



The Combined Security Transition Command **ENDURING** *Ledger*

JANUARY 2008



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The Enduring Ledger is a monthly publication of the Department of Defense and Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A). **The Enduring Ledger** is published each month by the CSTC-A Public Affairs Office, Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan. In accordance with DoD Instruction 5120.4, this DoD newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas. Contents of **The Enduring Ledger** are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by the U.S. government or DoD.

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.

About the cover: Karez villagers in Faryab Province received humanitarian assistance during Operation Four Seasons, as coalition and Afghan National Army forces keep the perimeter secure. The operation was led by Afghan National Security Forces alongside coalition mentors from Camp Spann in Mazar-e-Sharif. (photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour)

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From the top

Setting the conditions for continued success in 2008

As 2007 comes to a close, I want to wish everyone a happy and safe New Year. CSTC-A made great strides advancing the Afghan National Army and Police this year, and I am confident that 2008 will yield greater progress thanks to everyone's hard work and commitment to this noble mission.

In the past, custom and practice meant that winter months saw a lull in the fighting, presenting the enemy with an opportunity to regroup and return renewed in the spring. This winter, the enemy will receive no such quarter from us, our Afghan allies or our NATO partners. Our operational strategy is to use the winter to our advantage. We will continue to grow and develop the Afghan National Security Forces to enhance their field presence and operational forces. And with the support of coalition forces, Afghan units will continue operations to keep the pressure on the Taliban.

Over the next few months, we will focus on the force development arena and implementation of the first rounds of Focused District Development. We have the responsibility to set conditions for Afghan army and police forces to grow, gain effectiveness and succeed against the enemy. It must start now if we are going to see results in the next three to six months. We will push hard in our efforts to assist the army and police in honing their skills, taking the fight to the enemy and protecting the Afghan people. In the coming months, we seek nothing less than to see the Afghans in the fight like never before and in the lead as much as possible.

To do this, we have undertaken a number of ambitious initiatives to continue to strengthen, and in some cases accelerate, the growth of the ANSF. We are working with the Afghan army to recruit, train and field another 4,000 soldiers. We are calling this our "winter surge" and it will involve the Kabul Military Training Center along with Basic Warrior Training locations throughout Afghanistan. This "winter surge" will grow the army by an additional eight battalions, increasing its ranks before the spring thaw. You may recall that 70,000 was the previous authorized strength level for the ANA, but with some careful insight and consideration, the strength of the ANA has been raised by 10,000.

FDD is now in full swing and is our "main effort" with the Afghan police. The first cycle is underway, and the second is nearing commencement. This program is the key to reforming this nation's police force. The Ministry of Interior and the police leadership, with the strong backing of the international community, are committed to this enormous undertaking. We are already seeing results at the regional training centers, and I expect this trend to continue over the course of 2008.

Finally, we will also see the Afghan army and police receive new equipment ranging from M16A2s to 82mm mortars to Humvees. Likewise, we will continue our construction and renovation efforts across Afghanistan. To date, we have completed over 200 projects totaling more than \$1 billion and we have more than 280 projects underway for 2008.

In closing, I want to again wish you and your families a happy New Year and thank you for your service. Last year was a banner year for CSTC-A, and I anticipate 2008 to be no different. I appreciate all you do for this command, and our nation is grateful for your service. Remember to stay sharp and be prepared. Your safety and the success of our mission demand it.



Cone

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert W. Cone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maj. Gen. Robert W. Cone
CSTC-A Commanding General

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CSTC-A raises bar of excellence

by Command Sgt. Maj. Ruben A. Espinoza
CSTC-A command sergeant major



Espinoza

to everyone's hard work and commitment. As we look back at last year's accomplishments, we must start to look forward to the challenges that await us in 2008.

Over the course of this year, we will put a lot of emphasis on assisting the Afghan army by increasing the number of soldiers it trains at their Basic Warrior Training course. We will assist them with the implementation of several new noncommissioned officer corps and officer development courses. These classes are critical to enhancing leader development. And finally, we will continue with the implementation of the Focus District Development at the district police level. FDD is the building block for the Afghan National Police and is key to their reform.

In 2007, the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan team raised the bar of excellence to new heights, thanks in part

Over the next few months, we will see a significant number of important events happen within theater. The first of which is the passing of the reins from Task Force Phoenix VI, 218th Brigade Combat Team South Carolina, to Task Force Phoenix VII, 27th BCT New York. This spring we will also see the Combined Joint Task Force, 82nd Airborne Division transfer authority to the 101st Airborne Division. Another big event that will affect all of us here at Camp Eggers will be the phased move to the "new" Camp Eggers compound this summer.

