

# FREEDOM WATCH



JANUARY 2010



## AFGHANISTAN

### A BRIDGE NOT TOO FAR

INSIDE

AFGHAN  
VILLAGERS TO  
THE RESCUE

ANA SOLDIERS  
CATCH TWO  
SUICIDE BOMBERS

ROADS TO  
PROGRESS

“...A GROUP OF VILLAGERS  
HAVE DEFEATED THE TALIBAN  
REPEATEDLY WITHOUT  
GOVERNMENT HELP.”



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## FREEDOM WATCH

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COMMANDER, 304TH PAD  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
CAPT. WILLIAM GEDDES

MANAGING EDITOR  
STAFF SGT. COREY L. BEAL

LAYOUT EDITOR  
SPC. JAY VENTURINI

ASSOCIATE LAYOUT EDITOR  
PFC. AQUILLA REED

STAFF WRITERS  
SGT. TROY JOHNSON  
SGT. ANDREW REAGAN  
SPC. SPENCER CASE

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Commander, CJTF-82  
Maj. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti

Public Affairs Director, CJTF-82  
Lt. Col. Clarence Counts Jr.

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Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers hold a road equipment maintenance course for approximately 20 local equipment operators and mechanics at the Khost City Maintenance Yard in the Matun district, Dec. 5.



Story and photos by Air Force Capt. Angela Webb, Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team PAO

# Maintaining the path of progress

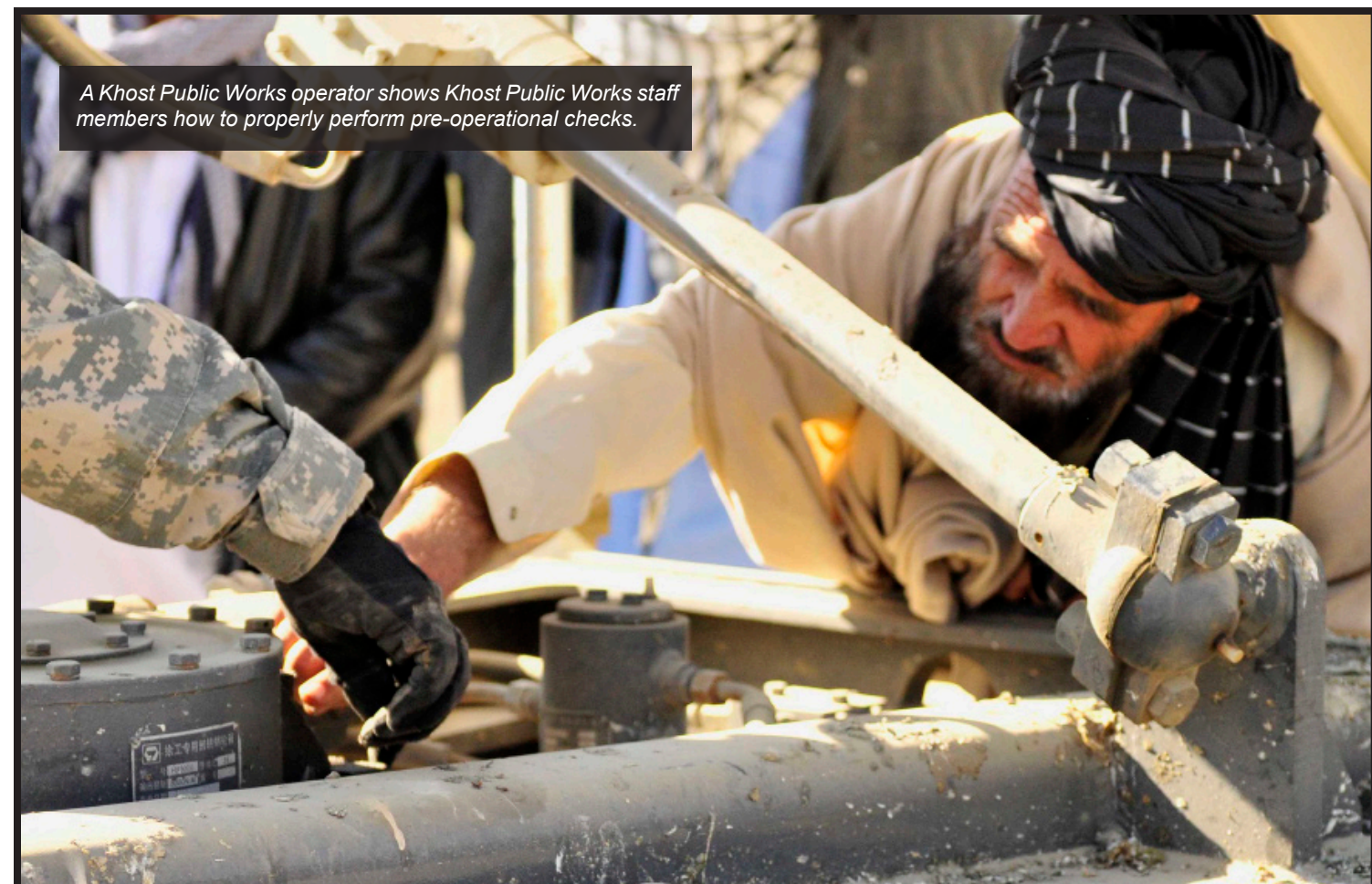
Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers held a road equipment maintenance course for local equipment operators and mechanics at the Khost City Maintenance Yard in Matun district, Dec. 5.

The first of several sessions concentrated on start-up equipment checklists and keeping maintenance logs.

“We want to reinforce the idea that proper maintenance and care will extend the useful life of this equipment, which will ultimately extend the time between major road resurfacing projects,” said Navy Lt. Stephen Gustafson, Khost PRT lead engineer. “The training is intended to improve the ability of the Afghans to properly operate and maintain their road and other construction equipment.”

The maintenance yard has a variety of different road equipment, but some vehicles are showing signs of wear and tear. Corrosion, improperly inflated tires, and dead batteries were a few of the basic issues addressed during training.

“It’s important to develop a maintenance schedule, whether it’s weekly, twice a month or monthly,” said Navy Machinist Mate 1st Class Jose Fernandez, Khost PRT Maintenance Course instructor. “Some of the equipment is used infrequently and only for specific types of road maintenance; this equipment requires even more upkeep.”



A Khost Public Works operator shows Khost Public Works staff members how to properly perform pre-operational checks.

PRT engineers demonstrated the proper pre-operational checks and procedures on road graders, loaders, dump trucks and other construction equipment. The instructors explained that checking the outside of the equipment for any deficiencies is just as important as the internal parts.

“Checking all the features for wear and tear before starting the vehicle can prevent a bigger and more expensive problem from occurring,” said Navy Builder 1st Class Isaac Baca, Khost PRT engineer.


The instructors explained that having a schedule to change the oil and other fluids, lubricating the gears, and properly storing the vehicles would help to keep their vehicles functioning at peak performance.

