



CSTC-A News

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Camp Eggers soldiers receive achievement medals, recall Serena attack

by Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Wollenberg
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Five medics received Army Achievement Medals Feb. 9 for their actions during the Serena Hotel bombing by Taliban forces Jan. 14.

Army Sgt. Jason Fortenberry and Spcs. Isiah Soto, Sean Meenan, Andrew Truong and Sarah Nickol, who deployed together from Fort Bragg, N.C., responded by rendering aid to the victims of the attack.

"The medics did a great job," said Army Medical Platoon Sergeant Sgt. 1st Class Karla Tapia. She said they were lucky the situation didn't get as bad as they expected it to, but they were prepared for the worst.

Tapia and Army Medical Platoon Leader 1st Lt. Brian Gomez, coordinated the medics efforts from Camp Eggers.

After the medics received a call about the incident at the hotel, they assembled their gear and joined force protection forces to travel to the hotel.

At the hotel, there were issues with communication. But they were quickly resolved.

"At first there was a huge gap between reality and what we were being told," said Nickol.

They were initially informed by a security guard there was only one casualty inside the hotel. Then they heard about another casualty at a different location, and then another.

"At first it was a little hectic because there were two different buildings," Meenan said. "There was one injury at the first building we went to, but (security people at the hotel) kept saying there was more and we couldn't see them. So it was a little hectic trying to find where the patients were."

The group treated at least seven casualties. Two were transported to the Kabul Afghanistan International Airport to the Medical Level 2 Facility.

"This was my first off-base response. Usually the patients are brought to us," Meenan added. "I was a firefighter before,



photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino

Spc. Sean Meenan, Camp Eggers Medical Platoon, is pinned with an Army Achievement Medal by Army 1st Lt. Brian Gomez, Medical Platoon Leader, Feb. 9 in a ceremony on Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan.

so I've seen patients before, but I've never seen it from gunshot wounds and explosions. So it was a little different knowing it wasn't a peaceful injury — someone deliberately set out to take their life."

Regarding military medics in responding to off-base military incidences, Tapia said, "We're the only medics that go outside the wire. We're known as the 911 of Kabul City. Anything that happens outside the wire, we get called."

"We made a difference and impacted someone's life. That's why I get involved, that's why I became a medic, to do good," said Meenan.

"Our job is a love-hate-type relationship; (we) love to help people but hate to have to do it because that means someone messed up," said Fortenberry.

Deployed since January 2007, the medics are scheduled to return to Fort Bragg in April.

TF King, ANA conduct joint artillery training in Nuristan

by Spc. Gregory J. Argentieri
173rd ABCT Public Affairs

NURISTAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Approximately 30 Afghan National Army artillerymen assigned to the Field Artillery Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 201st Corps, will be taught to operate and fire the modern M198 155mm howitzer by their U.S. Army artillery counterparts from 2nd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 4-319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment for the next several weeks at Forward Operating Base Kalagush.

One vital area of focus for the ANA artillery training is to come away fully capable and proficient in indirect fire in support of their troops on the ground. Indirect artillery fire, fire without direct line of sight, is critical for the success of the fight in the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan.

“Everybody knows the ANA soldiers volunteer, so these soldiers are very interested in artillery and are determined to use this opportunity to learn from the U.S. soldiers and gain more knowledge,” said ANA Field Artillery Company Commander 1st Lt. Abdul Nasir Ahmadi, from Kabul. “These are not new soldiers. They have been working for the ANA for four or five years and have had lots of training.”

“I really enjoyed shooting and I want to have lots of training on the modern howitzer,” said ANA artillery crew chief, Sgt. 1st Class Falak Naz, from Jalalabad. “I have learned lots of things, different kinds of ammunitions, rounds, fuses and how to direct fire for the modern howitzer.”

Working side-by-side with the ANA gives U.S. soldiers more than just a training opportunity. It provides them a better



photo by Spc. Gregory J. Argentieri
An Afghan National Army artilleryman peers through the firing tube as part of a hands-on training session on the M198 howitzer Jan. 28 at Forward Operating Base Kalagush in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan. Paratroopers from 2nd Platoon, Alpha Battery 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment conducted the joint training.

understanding of the overall mission and the importance of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“When I first started working with them I wasn’t sure exactly what they would know, and with the language barrier, how difficult it would be to communicate with them. But since they came with interpreters, and after I have been working with them, I have come to find out, across the board, artillery

is artillery. So I think it’s just a matter of going from one gun to another,” said Army Staff Sgt. James F. Natiello from Aston, Pa., section chief, 2nd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 4-319th AFAR.

“It’s good to know these guys are here and they have experience. It gives us Americans confidence in people here to take care of themselves after we leave,” said Natiello.



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Mission Statement

The mission of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community, is to plan, program and implement structural, organizational, institutional and management reforms of the Afghanistan National Security Forces in order to develop a stable Afghanistan, strengthen the rule of law and deter and defeat terrorism within its borders.

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