The new compound is scheduled to have many of the amenities we are accustomed to with some added improvements to include: improved living quarters, a consolidated dining facility, outdoor basketball courts, a running track and a court yard.

In 2008, I challenge you to set two goals, professionally and personally, to achieve during your tour here in Afghanistan. Don't give up until you accomplish them. I would also ask you to continue to remember our comrades who paid the ultimate sacrifice this past year. We salute them and their families and we will never forget. Stay safe and vigilant!

Sound Off:

What is your New Year's resolution for 2008?



Air Force Master Sgt.
Gleny Kevelier
CJ8
Maxwell, AFB, Ala.
"Slow down and enjoy life more, smell the roses."



Army Maj.
Jeff Bergmann
JVB
Paris, Mo.
"Write something inspiring for my kids to read 10 years from now."



Sophie Grandmont
Education Counselor
Ottawa, Canada
"I've stopped making them because I can't keep them."



Seaman
Steven DeJesus
Command Group
Bronx, N.Y.
"Stop eating junk food."

Do you have a story idea? Would you like to submit a photo for the "Around CSTC-A" page? Do you have a comment or suggestion for the Enduring Ledger? E-mail the editor at enduring.ledger@gmail.com

ARSIC-N and ANA travel outside boundaries to deliver aid

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Humanitarian assistance operations are helping the people of Afghanistan and coalition forces fight the Global War on Terrorism.

Under a strategy known as “information operations,” coalition mentors assigned to Afghan Regional Security Integration Command – North are developing HA projects for even the most remote villages in the Hindu Kush Mountains.

During a recent mission known as “Operation Four Seasons,” the Afghan National Army and their coalition mentors from ARSIC-N traveled beyond the edge of their boundaries and into the ARSIC-West’s domain to provide relief to the Afghan people.

In return for their generosity, the ANA asked the elders for assistance in tracking down anti-government forces.

The villages in receipt of the HA supplies are not chosen at random by any means. In fact, they are carefully selected by IO experts at ARSIC-N based on intelligence acquired from locally assigned Afghan National Security Forces, including the ANA and Afghan National Police in Ghormach and Qaysar districts.

During Operation Four Seasons, the ANA and ARSIC-N embedded training teams followed through with a promise of delivering HA to the towns of Khwaja Kinti and Karez, despite poor road conditions resulting from bad weather.

“The people in Khwaja Kinti saw us come in one day and promise to come back the next,” said Army Maj. Joel Graham, ARSIC-N IO Officer. “And we did.”

Following through with such a promise to return bearing gifts is what the ANA and coalition forces



photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour

Two Afghan National Army sergeants help set up supplies during a humanitarian assistance project at the village of Khwaja Kinti in Badghis Province as part of an effort to stabilize the region for Operation Four Seasons.

are becoming renowned for, which cannot be said about resistance forces like the Taliban, who are simply in the business of taking from the locals.

That is where the IO challenge comes in. Carefully pinpointing a strategic location to deliver relief goes a long way in winning support from local villagers. According to Graham and his IO team, the area from Qaysar in Faryab Province to Tez Nawa, a remote village in Badghis Province, is a hotbed for Taliban activity, and thus a perfect place to conduct presence patrols and HA projects.

“That’s where the insurgents have kind of built a stronghold,” said Graham. “So we go there with the ANA and ANP to let the people know that if they support their government, their government will support them, and vice versa.”

The HA mission, which coalition forces conduct with the ANA and ANP all over the country, would normally be carried out by non-government organizations such as: United States Agency for International Development and United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. However, due to some of the more volatile regions being the center of the IO campaign, these organizations cannot enter safely to conduct HA projects.

Thus, operations like December’s

‘Four Seasons’ and ‘Shaheen Sahara,’ which was conducted by the ANSF and coalition forces in November, are pivotal in providing enough stability for outside organizations to enter safely.

“After Operation Shaheen Sahara and Operation Four Seasons, the situation is paving the way for all NGOs to come out and provide reconstruction in the Faryab and Badghis area,” said Gen. Murad Ali, 209th ANA Corps commander. “So I would like to ensure the stability of those parts.”

The Taliban increased their activities in the region last summer by blocking roads, inflicting damage to schools, and illegally taxing and harassing local villagers, which inspired the ANSF and ARSIC-N elements to act. The region however falls into the realm of ARSIC-W, who cannot effectively reach it due to poor weather conditions. So, ARSIC-N took the initiative.