“Due to the weather conditions in Afghani-

stan, it is essential to perform routine maintenance,” Fernandez said. “The dust and humidity accelerates the deterioration process, but with continuous checks, simple care and storage would extend the use of the equipment greatly.”

The Khost operators appreciated the training provided for them, and look forward to future sessions.

“The instructors did a great job at showing us the proper steps to keep our vehicles in good shape; we learned and received a lot of helpful information,” said a Khost Public Works operator.

Khost Director of Public Works engineer Mamor Shah would like to see the training strengthen the ability of Afghans to sustain their own operations without assistance, and has great confidence in his staff that it can be accomplished. 



Navy Builder 1st Class Isaac Baca, Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team engineer, explains pre-operational vehicle checks.



# The Cold Hard Facts

By Abdo Zacheus, CJTF-82 Safety Officer

**Cold weather is a threat to successful operations. Fortunately, there are effective countermeasures to these threats. It's never too early to start planning.**

Exposure to the elements is an occupational hazard familiar to all servicemembers. As leaders, we must be aware of the difficult circumstances junior troops often find themselves in. Whether in the field or in garrison, it's usually the corporal – not the commander – who is outside in the cold while on patrol or setting pickets. However, proper awareness and implementation of appropriate control measures can help servicemembers prevent cold weather injuries.

**Prior planning enables units to effectively employ these cold weather countermeasures and may help prevent your Servicemembers from suffering an injury this winter.**

## Nutrition and Hydration:

Good nutrition is an important measure to prevent cold injury, because it provides the body with fuel to produce heat.

The number of calories needed to maintain normal bodily function generally increases as the weather gets colder. However, adequately clothed and protected servicemembers in cold climates don't require more than the daily ration of 3,600 to 4,600 calories they're provided in Meal, Ready-To-Eat packages or dining facility meals.

One of the most important precautions servicemembers can take to stave off a cold injury is to stay hydrated. Leaders can help their servicemembers stay hydrated by providing them liquids they'll actually drink. Lukewarm drinks with flavoring taste better than cold, tasteless drinks in the winter.

Leaders should remember that coffee, tea, hot chocolate and soda are diuretics which actually increase fluid output and lead to dehydration.

## Proper Training:

It is known that well-trained servicemembers suffer less from the cold than others. The absence at the unit level of a cold weather officer leaves leaders without a focal point to ensure first line supervisors are properly trained to implement cold injury preventive measures.

The potential consequences of command inattention to cold weather training are numerous and dangerous. Though it may seem obvious, leaders must remember to use weather data when planning cold weather missions.

Knowing what hazards are forecast allows for more informed and effective mission planning. All troops, however, should be trained to prevent, detect and give first aid for cold weather injuries. Similarly, all troops must be disciplined in their behavior for any mission plan to have a real chance at success.

## Alcohol and Tobacco:

Servicemembers should not consume alcohol or use tobacco products before or during operations. Besides being prohibited by General Order Number One, alcohol may give a sensation of warmth, but it actually decreases core body temperature and increases the risk of hypothermia.

Tobacco causes constriction of blood vessels (which bring nutrients and warmth) to the extremities. For safety's sake, it's best to stay away from both alcohol and tobacco products.

## Beware of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

Watch for flu-like symptoms including fatigue, drowsiness and headache. Affected individuals may become confused and develop blurred vision. Carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless and tasteless. Suspected carbon monoxide victims must be moved to fresh air and given medical attention immediately.

## Cold Weather and Clothing:

Normally, servicemembers who suffer cold weather injuries are improperly dressed. All servicemembers must be issued the full complement of cold weather gear, including insulated boots, gloves and a field jacket liner.

Soldiering often requires intense physical exertion, causing body heat to be lost through perspiration. Clothing dampened by sweat or elements such as sleet, rain, or snow provides no insulation against the cold, and actually increases the risk of injury.

Once a servicemember's clothing becomes drenched in sweat, the layers stick together and prevent warm air from being trapped between them. Therefore, dress lightly, yet as realistically as possible to reduce the hazard of excessive perspiration.

Clothing should be worn loose and in layers so it can be vented at the neck. Garments that fit too tight restrict circulation and reduce insulation and ventilation in the covered areas, providing an environment for cold injury.

Changing socks and wearing proper footgear is also important in preventing cold weather injuries such as trench foot or immersion foot.

Additionally, servicemembers should wear gloves with inserts in cold weather. Head protection is also necessary to prevent heat loss.

*Servicemembers should always use the buddy system. In other words, they should observe their counterparts in the field for early signs of cold weather injuries.*

**When using Cold-Weather Clothing, Remember**

# C-O-L-D

**Keep it...Clean**

**Avoid.....Overheating**

**Wear it.. Loose in layers**

**Keep it..Dry**



## Know Your Cold Weather Injury Signs and Symptoms:

### Trench Foot:

Numbness in the feet accompanied by a burning sensation and shooting pain. Severely affected tissue will appear pale and slightly blue. Trench foot can lead to gangrene.

### Frostbite:

Loss of feeling or a tingling sensation in the affected area along with white, grey, red, yellow or waxy-looking skin. The frozen tissue will feel solid to the touch.

### Chilblain:

Reddened, slightly swollen skin accompanied by a prickly or burning sensation. Left untreated, chilblain can lead to more severe cold injuries.

### Hypothermia:

Shivering, an altered sense of consciousness and uncoordinated movements. Hypothermia can be fatal if treatment is not given immediately.



# ANA Soldiers Catch Suicide Bombers

*These soldiers of 4th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, successfully prevented two suicide bombings in the Zarobi district.*



*Story and photos by Afghan National Army Maj. Mohammad Arif  
201st Corps PAO*

Soldiers from 4th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, discovered two suicide vests at a house in the Zarobi district of Kabul, Dec. 5, and arrested the people accused of planning to use them.

The alleged insurgents had planned to launch a suicide bombing as part of terrorist activities in the capital city, but this was prevented by the 3rd Brigade's operation. Intelligence reports had told the soldiers exactly where the suspects would be.

In Laghman province, six Taliban were captured and another six killed by soldiers from 4th Kandak, 2nd Brigade, who were working with Afghan National Police and Coalition Forces at Alingar district.

Taliban commander Abdul Rahman was one of the six arrested. Afghan National Security Forces also confiscated four AK-47s, two RPGs and several rounds of ammunition.

No civilians, Afghan National Security Forces or Coalition forces were injured in either operation. These are just two examples of how the ANA continues to serve the security, peace and independence of the Afghan people. 🇦🇫



*The two suicide vests confiscated by the ANA soldiers.*

## PUT YOUR UNIT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**Does your unit deserve recognition?**

Email us at [freedomwatch@swa.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@swa.army.mil).

Please include unit name, mission, history and why your unit stands above the rest.

Deadline January 15th.



