. During June, fighting increased across northern Helmand province, challenging the ANSF as International Security Assistance Forces prepare to depart Helmand later this year. As the ANSF have taken the fight to the Taliban, coalition medical advisors have worked closely with Afghan Army doctors to ensure quality medical care for those injured in the fighting. In a significant milestone for the medical advisors and the Afghan National Army’s 215th Corps, the Camp Shorabak Trauma Center will open later this month. The first of its kind in Helmand province,

the trauma center will include four emergency bays, a two-operating-room theater, a five-bed intensive care unit, a post anesthesia unit as well as a 30 bed ward. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

First in, last out: Sailor serves with Marine units making history in Afghanistan

Story by Sgt. Jessica Ostroska

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – A day that many remember and few will ever forget – the day four planes were hijacked and America was attacked. It was a day that would change the lives of thousands of Americans, on that day and for many years to come. Born May 13, 1977, Petty Officer 1st Class Aaron Spaulding’s life-long dream was to enlist into the Navy as a medical corpsman. He enlisted and left for boot camp July 30, 1999. He completed his training and checked into his first duty station aboard Camp Pendleton, California, and was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, during July 2000. While serving with 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, he deployed with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit as a company line corpsman on a Western Pacific Tour, during July 2001. “We headed to Darwin, Australia, to conduct some training with the Australian Army,” said Spaulding, a Glendale, Arizona, native. “After the training we were going to get a few days of liberty. We came back to the ship following the completion of the training, cleaned up our gear, showered, put on our liberty clothes and headed out.” [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Hawaii Marine instills ‘Ohana’ family spirit during Afghanistan deployment

Story by 1st Lt. Garth Langley



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — For 20-year-old Marine Sgt. Victor Farinas “Ohana,” or family, is everything. The Aiea, Hawaii, native deployed to Helmand province, Afghanistan, during Feb. 2014 with 1st Marine Regiment, the last Marine regiment to serve in Afghanistan during the Operation Enduring Freedom campaign and past 13 years of war. On Aug. 15, 2014, 1st Marines cased their battle colors for the final time and will head back to Camp Pendleton by the end of the month. Farinas joined a hand selected group of 45 Marines from the regiment who led Task Force Belleau Wood, and the overall security of Regional Command (Southwest) during their time in Helmand. He joined the Marine Corps

Mar. 5, 2012, seeking a leadership challenge and also to set a good example for his two younger brothers. Farinas said his family supported his decision to enlist and knew he would be a strong leader in the military.

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

Minnesota Marine is a heavy lifter during Helmand drawdown

Story by 1st Lt. Garth Langley

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan— During the final year of operations in Helmand province, U.S. forces with Marine Expeditionary Brigade – Afghanistan, Regional Command (Southwest), are hard at work. While some security force assistance advisors continue to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Forces, others are focused on ensuring the retrograde mission is met with success. By the end of the year, RC(SW) will transition full security responsibility including the remaining U.S. and coalition military bases to the ANSF after more than five years of counterinsurgency and security force assistance operations. U.S. Marine Cpl. Robert W. Clark, a native of Maple Grove, Minnesota, and landing support specialist with RC(SW), deployed with MEB-A during Jan. 2014 to aid U.S. and coalition forces in the complete retrograde and redeployment of equipment and personnel. Later this month, Clark will celebrate his third year in the Marines. He enlisted on Aug. 22, 2011. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



New Jersey Marine accounts for millions during Afghanistan drawdown

Story by 1st Lt. Garth Langley



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — Making sense of a military’s budget in a war zone is no easy task. Corporal Jesus O. Maldonado, 30, a native of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and financial management resource analyst with Regional Command (Southwest), takes these matters seriously. Maldonado deployed to Afghanistan during Jan. 2014, with Marine Expeditionary Brigade – Afghanistan, the final Marine command to lead security force assistance operations in RC(SW). By the year’s end, the regional command will close its doors and transfer full security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces. He said he was thrilled when he heard he would get one of the last deployments to

Helmand province. “Being in Afghanistan gives me the opportunity to serve my country and assist the Afghan forces in the best way possible,” said Maldonado. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

PHOTOS

1/7 disrupts Taliban insurgents to assist retrograde operations

Photos by Sgt. Joseph Scanlan



Lance Cpl. Danny Robinson, machine gunner, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, carries an M240B medium machine gun on his back while maneuvering to a patrol base during a mission in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Aug. 16, 2014. Robinson, a native of Longmont, Colo., and the company operated in Helmand province to disrupt enemy insurgents while retrograde operations were ongoing nearby, Aug. 16-18. ([See the PHOTOS](#))

1/2 Bravo Company conducts overnight security patrol

Photos by Cpl. John Martinez

U.S. Marine 1st Lt. Patrick Ford, a platoon commander with 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, hands candy to children during a security patrol in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Aug. 23, 2014. Patrols are conducted to disrupt enemy operations against Camps Bastion and Leatherneck.

([See the PHOTOS](#))



VIDEOS

Here Is Your War: ANA Opens New Trauma Center in Helmand

Video by Staff Sgt. John Jackson



The Afghan National Army's 215th Corps opened the Camp Shorabak Trauma Center on the ANA base in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Aug. 21, 2014. Includes sound bites from Cmdr. Jeff Stancil, RC(SW) Deputy Command Surgeon.

([Watch the VIDEO](#))

1/2 Charlie Company Deconstructs Patrol Base Boldak

Video by Cpl. John Martinez



U.S. Marines with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, conduct retrograde operations aboard Patrol Base Boldak, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Aug. 14-19, 2014. The remediation and closure of Patrol Base Boldak allows Charlie Company to continue their operations aboard Camp Leatherneck.

[\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

HMH-366 Conducts Quick Reaction Force Night Fire

Video by Sgt. James Pauly

U.S. Marines with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 366 participate in a live-fire range conducted during regular and low light conditions with night vision equipment aboard Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, Aug. 19, 2014. The purpose of the training was to familiarize the Marines with their equipment and prepare them to react to any possible contingency in the defense of the Camp Bastion airfield. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



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 below.