“You would think, okay, it’s too far out there for the west, and too far out there for the north to get to this forward operating region,” said Army Col. Edward Daly, ARSIC-N commander. “Even though it’s out of our boundary we said, ‘we can get there. We’ll go after the bad guys.’ So we did that, and it’s part of the effort to show the reach of the Afghan government and its support toward the people.”

National police are in the fight

by Petty Officer 1st Class
David M. Votroubek
CSTC—A Public Affairs

The Afghan National Police are definitely in the fight for Afghanistan's security.

If anyone doubted their ability to work beside the Afghan National Army, they only needed to watch the Afghan National Security Forces during the recent operation in Faryab and Badghis Provinces.

The ANP had three key roles during Operation Shaheen Sahara: help identify the insurgents, secure the roads and assist the army with arrests by taking custody of the detainees. Their observation posts along the Ring Road also kept the insurgents from escaping to the north.

Their role wasn't limited to just security, however. Not only did the police discover and disarm at least one improvised explosive device, they also helped conduct raids that captured at least 24 insurgents during the operation. Several ANP officers also distinguished themselves during combat actions.

During an insurgent ambush against the ANSF, police mentor Army Sgt. Bill Westberg conducted a house-clearing maneuver with an ANP officer. Westberg is a special weapons and tactics sheriff's deputy from Charleston, S.C., and was impressed by the officer's performance.

"I'm very particular about who I enter buildings with," Westberg said. "He was phenomenal."

Even the border police got involved by sealing the border while the ANA and coalition forces fought the insurgents. Their taking advantage of having other forces available was "brilliant," according to

Army Lt. Col. Ward Marshall of Afghan Regional Security Integration Command-North.

"Unity of effort is definitely a combat multiplier," he added.

The last phase of Shaheen Sahara brought extra challenges for the police, according to the deputy commander of northern police forces, Maj. Gen. Mohamad Belal Nayram. Police don't normally deploy away from home, or have logistical support like the army does. Some of them came to Faryab from as far away as Mazar-e-Sharif, and were out for over 45 days.

Along with the growing ability of the ANP, Nayram sees the Afghan population's trust in the ANP growing. Having led Mujahadin forces against the Russians two decades ago, he understands insurgency well. He believes the insurgents in the north have much less support by Afghans than the Mujahadin did.

"They know that the police are sons of Afghanistan," he explained.

Operation Shaheen Sahara showed ARSIC-North's commanding officer, Army Col. Edward Daly, how well the ANP and ANA can work together.

"This is the first time we saw the ANP and ANA do what they were supposed to do: the ANA secured and the ANP searched," he said.

As the operation ended, it was up to the ANP to maintain security after the coalition and ANA forces withdrew.

As the fight for Afghanistan's security continues, police efforts should eventually shift from fighting for peace to keeping it.

"Maintaining the rule of law after the forces leave is how we'll measure success here," said Marshall.



photos by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek

An Afghan National Police officer keeps others away as Army Capt. Stewart Gast looks at an improvised explosive device the ANP found and disabled.



Maj. Gen. Mohamed Belal Nayram, the Afghan National Police deputy commander for the northern region, served as commander for all ANP forces during Operation Shaheen Sahara, alongside units from the Afghan National Army's 209th and 207th Corps and coalition forces.

A change in plans: No plan survives first contact with the enemy

by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek
CSTC-A Public Affairs

When the logistics convoy set out during Operation Shaheen Sahara, it was prepared for a fight. They planned to resupply an embedded training team by a village with dozens of insurgents nearby. But whoever said, “No plan survives first contact with the enemy” had missions like this in mind.

A firefight between coalition forces and insurgents near Dasht-i-Khatun changed the plan. The fight meant that there was too much enemy activity between the convoy and the ETT, so they joined with elements of the Afghan National Army’s 209th Corps and the Afghan National Police to secure the road south of the town of Ghormach first.

Progress was slow for the first three hours because the road was thought to be mined and dictated caution. The patrol only covered nine kilometers, and they often stopped to talk to local villagers and check for insurgents.

They reached Dasht-i-Khatun by 1 p.m., and began searching the village. The ANA positioned themselves on the surrounding hills to protect the police as they searched for signs of insurgent activity. An American police mentoring team advised and provided cover for the officers. Nothing was found, although some elders told Lt. Col. Douglas Quarve, Afghan Regional Security Integration Command-North, that they believed insurgents were south of town.