# Roads to Progress



Story and photos by Air Force Capt. Tony Wickman  
Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

Local workers cleaning the streets in downtown Asadabad watch a Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team patrol conduct a final quality assurance and quality check on four kilometers of new roads through the provincial capital prior to a dedication ceremony, Dec. 13. The Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers did the check to ensure the Kunar Construction Company did a good job building the roads. The project took nearly one year and approximately \$1 million to complete. The hope is the new roads will continue to spur economic development and job growth in the city.

Getting through downtown Asadabad, Afghanistan, just became easier thanks to four kilometers of new roads that were completed, Dec. 13.

Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers completed their final quality assurance check prior to a dedication ceremony with Fazlullah Wahidi, Kunar provincial governor, and village elders on a clear, warm day.

The roads, worth \$935,000, took nearly a year to complete; engineers used concrete and double-bituminous surface treatment to pave the roads that will benefit hundreds of families and businesses in the city. It is a welcomed improvement according to several residents and shopkeepers.

Sherzada, a general store owner who has been in business for three years, said the new roads make a difference in the lives of the people working and living in Dam Kalay village and Asadabad.

“Before, the road was all muddy and wasn’t good for my business. The people of this village and (I) were getting our clothes dirty while walking here,” Sherzada said. “Whenever we were doing shopping downtown, it would take more time for us to come here. But the new road now makes us feel safer and cleaner. It also makes the trip shorter, and it’s a benefit for everyone in the village.”

According to Navy Lt. Derek Elling, PRT engineer, it was a

good project with only minor issues. He said that unlike many of the other road projects the PRT is working on, this wasn’t a continuous four-kilometer road, but rather smaller segments of roads linking different parts of the city together.

“The overall quality of the road is good. There was a 700-meter section of road that wasn’t complete when we got here (in July) that we had to decide whether it was going to be (double-bituminous surface treatment) or concrete because it is in a washout area. That was what we (quality assessed) before the dedication ceremony,” said Elling, a native of Norwood Young America, Minn. “There were minor things that need to be addressed—a small section of the road broke off and a culvert needs to be repaired—but overall it is a good road.”

Elling said a positive sight while conducting the quality assessment patrol was seeing people who had been hired by a non-governmental group cleaning the new streets.

“The NGO is doing some good work and are on the front-line of things. They pay people directly to go out and do jobs like clean the street, which eliminates the threat of corruption and graft,” Elling added.

In remarks to the crowd of more than 50 provincial leaders and tribal elders, Army Lt. Col. Joseph Cantlin, PRT chief of military-civilian operations, praised the local construction and engineering company for its efforts.

Local Afghan women in downtown Asadabad move past a Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team patrol conducting a final quality assurance and quality check of the PRT project.



“This morning the PRT walked up and down the road to see that the contractor did a good job and built a good road for the city of Asadabad,” said Cantlin, a native of Ft. Belvoir, Va.

Cantlin said the desire of the PRT is that the road will improve governance and development in the area.

“The PRT is very happy that we can be here on this beauti-

ful day in Asadabad to celebrate the opening of this new road,” Cantlin said. “As you know, Asadabad is the capital and center of governance and economic development for the entire province. Our hope is that this new road will help to continue economic development and bring new jobs to the people of Asadabad.”



Fazlullah Wahidi, Kunar provincial governor, speaks to the crowd following the dedication of four kilometers of new roads through Asadabad, the Kunar province capital, Dec. 13.



# A Bridge Not Too Far

*The Saracha Bridge in Nangarhar province, stands partially built. TF Mountain Warrior servicemembers, in conjunction with Afghan contractors, continue working to replace the bridge across the Saracha River.*



*Story and photos courtesy of TF Mountain Warrior*

Task Force Mountain Warrior servicemembers in conjunction with Afghan contractors, continue working to replace a bridge across the Saracha River in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan.

Flash flooding destroyed the Saracha Bridge along Highway 1, cutting all traffic from Torkham Gate to Jalalabad, Aug. 31.

After the incident, Afghan contractors immediately built dirt bypasses for the vehicles and moved concrete to support the footers and piers of the bridge.

In September, a complete reconstruction of the bridge began to restore the traffic flow through the area.

Servicemembers from the 1613th Engineer Company conducted the necessary demolition of the destroyed bridge and emplaced concrete footers and piers for support.

The 502nd Multi-Role Bridge Company placed towers and constructed a Mabey-Johnson Bridge - a tempo-

rary military bridge that snaps together - and launched it across the 142-meter gap.

TF Mountain Warrior servicemembers synchronized and coordinated all assets and provided round-the-clock security and engineer escorts. ANA soldiers and ANP provided on-site traffic control and security.

Rebuilding the Saracha Bridge presented an opportunity for ISAF, and local Afghan government agencies to come together and solve a problem, said Army Maj. Gerald S. Law, an engineer for TF Mountain Warrior and 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

"Everyone came through and did a great job. We expect the bridge to be open in late December," he added.

With the bridge approximately 50 percent complete they are well on their way to meeting their goal of opening the bridge by the end of the year.

"This bridge represents a combined effort and shows what we can accomplish together," Law said. 🌐



*ISAF servicemembers work on rebuilding the Saracha Bridge, in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, Dec. 7. The bridge was destroyed by flash flooding in late August, immediately cutting off all traffic from Torkham Gate to Jalalabad. The Afghan government, ANA, ANP and ISAF have been working together to show that positive teamwork leads to accomplishments.*



Goodwill Across the Region:

ISAF and ANA Reaching Out

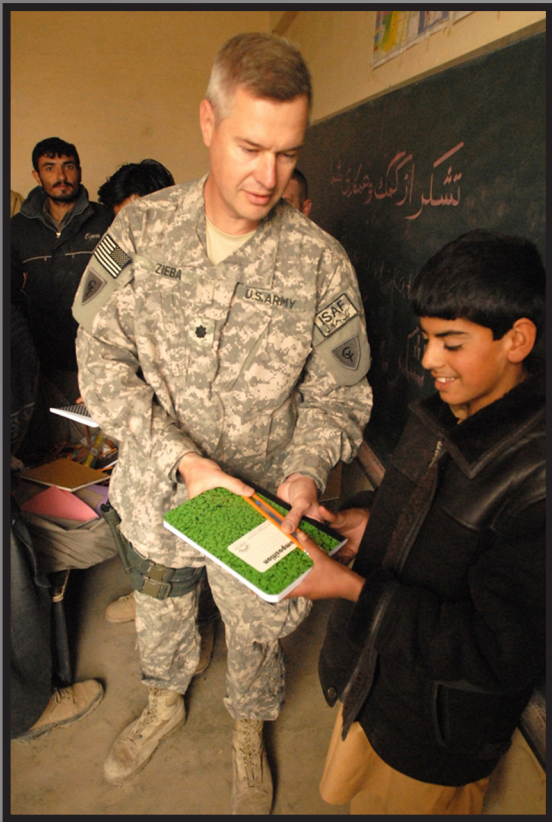


Photo by Army Spc. William E. Henry, TF Cyclone, 38th Inf. Div.