While talking with the elders about security issues, Quarve asked them about

the village’s needs. They responded by asking him for help building a school. There was also discussion about wells and electricity, but he reminded the elders that help can only come if the area is secure.

Quarve believes that, “Establishing the rule of law is key.”

After talking with the elders, the patrol stayed to hand out candy and eat watermelon with the villagers. The ANP was particularly interested in developing relationships, since security for the area would be their responsibility after the operation ended.

The commander of ARSIC-N, Army Col. Edward Daly, considers the mission

very successful. Although no insurgents were found, it let the Afghan government establish a presence where they didn’t have one before. It also showed how well the 209th Corps could work with both the ANP and the coalition.

“They did what they were supposed to do,” said Daly, “The ANA secured and the ANP searched.”

Daly noted that the ANA leaders learned other lessons, like how quickly the “ground truth” changes in combat. When leaders lack current information, plans and timelines can become meaningless. In the case of Dasht-i-Khatun, the plan changed for the better.



photos by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek

(Above) Afghan National Army Maj. Tajagul (left) questions an elder from Langar village about insurgent activity in the area. Tajagul was part of a coalition mission to Dasht-i-Khatun to check security there following an ambush on coalition forces outside the village the night before.

(Left) An Afghan National Policeman watches for enemy activity while other ANP officers check the village for insurgents.





Soldiers overcome Afghanistan terrain challenges

by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Mentoring Afghan National Security Forces puts coalition soldiers everywhere in Afghanistan, which means a lot of wear and tear on their vehicles. But that's not stopping them.

Soldiers recognize that the dirt and rocky roads, mountain sides and random paths are going to be hard on even the toughest of all-terrain vehicles, so they handle mechanical breakdowns in stride. They remain alert and ready to improvise, adapt, and overcome the obstacles and challenges, regardless of the circumstances.

During a recent morning mission in western Khowst, soldiers with Anti-tank Platoon 4, Company D, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, drove from Shamal District center to Spera District center, then to Spera Village. Along the way, they experienced many challenges brought on by the rough Afghanistan terrain.

The soldiers had a four-vehicle convoy and experienced mechanical difficulties early on. They drove primarily through a wadi, but traversed up and down several hills as well. At their first stop, the Spera District center, soldiers had to change a flat tire on one Humvee. They also decided to tow one of the Humvees because a front left wheel had become wobbly.

"It's really difficult to maintain the vehicles in this terrain," said AT-4 platoon

sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class William J. Holman, from Flora, Ill. "We do what we can. But it's a big heartache lots of times."

After completing their business in the Spera District, AT-4 soldiers followed Afghan National Police by vehicle convoy to Spera Village to assist in searching for Taliban and other enemy fighters. This trip was also through a wadi. The roads at Spera Village were too narrow for the towing and towed Humvee. They parked just below the village, from where soldiers provided guard.

The other two Humvees were positioned in the village to provide additional security. Several soldiers and ANP were dismounted throughout the village to provide more protection as needed. The platoon commander, Army 2nd Lt. Marc D. Loughton, from Erda, Utah, assisted Spera District police in searching through random compounds.

Once the searches were completed, AT-4 had to decide on the return route. Holman and Loughton decided to drive through the wadi because it might be a shorter trip than the road.

Unfortunately, a few miles into the drive, the wobbly wheel on the towed Humvee fell off.

"This is the second time we've had a wheel fall off (in a wadi)," said Holman.

Holman and a few soldiers climbed a nearby mountain to ensure the area was secure. The Humvee driver, Army Sgt. Ryan A. Siddall, removed the tire from

under the vehicle to determine the cause of the breakdown. Once he determined additional maintenance assistance would be needed, a message was sent to the company headquarters, from where a mechanic and parts could be sent.

It would be several hours before maintenance assistance would arrive, so the soldiers made due. They secured the perimeter, kept themselves warm, and made use of night vision goggles to remain on the lookout for possible enemy threats. The soldiers rotated shifts hourly as lookouts in the gunner turrets.

Night fell by the time help arrived, but the soldiers went right to work. Army Sgt. David L. Wight, from Joplin, Mo., was the mechanic from AT-3 at Camp Clark. Wight worked from about 11 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. before realizing another trip would have to be made. This time AT-4 split up, with two vehicles making their way to Camp Clark for picking up a gear box, and the other two remaining at the site of the break-down.

After returning in the morning, Wight spent another hour making the final repairs. Like the other soldiers, he took it in stride.

"It wasn't too bad," Wight said. "It's all easy."

At about 9:30 a.m., all of AT-4 had returned to the Shamal District center – their current "home" in Afghanistan – just in time to prepare for a visit from their battalion commander and stand by for their next mission.



(Left) An 82nd Airborne Division Humvee sits in a Khowst wadi after a tire fell off on return from a recent mission. **(Right)** Spc. Joel M. Ogden from Buffalo, N.Y., replaces a flat tire on a Humvee in Spera District after a drive through a wadi

photos by Marine Staff Sgt.
Luis P. Valdespino Jr.



PMT missions not a walk in the park

Travel the country, QC outposts, team up with ANP against the Taliban and more

Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek
CSTC-A Public Affairs

The road maps in Faryab province mark roads as “Drivable,” “Possibly Drivable” and “Maybe Drivable,” but a police mentoring team there often drives where there are no roads at all. These mentors from Task Force Phoenix drive them all; even at night.

The province has two six-man PMTs, led by Army Maj. David Goodman. One team works at the provincial level while the other mentors Faryab’s district police, who are responsible for general law enforcement, public safety and internal security. Both teams work from Forward Operating Base Maimaneh.

The district team, whose call sign

is “PMT 21,” is lead by Army Capt. Stewart Gast. His team travels to every district in Faryab to find out who the police are and where they are. The team conducted a census of police in every district in preparation for the “Focused District Development” initiative, which is how the Afghan Ministry of the Interior plans to reform the police and improve the rule of law.

It was a typical day for PMT 21, when they checked in with ANP officers at the district headquarters in Qaysar. Gast and his team discovered that the chief of police was assisting the Afghan National Army by escorting detainees who had been arrested during a security operation the day before.

During Operation Shaheen Sahara

(Desert Eagle) the police in Faryab helped the ANA by securing the roads and preventing insurgents from escaping to the north. To do this, they deployed officers from as far away as Mazar-e-Sharif, which is more than a ten-hour drive away. Some of those were deployed for more than 45 days, which is unique for local policemen and presented logistics challenges they don’t normally face at home.

Further along on their mission, the PMT stopped at a few observation posts outside the village of Karez. Gast asked the officer in charge of the post how they were doing, and if they had enough supplies.

“We need more firewood,” he replied.

Gast promised to look into it. For now, the team tends to focus more on

logistics issues than on actual police training. Later on, FDD will gradually take all officers from their districts and train them as complete units.

While Gast spoke to their leader, Sergeant 1st Class Ramon Gutierrez checked the ANP’s defensive positions overlooking the Ring Road. After walking through the trenches encircling the hilltop, he crawled into the bunker they had constructed.

He smiled as he looked up at the solid roof beams. “You did a good job,” he told one officer.

At the next outpost, officers showed Gutierrez an improvised explosive device they had found nearby and disabled themselves. Because of its location, it was probably meant for them.

While the two mortar rounds might not necessarily have caused much damage to the PMT’s armored vehicles, they could have posed a serious threat to the ANP’s light trucks. Yet, the police

did not seem at all intimidated.

On the team’s way back from visiting village elders and police outposts a few days later, they got a radio call to help the ANP and coalition forces in a running gunfight with insurgents. The PMT suffered no casualties and kept exchanging fire even as they left. The fight shows that mentoring Afghan police is definitely “hands on,” but sharing risks with the police is part of their job.

The ANP impressed team member Army Sgt. Bill Westberg during the firefight. The Charleston, S.C. special weapons and tactics deputy has 21 years of law enforcement experience and is careful about who he clears buildings with, but says the ANP officer who helped him was, “phenomenal.”

The rest of the team might not have police experience, but they bring other skills to the PMT. Gunners Spc. John Caddell and Cpl. Thomas Palis provide security for the team and may spend ten

hours or more a day in the turret when the team goes out. Army Capt. Gerald Keller formerly served as a combat engineer in Iraq and now helps mentor the police.

Although they return from some missions well after dark, the job doesn’t end when they park their humvees.

Guns need to be cleaned, gear needs to be unloaded and the vehicles need to be serviced. Dinner and showers can wait. Army Lt. Col. Robert Williams, the commanding officer of FOB Maimaneh watched as PMT 21 got ready for their next mission.

“They do it right,” he said. “They take care of their ‘horses’ first.”

The team is ready to go out again the next morning, and out on the road these police mentors will try to enhance the ANP’s capabilities and transform their loyalties to the Afghan nation and to its people. While they do, they are side by side with the Afghans in the fight.