Task Force Cyclone Staff Judge Advocate Army Lt. Col. James Zieba hands school supplies to a boy at Uzbashi Primary School in Bagram district, Parwan province, Dec. 3. Supplies such as pens, pencils and notebooks were handed out in two schools in the Bagram district area.



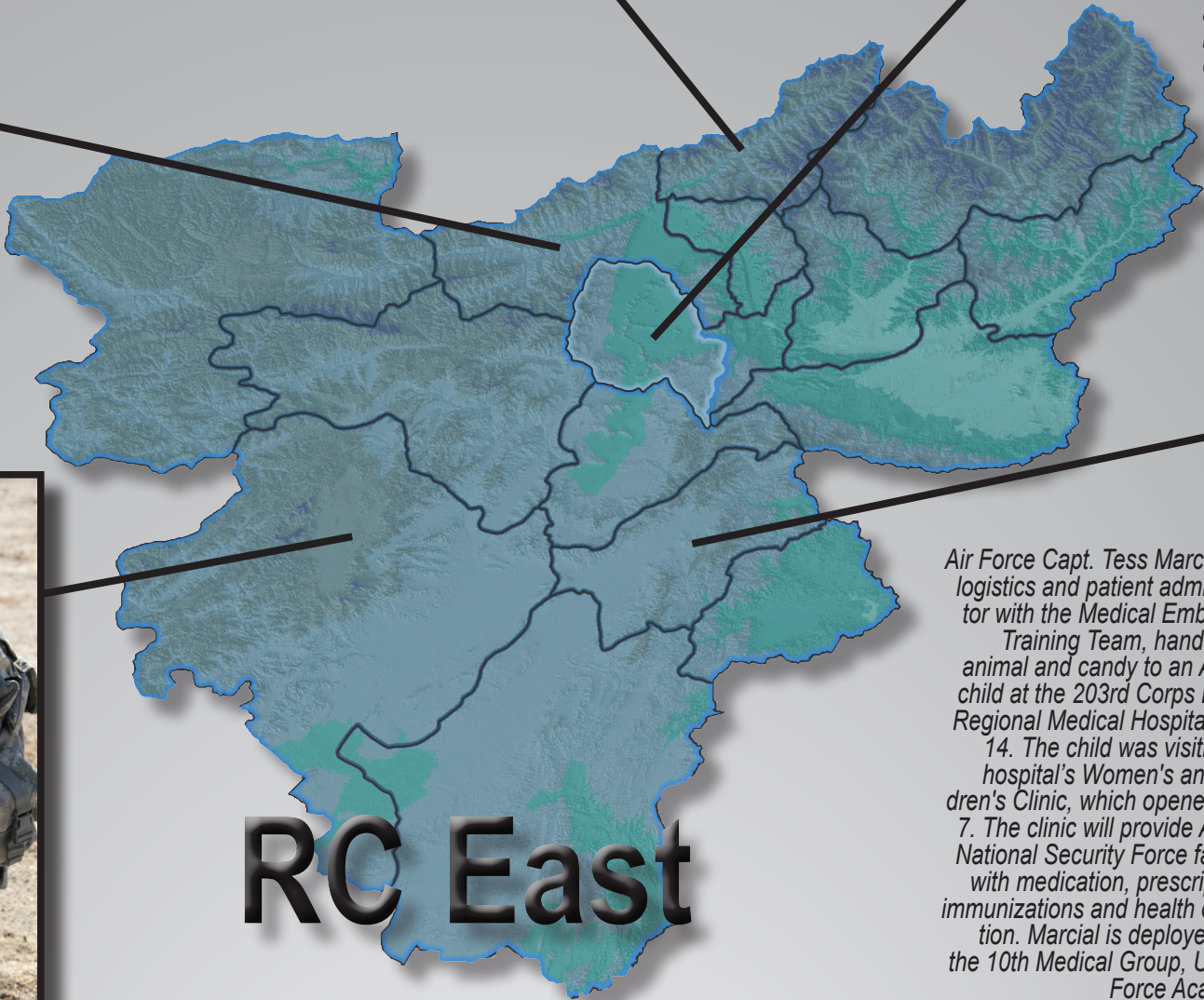
Photo by Air Force Capt. John T. Stamm, Panjshir PRT PAO

Navy Master Chief Petty Officer William Goforth, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team Civil Affairs, wraps a young resident of Panjshir's Dara district in a handmade quilt, Dec. 14. The quilts were made and donated by the Lake Norman Piece-makers of Lake Norman, N.C., and the Afghans for Afghanistan organization from the First Presbyterian Church of Aiken, S.C.



Photos by Army Lt. Col. John Lim 201st Corps information officer

Key leaders of Shani Zahvra village help unload bundles from the 201st Corps truck, handing food and winter supplies to two children from the area. Almost 1,200 people from 250 families were given flour, rice, beans, sugar, tea, matches, stationery, blankets, scarves and hand-crank radios from the 201st Corps of the ANA, Dec. 16.



Army Sgt. Brian Dalka, security force member with Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team, gives candy to a local boy from a "returnee" village outside of Ghazni City, Dec. 3. Ghazni PRT was in the village to check on a completed project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. The building was constructed with the help of a grant from USAID, and is used by the approximately 750 villagers as a community center.

Photo by AMaster Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT PAO



Air Force Capt. Tess Marcial, the logistics and patient administrator with the Medical Embedded Training Team, hands a toy animal and candy to an Afghan child at the 203rd Corps Paktya Regional Medical Hospital, Dec. 14. The child was visiting the hospital's Women's and Children's Clinic, which opened Dec. 7. The clinic will provide Afghan National Security Force families with medication, prescriptions, immunizations and health education. Marcial is deployed from the 10th Medical Group, U.S. Air Force Academy.

Photo by Senior Airman Evelyn Chavez, CJTF 82, TAC-2 PAO





Story and photos by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Lindsey  
CJTF-82, TAC-2 PAO

Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq, left, speaks about the Department of Defense Rewards Program and Operation Jaeza during a press conference at FOB Thunder, Gardez district, Dec. 7. The ANA 203rd Corps commander, along with U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Kurt Fuller, right, shared details on local and national news programs about the monetary rewards program to gain actionable information or non-lethal assistance from citizens to disrupt or defeat enemy activities, particularly the use of improvised explosive devices. Fuller also serves as deputy commander of operations for CJTF-82.

A new program backed by Afghan National Security Forces and Combined Joint Task Force-82 empowers Afghan citizens to take a stand against improvised explosive device attacks.

“Operation Jaeza,” or “reward,” gives Afghans a protection from enemy actions targeting innocent people, said Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq, commanding general of the 203rd Corps, Afghan National Army, during a press conference on the subject at a forward operating base in Paktya province, Dec. 7.

The program was implemented four weeks ago and has already produced \$48,000 in rewards in just the past week.