Army Capt. Stewart Gast gets a security update from an Afghan National Police officer at an observation post overlooking the Ring Road. Gast and others from his Police Mentoring Team stopped at the OP to check up on the ANP officers deployed there to secure the road during an operation against insurgents in Afghanistan’s northwest Faryab Province.



Army Cpl. Thomas Palis keeps watch by his M240 machine gun turret gun while his convoy is halted.



photos by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek



Sgt. First Class Ramon Gutierrez looks at an improvised explosive device that was found and disabled by members of the Afghan National Police. Gutierrez and others from his Police Mentoring Team learned about the device when they stopped at the observation post to check up on the ANP officers.



Army Sgt. Bill Westberg gives an Afghan boy a toy outside the Qasir Police headquarters.



Spc. John Caddell cleans the talc-like dust from his M-240 machine gun at a rest stop during a patrol.

Around CSTC-A

Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan



photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

Dara McFarlane, a Dallas Cowboys cheerleader, has lunch and talks with Spc. Zac C. Johnston, a Casper, Wyo., native, and other military men and women Dec. 21 at the Camp Blessing dining facility in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.



photo by Petty Officer First Class David M. Votroubek

Army Maj. Wayne Hunt greets some boys after the Afghan National Army cordoned and searched their village for insurgents.



photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

Model and television personality Leeann Tweeden joins 2nd Airborne Battalion, 503rd Army Infantry Regiment, in front of a 155mm howitzer for a picture Dec. 21 at Camp Blessing in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.



photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

Sgt. 1st Class William J. Holman (far left) of Flora, Ill., and Army 2nd Lt. Marc D. Loughton (2nd from right) of Erda, Utah, speak with Spera District Afghan National Police Capt. Laiq (center) and sub-governor Hussain Jon "Shirzai" Azathan (right) through interpreter Said Raowf (2nd from left) about construction projects in the district.



photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

Army Sgt. Jeremiah K. Stafford of Charleston, S.C., helps Afghan Border Police at the Tera zayi District Center set up an antenna for their communications radio.

Pakistan border traffic control point gets a facelift

by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.
CSTC-A Public Affairs

Coalition mentors recently helped the Afghan Border Police in Khowst make notable improvements at a border control point.

There were no written plans, just some shared ideas. But the mentors helped the ABP create an effective traffic control point in less than two days with makeshift walls, impromptu help from a local tractor owner and some old-fashioned elbow grease.

The ABP mentor team arrived mid-morning at an eastern Khowst Province border control point, about three miles from the Pakistan border. The border control point facility rests on the top of a hill, a few hundred meters above the border crossing road. Their assigned mission from team leader Army Capt. John T. Boyd, of Cranford, N.J., was to “Supervise (traffic control point) improvements.”

“If we can get this route down, then we know we can go out and check the other five routes,” said Boyd. He explained that the ABP and mentors need to be available to randomly check vehicles that cross the border through other routes, such as wadis or valleys without roads. It is important to have the main route secure first.

After arriving at the border control point, Boyd and his team met with the ABP company executive officer, 1st Lt. Saleh Khan, and the acting noncommissioned officer, Mohammad



photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Luis P. Valdespino Jr.

Army Sgt. Jeremiah K. Stafford from Charleston, S.C., helps Afghan Border Police in setting up a re-structured traffic control point in eastern Khowst.

Ayoub Khan (no relation).

Army Master Sgt. Jeffrey P. Lowe, a mentor and senior enlisted soldier with the team, reminded his team that as mentors, they need to teach the leaders to lead. “We have to try to make them get their soldiers to do (their work).”

After lunch, most of the team joined the available ABP on the road. There was already a point on the road marked by signs, concertina wire and Hescos (large wire mesh baskets lined with fabric and filled with dirt). However, the team leader recognized a need for improvements.

The control point needed to be better prepared to handle traffic. Boyd told his team the signs needed to be out further, warning traffic to be prepared

to stop. He also said they need a separate vehicle search area adjacent to the road to prevent stopping traffic as it approaches. This would create a traffic control point that really keeps the ABP in control of the crossing.

With the executive officer and NCO in agreement, Boyd disbursed his team to work with the ABP to accomplish the tasks at hand.

Because the group of ABP consisted of only ten men, Boyd and his men worked side-by-side with them, shoveling dirt, setting up Hesco barriers and mentoring the men responsible for checking vehicles.

As a team, the ABP and their mentors created an effective traffic control point. The mentors continuously conveyed to the ABP leaders the significance of them motivating their men to work hard – for their own benefit.

At one point the NCO stopped a tractor crossing the border road and hired his help in leveling the ground and moving dirt. With his assistance and the men’s efforts the next morning, the traffic control point was completely remodeled before noon the second day.

Though the mentors did at times admit to dealing with frustrations, they were pleased at the results.

“It’s only been 10 months of them being in a unit here at (this border control point),” Lowe said, reminding his team they needed to show some patience.

The patience and hard work paid off, as they accomplished their mission. The border control point is in better condition, and the ABP is better prepared for various border traffic situations.



Afghan Border Police acting noncommissioned officer Mohammad Ayoub Khan arranges to hire a local tractor-owning villager to construct a new traffic control point in eastern Khowst.



An OMLT takes to the field

photo and story by Petty Officer 1st Class
David M. Votroubek
CSTC-A Public Affairs

When the Afghan National Army's 209th Corps recently deployed to Faryab Province for Operation Shaheen Sahara, its Operational Mentor Liaison Team members had to catch up with them.

Since the 209th Corps is stationed in the relatively quiet northern region of Afghanistan, this was a good opportunity for the OMLT to mentor them during an actual operation. As the OMLT's 10-vehicle convoy drove toward Forward Operating Base Freia on Highway One, they carefully traversed unpaved mountain passes, down wadis and over open stretches of ground.

There are currently 21 OMLTs embedded in ANA kandaks, brigades, garrisons and corps headquarters across Afghanistan, with plans for more in the future. They train and mentor the

ANA, and provide a liaison capability between the ANA and the International Security Assistance Forces.

This particular OMLT is comprised of soldiers from Croatia, Germany, Norway and Sweden, with leadership that rotates between the last two. It is now led by Norwegian Col. Bjorn T. Bech.

Bech also mentors the brigade commander. His rapport with the commander helps him know when to get involved or when to let the Afghans handle things on their own. If in doubt, his interpreter occasionally advises him about how to understand Afghans.

Over the course of his career, the Norwegian colonel has worked with military forces from several NATO countries, which makes it easier for him to assess and work with foreign militaries. In his short time with the OMLT, Bech has learned something of

the ANA's strengths and weaknesses.

He began, "No one should ever doubt the Afghan's fighting ability."

He added that this is especially true at the squad and company levels, which is why his OMLT is concentrating on improving the 209th Corps' higher brigade staff. Each section within the brigade has one officer and non-commissioned officer to advise the ANA leadership.

When the OMLT arrived at FOB Freia, the 209th Corps was already deployed out in the field. Getting out to the operation ahead of their mentors showed that they are in the lead, which is the OMLT's goal.

As the German and Norwegian soldiers unloaded cots, generators and provisions from their truck, it was obvious that mentoring the ANA brigade staff wouldn't just happen at camp.

"The Afghans will be able to work on their own," said German mentor 1st Lt. Matthias Wagner. "They are soldiers more and more."

Warrior of the Month



photo by Staff Sgt. Robert Wollenberg

Army Spc. John A. Martinez

Job title and unit: Cope/458th Ag. Postal Company

Home station: San Antonio, Texas

Hometown: San Antonio, Texas

Deployment Goals: Getting home

Best part of the deployment: Seeing a smile on a soldier's face after they receive a package from a love one, makes it all worth it.

Life after Camp Eggers: College

Favorite vacation spot: Canyon Lake, Texas

Favorite movie: *The Matrix 1,2,3*

Favorite music group: The Killers

Favorite sports team: New England Patriots

Favorite meal: Pizza

Favorite quote: "As long as there is man, there will be war," Albert Einstein

Favorite cereal: Frosted Flakes

Celebrity crush: Eva Longoria

Hobbies: Drawing and Salsa night

Pet peeve: People who get their addresses wrong

Supervisor says: "Spc. Martinez was placed in a job normally done by an E-6, and with very little training. He's been responsible for the accountability of funds and has done an exceptional job. He has a very important role to play in the morale of the troops here and does his best to keep their morale high."