People in the Paktika, Paktya, Khost and Ghazni provinces produced leads on the location of the IEDs, IED makers or distributors of IED-making materials.

It is an honor to have citizens work side-by-side with the ANSF on the counter-IED program to help in the ways they can to end these enemy threats that harm innocent civilians, Khaliq said.

For several years the counter-IED information campaign has been part of the U.S. Department of Defense Rewards Program. The program offers citizens monetary incentives generally ranging from \$50-\$10,000 for information that leads to the disruption or defeat of enemy activities and weapons caches.

Regional government officials and public representatives spoke out to local and national news agencies at the conference about the importance for citizens to take action against the use of IEDs.

“This is a good program that we fully support,” said Zarguna Hammeed, representative of the Women of Paktya. “People who discover information about IEDs should stop and report it. The money offered helps families as they help to protect others by reporting IEDs.”

“I think the enemy is targeting people on purpose,” said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Kurt Fuller. “These are the same organizations who send suicide bombers into mosques to blow up themselves.”

The DOD Reward Program and Operation Jaeza employ special precautions to protect people who report in to the tip-line and assures anonymity.

“We don’t want people to put themselves in harm’s way,” he said.

Because of the proactive steps taken by ordinary citizens to dismantle the IED manufacture and distribution cycle, many leaders are more than confident that the program will continue on.

“People must organize their actions against enemy activities ... to defeat this common enemy requires a partnership between the ANSF and the citizens,” said ANA Col. Waqaf Shah, ANA 203rd Corps Religious and Cultural Office Chief. “We must pave the way for a safer future for our children, and protect innocent lives from these threats.”

In the past year, reports show more than 850 citizens were killed as a result of 3,170 IED detonations. Currently, civilians comprise 36 percent of all IED casualties. In the past three months, the number of IED casualties has increased, said Fuller. [e](#)



A local citizen who lost his leg from an IED detonation encourages people to help protect one another by reporting enemy activities through the Department of Defense Rewards Program and Operation Jaeza, Dec. 7. The citizen’s sons had to drop out of school because of their father’s disability to help support the family.



Local reporters interview Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq and Army Brig. Gen. Kurt Fuller during a press conference about the Department of Defense Rewards Program and Operation Jaeza at FOB Thunder, Gardez district, Dec. 7. The ANA 203rd Corps commander and deputy commander shared details on local and national news programs about the monetary rewards program to gain actionable information or non-lethal assistance from citizens to disrupt or defeat enemy activities, particularly the use of IEDs.



# Illuminating Relations



*108th Cavalry Regiment Soldiers share a meal with local government, security force and tribal leaders after a shura, or tribal meeting, at the Achin District Center in Nangarhar.*

Story and photos by Army Sgt. Tracy J. Smith  
48th Inf. BCT PAO

Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment and their Afghan National Army partners bedded down for the night at the Afghan National Police Achin District Center in preparation for a meeting with local Shinwari tribal elders and Afghan Security personnel, Nov. 18.

The meeting at the compound managed by the local ANP was a first for the Afghans and the Georgia-based Soldiers.

Army Maj. Andrew McDonald, the 108th Cav. Regt. operations officer met with a group of tribal elders, or Maliks, to discuss the border tribes' ongoing efforts to thwart the insurgency.

Shinwari tribesmen fight disruptive factions by taking up arms themselves, and took great risk to meet with the U.S. military, the local governor and Afghan security forces. Attempts on the Maliks' lives and kidnappings are not uncommon when insurgents discover they've been sharing information and taking action.

"This is the first time since the ouster of the Taliban that a group of villagers have defeated the Taliban repeatedly without government help," McDonald said.

The officials of each group collectively decided that it was time to introduce what will be a stronger tribal-government

union while maintaining the traditions of daily life. The plan creates a stepping stone to unionizing other tribes with the Shinwaris, allowing them to find a common goal in defeating Afghanistan's insurgent enemies.

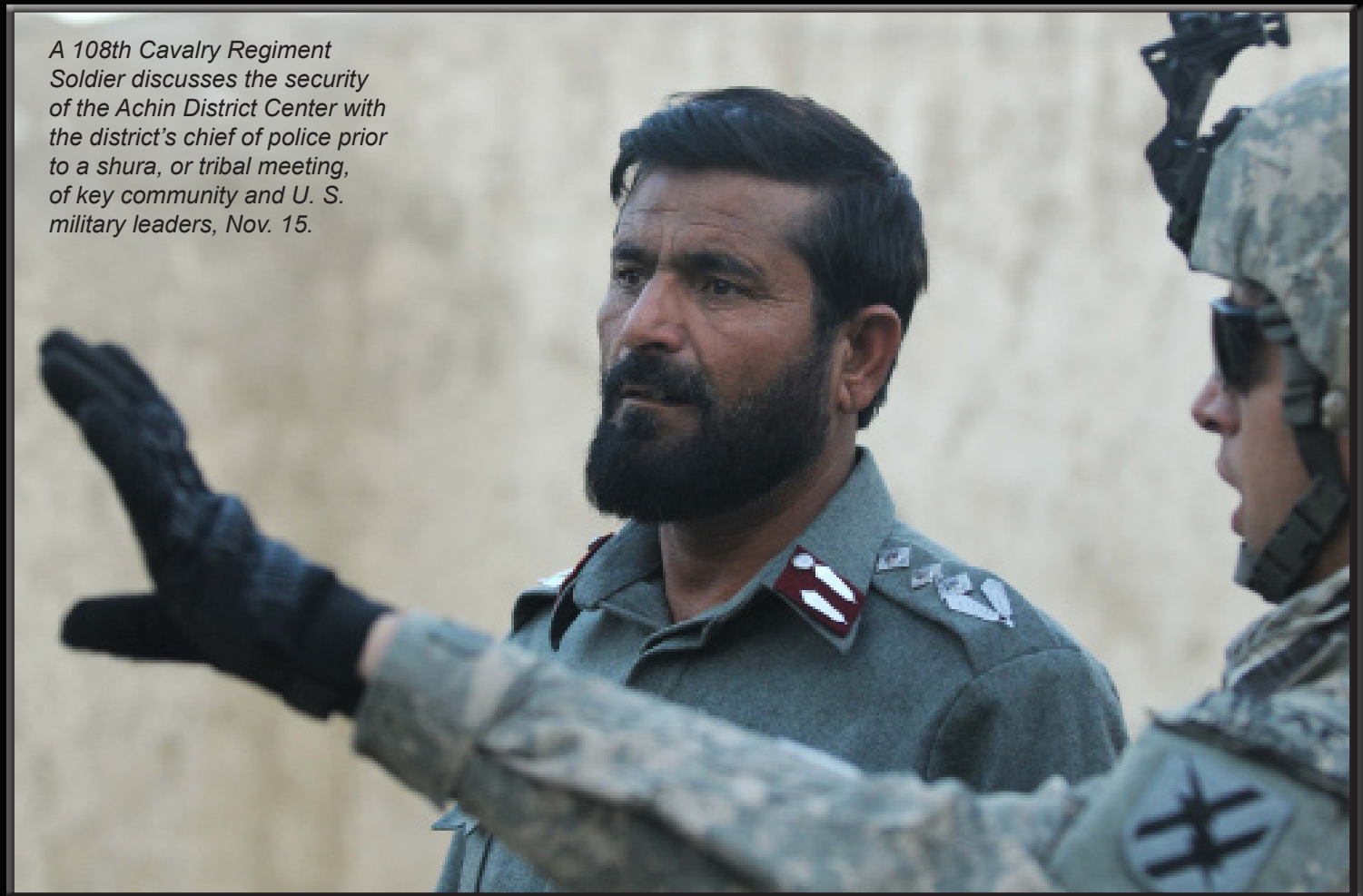
Working in and among the people is a central tenet of the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine, and has been at the forefront of the "Rough Riders" mission.

"They do counterinsurgency very well," said Ed Vowell the U.S. State Department's District Support Team Advisor embedded with the 108th. "These young guys are in the more remote areas every day engaging the people. We've already seen positive effects."

**"This is the first time since the ouster of the Taliban that a group of villagers have defeated the Taliban repeatedly without government help."**

**-- Army Major Andrew McDonald,  
1st Squadron, 108th Regiment**

*A 108th Cavalry Regiment Soldier discusses the security of the Achin District Center with the district's chief of police prior to a shura, or tribal meeting, of key community and U. S. military leaders, Nov. 15.*





# Operation Orchard: TF La Fayette donates 70,000 fruit trees

Task Force La Fayette civil-military action staff worked to support the Afrane Non-Governmental Organization to donate a total of 70,000 fruit trees to farmers in Kapisa province, Afghanistan, Dec. 8.

This initiative is going to assist a lot of Afghans, explained Abdul Wassey, the agricultural representative for Tagab Valley.

The forestation of the province creates the potential to repel erosion, which has regularly caused damage to the houses and plantations, explained Yves Fevre, the representative responsible for the project.

This project will also attempt to have an economic impact through the production of fruits which could provide consistent income to the farmers. 🌳



French Army Brig. Gen. Marcel Druart, commander of Task Force La Fayette, greets the Operation Orchard project chief in Kapisa province, Afghanistan, Dec 8. Operation Orchard is a joint venture in which TF La Fayette and the Afrane Non-Governmental Organization donated approximately 70,000 fruit trees.

Photos by French Army Command Sgt. Maj. Jean-Charles Thorel, TF La Fayette PAO

# KEEPING KHOST MOVING

Story and photo by Army Spc. Spencer Case, 304th PAD

To the uninitiated, it may not seem like there's a lot of glory to be found in working punishing hours to fix military vehicles. The Soldiers of Maintenance Platoon, Company G, 725th Support Battalion, however, know that without them, everything grinds to a halt.

Since February, the Fort Richardson, Alaska, unit has endured long hours, monotony, and the challenge of familiarizing themselves with the Army's newest generation of vehicles, the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected series, or MRAP.

Their area of responsibility is the entire Khost province on Afghanistan's south-eastern border with Pakistan, where there are seven combat outposts in addition to Forward Operating Base Salerno where they are stationed. That adds up to a lot of work, said Army Staff Sgt. Brandi Espinoza, the senior mechanic for G Co.

"We've clearly done over 5,000 jobs since we've been here," said Espinoza.

These jobs fall, roughly, into two categories. First there are the routine and predictable jobs, such as replacing the springs and suspensions worn out by the harsh Afghan terrain. Then there are the

major jobs that are somewhat more sporadic and challenging.

"I can't even begin to tell you how many vehicles came in severely damaged from IEDs or RPGs that we didn't think were repairable," Espinoza said of jobs of the latter category, "but together we were able to bring most of them up to a fully mission capable status."

Major jobs are obviously much more difficult than routine jobs, but they also afford the greatest opportunities for competition and a sense of accomplishment as on Dec. 21, one of the longest days of the deployment. On that day, G Co. was slammed with 11 jobs in one day, most of them major jobs.

Army Spc. Christopher Ryan Almryde, a mechanic for G Co, a San Diego native, recalled how competition helped make the days pass more pleasantly:

"About two days ago one of the teams did a leaf spring. It took like four hours and some odd minutes," he said. "And then the other team did it yesterday. It took them two a half hours and they're still rubbing it into the other team's face."

Army Spc. Geoffrey D. Hansen, another G Co. mechanic, is familiar with the competition. "My team—we actually haven't done [a leaf spring] yet," he said. "Whenever we get another one in, we're doing it to see how fast we can do it. I don't know if there's any incentive or if it's just for [kicks] and [laughs]."

Soldiers outside the company have come to recognize the unit's accomplishments. Some units even come in from outside Khost province because of the unit's reputation, Espinoza said.

"We never turn anyone away," she said. "And the Soldiers never complain."

Army Spc. Laura Zeranick, a mechanic for B Co., 1-321 Airborne Field Artillery Regiment who has been attached to G Co. since August, was also impressed with the unit.

"I've learned more here [with G Co.] than anywhere else in my Army career so far," she said. These skills include services, purging and placing filters on the MRAPs, which she did not have the opportunity to learn in Advanced Individual Training. 🛠️



Army Spc. Thorsen Shoupe, a mechanic for mechanic platoon, G Co., 725th Support Battalion, removes the bolts of near a leaf spring of a Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected vehicle on FOB Salerno, Afghanistan, Dec. 23.



# Photos *from the Field*



Photo by Senior Airman Ashley Hawkins Nuristan PRT PAO

Army Staff Sgt. Gilbert Lenz II, with the Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team security force, from Reno, Nev., scans the area while observing the site where an IED was detonated.



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT, PAO

Army Sgt. Eric Pardo, lead medic for Texas Agri-business Development Team, assigned to Forward Operating Base Ghazni, Afghanistan, draws blood for an emergency walking blood bank. Personnel assigned to FOB Ghazni with the required blood type, volunteered to donate their blood to help save the life of an Afghan National Policeman who was in critical condition after an incident with an IED.



Photo by Army Pfc. Andrya Hill, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. PAO

Army Spc. John Shurtz (right), from Huntington Beach, Calif., and Army Spc. Dallan Higgs (left), from Idaho Falls, Idaho, tend to a local Afghan boy at FOB Kushmond in Paktika province, Dec. 6. The boy broke his arm after falling off a donkey and has received weekly check-ups from the Soldiers throughout his recovery. Shurtz, a combat medic, and Higgs, an Infantryman, serve with Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.



Photo by Air Force 2nd Lt. Natassia Cherne, Nuristan PRT PAO

Afghans from the Lowkar and Dareng villages play volleyball in a tournament to celebrate Eid and to encourage children to play sports instead of doing drugs, Nov. 28. The volleyball tournament, held in Lowkar village, was attended by more than 200 people, and featured 32 teams made up of villagers from the Alingar and Nurgaram districts.

Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey Ghazni PRT



Army Cpl. Jason Ulin, Security Forces members, assigned to Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team, sets up TACSAT to communicate back to FOB Ghazni after arriving at the Jaghori District Center, Ghazni province, Nov. 28. Members of Ghazni PRT visited Jaghori to perform quality control quality assurance on several projects funded by the PRT.



Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Davio, 5th MPAD

After each drill of their live fire and tactical movement training, Afghan National Army soldiers in 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 201st Corps Commando Kandak, quickly run toward the range safety to have their M4 rifles checked and cleared, then run again to the back of Pol-e Charkhi's Range 5.



# Photos *from the Field*



Photo by Afghan National Army Sgt. Rahmudeen Nangahari, 201st Corps PAO

Aghan National Army Brig. Gen. Zemari, the 3rd Brigade commanding general, speaks with the elders about district security and what ordinary civilians can do to help, Nov. 25.



Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Leonardo Torres CJTF-82 Combat Camera

Afghan elders enjoy their meal during the governor's visit to the opening ceremony of the Memlah Gardens in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province, Dec. 8.



Photo by Army Spc. Ryan D'Agostino, 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team PAO

Afghan National Army General Murat Ali Murat, 209th Corps commander, passes out winter clothing to orphans in Aibak, Nov. 1. The children, who lack sufficient winter attire, welcomed the humanitarian assistance.



Photo by Senior Airman Ashley Hawkins, Nuristan PRT PAO

Servicemembers from the Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team speak to village elders about the security and overall well-being of the local population in Quandalay village in eastern Afghanistan's Nuristan province, Dec. 7. The PRT routinely visits local villages to build positive relationships with elders and follow up on self-help projects funded by the PRT.



Photo by Senior Airman Ashley Hawkins, Nuristan PRT PAO

Army Pfc. Jason Dixon, Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs member, talks with villagers about the condition of their buildings and sanitation in Rajai village in eastern Afghanistan's Nuristan province, Nov. 30. The PRT civil affairs team routinely visits local villages to build positive relations with elders and follow up on self-help projects funded by the PRT.



# Painting with a Purpose

Story by Army Capt. Thomas Cieslak TF Protector PAO

The many talents of Army Sgt. Henry Harrell, a counterinsurgency non-commissioned officer with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 16th Military Police Brigade, are evident on the office door of Army Col. John F. Garrity, the Task Force Protector commander.

"I have been working with art, in general, since I was five. I just started drawing one day and never stopped," said Harrell about developing his skill. "I took 10 art classes in high school and turned down a full art scholarship to come in the Army."

Two shipping containers placed side-by-side in the Combined Joint Task Force- 82 Champion Main comprise the office of the Task Force Protector commander, deputy commander, command sergeant major and the counterinsurgency section.

Wooden walls and doors inside the shipping containers were painted white years ago and remained plain until Garrity noticed Harrell's talents and eye for color.

Harrell was sketching on a pad one day when Garrity saw his work and asked Harrell if he would be willing to paint a design on his door. Harrell agreed and, after receiving the necessary tools and paints from Garrity, went to work.

The military intelligence non-commissioned officer worked during his off-duty time to complete the door, arriving early and leaving late to complete the task. He proposed a design to Garrity, who approved it, and went to work with pencils to complete a rough drawing on the door. Permanent marker was next to finalize the design on the door. Harrell then followed up with acrylic paints to put color to the design and shading to add depth.

"It's phenomenal, he's very talented," said Army Maj. Devon Blake, Harrell's supervisor. "We're excited he's able to use his talents to contribute to the aesthetics of the command group."

The door incorporates many elements of the 16th Military Police Brigade and the military police corps.

Below the banner is the rank of the brigade commander, colonel, with a wartime orientation of the eagle facing the arrows; to the left of the eagle is the military police distinctive insignia and on the opposite side is the distinctive unit insignia of the 16th Military Police Brigade.

An aircraft with paratroopers jumping from it placed behind the design symbolizes the brigade's airborne status and preparedness to conduct airborne operations. An armored security vehicle and an up-armored HMMWV are below the Paratroopers, depicting the nature of combat operations conducted by military police paratroopers.

The foundation of the design includes the brigade's motto: "One of A Kind" and the brigade commander's philosophy "Be a Professional," all above an image of the American Flag.

Thanks to the talents and hard work of a Soldier, visitors to TF Protector command offices are greeted with artwork displaying pride servicemembers have in their unit, profession and mission. ©



Army Sgt. Henry Harrell, a counterinsurgency non-commissioned officer with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 16th MP BDE from Paulden, Ariz., created the artwork above at Bagram, Nov. 20.



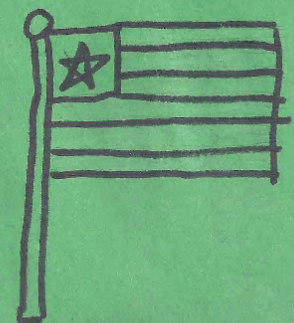
Photos by Army Pfc. Garrett Hernandez, TF Protector PAO

FREEDOM WATCH, JANUARY 2010

from the kids



Thank You  
For Serving Our  
Country!



FREEDOM WATCH, JANUARY 2010



# U.S. AND POLISH TRAINING AT ITS HIGHEST

Polish medics, Special Forces and Army personnel train on 9-line MEDEVAC rescue procedures and secure the area on the side of a mountain inside Ghazni province, Afghanistan, Dec 7. Polish servicemembers fast-rope to a landing site, prepared “casualties” for transport, and evacuated them to the nearest FOB.



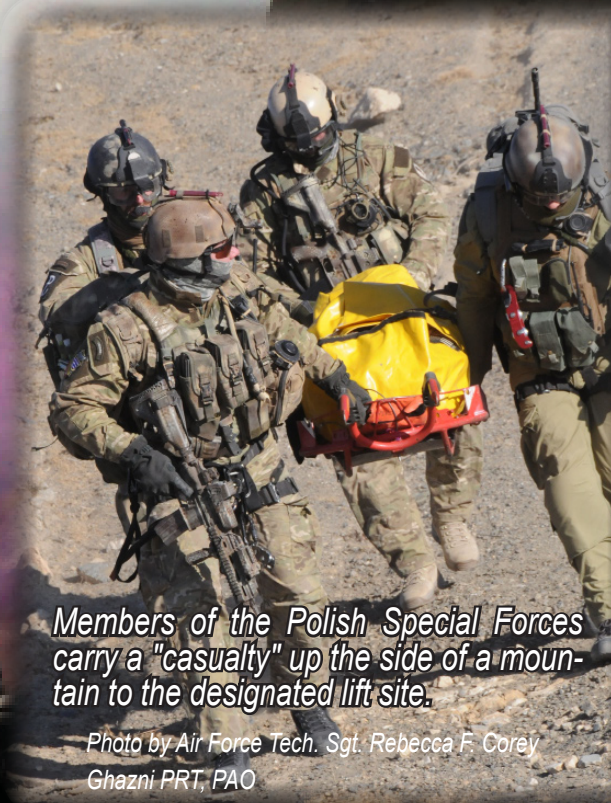
*A member of the Polish Special Forces rappels off the side of a helicopter during a training mission in Ghazni.*

Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey  
Ghazni PRT, PAO



*A Polish paramedic signals to a helicopter.*

Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey,  
Ghazni PRT, PAO



*Members of the Polish Special Forces carry a “casualty” up the side of a mountain to the designated lift site.*

Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey  
Ghazni PRT, PAO



*A “casualty” is airlifted back to the nearest FOB while servicemembers continue to provide security for the site.*

Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb,  
Ghazni PRT, PAO

Background photo: Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Kuniyuki, a medic from Ghazni PRT, provides security for the LZ on the side of a mountain during a MEDEVAC exercise. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT, PAO



# Afghan Citizens Aid the Panjshir PRT

*"They put themselves at risk to help us"*

Story by Air Force Capt. John T. Stamm  
Panjshir PRT PAO

The adventure began on the cold wintery morning of Dec. 10, deep in the Hindu Kush Mountains of the Panjshir valley in Afghanistan. The Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team conducted a routine mission to deliver material assistance, such as clothing, food and other supplies to a high-altitude village in the Dara district of the valley.

It snowed all morning, but temperatures were a bit too warm for it to stick to the road. The convoy departed with three trucks filled with supplies bound for the district center in Dara, with a mission to assess the situation and decide whether to leave the supplies with the district governor for distribution or to continue on its own into more remote regions.

When we arrived, it was still snowing but not heavily. The road was clear up until that point, and, as far as we could see, it was still passable. The forecast said the snows would subside, so the mission commander decided to continue.

I was in the third truck as we travelled upwards along the road that wrapped along the mountainside. The road was barely wide enough for one vehicle, with the mountain on the left and a significant drop to the river on the right.

In an instant, the situation turned ugly, as the second truck could not maintain enough speed to make it up the now ice-covered road and slid backward. My truck also began sliding back down the hill. My driver, Air Force Master Sgt. Jeff Kelly, deliberately slammed our truck into the mountain side to stop our descent. It worked, but the second truck smashed into us.

Both the trucks were now stopped on the mountain road. We checked for any injuries, and, fortunately, there were none. I radioed the first truck, which we had lost sight of, to inform them of the situation.

"Sir, we are in a predicament," said Senior Airman Bryan Ulloa, PRT Civil Affairs. "We couldn't stop and our truck is now dangling off a cliff."

I arrived to a frightful scene. The truck's right side was com-

pletely off the road with at least a 15-foot drop to the boulders below. Everyone had made it out safely, and some had leapt from the vehicle as it had slid toward the cliff.

With the help of a crowd of local residents who had gathered to lend assistance, we began recovery attempts on the disabled vehicle as we relayed information regarding the situation back to our forward operating base. Help was dispatched, but the weather impeded arrival. As darkness set in, temperatures dropped, and the snow continued to fall, we were forced to abandon the recovery mission.

"The decision was made to download all sensitive items, such as radio equipment and weapons, and return to base with the hopes that the truck would remain in its current position until we could resume recovery efforts the next morning," Kelly said.

That's when the Panjshir Afghan National Police and the local residents displayed their heroism. Together, they took turns braving the frigid temperatures, cutting winds, and mounting snow-fall to guard the truck all night

long, making sure it didn't fall and no one was injured. When morning came they worked, stone by stone, to build a new rock wall reaching up from the riverbed to stabilize the truck. Then they used wooden logs to push the vehicle back onto the road. The ANP drove to the PRT's FOB to let us know that our truck was safe and ready for us to retrieve it.

"This is proof that the government and citizens of Panjshir are capable of accomplishing great things," said Army Maj. Ian Murray, PRT operations officer. "Not only did they watch over our truck, but they took it upon themselves to make sure we got it back. They put themselves at risk to help us. If it weren't for their efforts, the PRT would have lost a valuable asset. We are proud to live and work in partnership with all of them."

When asked why they did it, a local man named Pahlawan who had helped lead the recovery efforts stated simply, "You would do it for us."

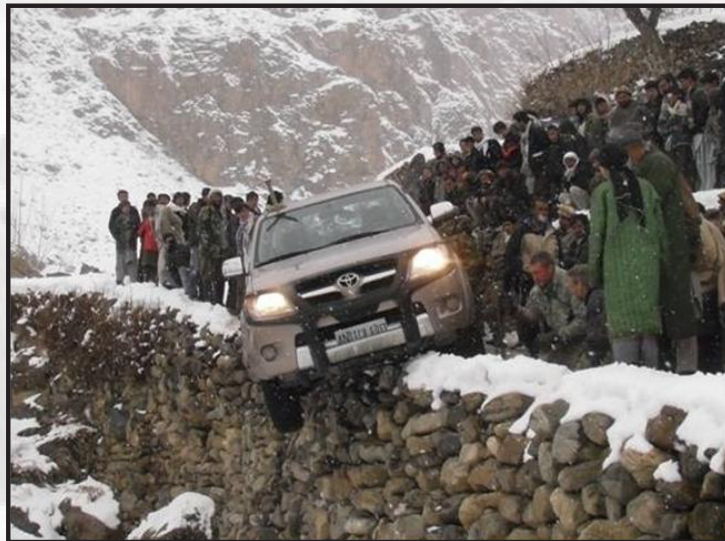


Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Jeff Kelly, Panjshir PRT Intelligence Operations

*A Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team truck dangles off the edge of a cliff while PRT members and local residents work to recover the vehicle in Panjshir province, Afghanistan, Dec. 10. The truck was being used to deliver material assistance to a remote village in the Dara district of the Panjshir valley when it slid backward out of control and off of the mountain road.*

## FREEDOM WATCH PHOTO CONTEST

NOW ACCEPTING ENTRIES FOR THE  
FREEDOM WATCH PHOTO CONTEST

THE TOP THREE PHOTOS OF THE MONTH  
WILL BE CHOSEN BY AN EDITORIAL PANEL  
AND PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT FW ISSUE

ENTRIES MUST INCLUDE:

- A PHOTO NO LARGER THAN 5 MBS -
- A CAPTION THAT INCLUDES WHO, WHEN, WHERE, AND WHAT -
- YOUR BRANCH, RANK, FULL NAME, UNIT AND FOB -

SUBMIT ENTRIES TO:

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS JANUARY 20TH.





### Photo of the Month

Army Pfc. Josh Barrios from Torrance, Calif., and Army Staff Sgt. Brent Holmes from Marysville, Wash., both mortarmen with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conduct a fires mission, Dec. 16, from Camp Clark in Khost province of eastern Afghanistan.