-- Army Sgt. Stephen Shelton
Post Office NCO in charge

Camp Eggers Salutes

■ The following individuals for earning the Bronze Star: **Army Capts. Kent Christopher and Daniel Burkhart, Sgt. Maj. Sammy Sablan and Sgt. 1st Class Clifford Foster, DCG-PD; Sgt. 1st Class Jason Sweat, HHC; Lt. Col. John Davis, ANADEV; Army Lt. Col. Crystal Staples and Army Maj. Debra Jungers, CJ7; Chief Warrant Officer Bruce Mozingo, CJ4; Lt. Col. Brian Brennan and Marine Maj. Brian McDermott, CJ3; and Army Col. Edward Smallwood, CJ1.**

■ The following individuals for earning the Defense Meritorious Service Medal: **Senior Chief Petty Office Jason Scott, CJ2; Lt. Troy Orr, CJ4; Cmdr. Angela Keith, CJ5; and Gunny Sgt. Steven Goodban, CJ1.**

■ The following individuals for earning the Joint Service Commendation Medal: **Petty Officer 1st Class William Cunningham, CJ1; Lt. Cmdr. Fernando Lorente and Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Smith, CJ4; Petty Officer 1st Class Romel Agliam, CMD GRP; Lt. Omar Hasan and Senior Airman Joshua Coulombe, CJ-ENG; Cpl. Stephen Saunders, JVB and Petty Officer 2nd Class Maria Miranda, CJ5.**

■ The following individual for earning a Certificate of Appreciation: **Padilla Ramon, MPRI.**

Do you have a story idea? Would you like to submit a photo for the "Around CSTC-A" page? Do you have a comment or suggestion for the Enduring Ledger? E-mail the editor at enduring.ledger@gmail.com

Looking for a picture or story that appeared in a previous issue, but can't find it?

Check out the CSTC-A public site at, www.cstc-a.com.

Legend visits Camp Eggers

James Megellas, the most decorated officer in the history of the 82nd Airborne, visited Camp Eggers Dec. 26 to sign his book, *All the Way to Berlin*, for troops and talk to them about his experiences. The retired lieutenant colonel chronicled his time in the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division during World War II in his book, which was later portrayed in the movie, "A Bridge to Far." Magellas discussed his experiences with the troops before signing books, then traveled to the International Security Assistance Force headquarters and then further downrange in Afghanistan.

-- photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour



MWR weekly events

Sunday

6 a.m. – Abdominal strength class at the Warrior Gym

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

Monday

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6 p.m. – Hip Hop Fitness class at the Clamshell

6:30 p.m. – Country music night at the Clamshell

Tuesday

6 a.m. – Combatives class at the Clamshell

6 a.m. – Abdominal strength class at the Warrior Gym

4:30 – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

Wednesday

6 a.m. – Combatives class at the Clamshell

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6 p.m. – Hip Hop Fitness class at the Clamshell

6:30 p.m. – R&B Night at the Green Bean patio

Thursday

6 a.m. – Combatives class at the Clamshell

6 a.m. – Abdominal Strength class at the Warrior Gym

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6:30 p.m. – All Request Night at the Green Bean patio

Friday

9:30 a.m. – Read to Your Kids program at the Armadillo House

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6 p.m. – Karaoke outside the Green Bean patio

Saturday

4:30 p.m. – Spin class at the Warrior Gym

6:30 p.m. – Salsa Night at the Green Bean patio

Chapel weekly schedule

Sunday

11 a.m. – Protestant Traditional service at the Clamshell

5 p.m. – Christian service at the U.S. Embassy

6 p.m. – Refuge Praise Band practice at the Clamshell

7 p.m. – Protestant Contemporary service at the Clamshell

Monday

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

Tuesday

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Women's Bible Study at the Pool House

Wednesday

6 a.m. – Christian Officer Fellowship at the Chapel House

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Men's Bible Study at the Pool House

Thursday

4:30 p.m. – Catholic Liturgy of the Word at the Chapel House

6 p.m. – Gospel musicians practice at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Gospel choir practice at the Chapel House

Friday

12:30 p.m. – The Church of Latter Day Saints at the Chapel House

6 p.m. – Jewish Lay service at the Pool House

6 p.m. – Refuge Praise Band practice at the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Gospel service in the Chapel House

Saturday

4 p.m. – Roman Catholic Vigil Mass at the Clamshell

4:30 p.m. – Mighty Voice of Praise at the Chapel House

6 p.m. – Gospel Choir Practice in the Chapel House

7 p.m. – Bible Study at the Swamp Conference Room

7 p.m. – Gospel service in the Chapel House

Saturday-Thursday

1 p.m. – Muslim prayer time at the Chapel House (prayer rugs are available)



Delivering aid to Afghans

A convoy of embedded trainers, police mentors, a security force team and a tactical command post team scales the Hindu Kush Mountains on their way from Forward Operating Base Meymaneh to FOB Freia in Qaysar District to kick off Operation Four Seasons.

-- photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour