

FREEDOM WATCH

FEBRUARY 2010



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FREEDOM WATCH

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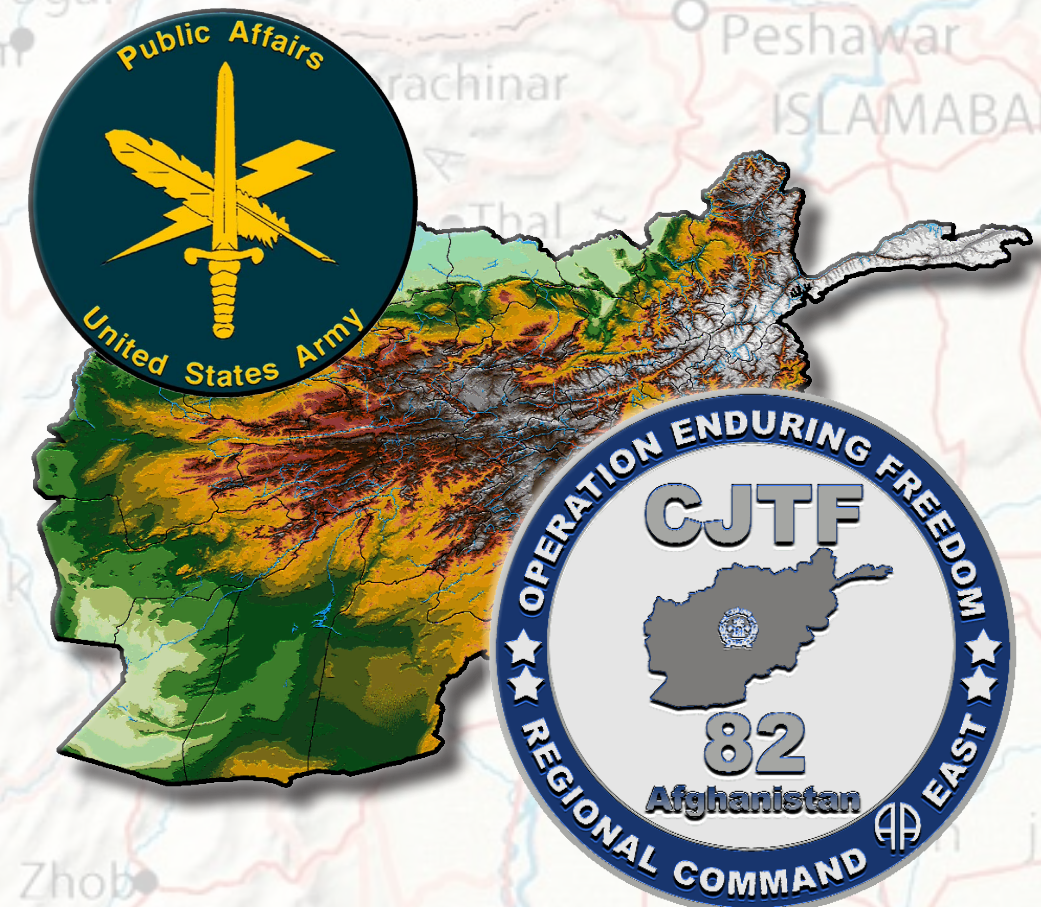
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Answering the Call Empowering the Next Generation

By Spc. Monica K. Smith, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

Army Sgt. Matthew West said he didn't know what to expect when a rock came flying at him.

West, a crew chief with Co. A, TF Knighthawk, was recently guarding his UH-60 Black Hawk at a landing zone on Camp Kiwi, Bamyan province, when a small child threw a rock at him.

"Children throwing rocks isn't unexpected out here," West said. "You never know what people really think of you out here so I just assumed it was another kid taunting us."

But this kind of rock throwing was different; the rock had a note attached to it. The note indicated that he taught an English class in the Bamyan province. The child, who spoke excellent English, was requesting school supplies to help him teach his class.

"His English was really good and I thought 'why not help a kid who wants to educate others?'" said West. "It's part of the whole 'winning the hearts and minds of the people of Afghanistan,' and what better way to win the minds than by educating them? So, when (our flight) got back to Bagram, I talked it over with some of the guys in my company and we decided we wanted to help them."

One of the Soldiers West talked to was Spc. Sean Noonan, also a crew chief in A Co., TF Knighthawk. Noonan took the lead on the project, gathering together school

supplies, clothing and candy, to donate to the Afghan people in Bamyan. Three weeks later they had enough boxes to fill the back of a Black Hawk and began planning a mission to return to Bamyan.

"When I heard West talking about what happened, I don't know, I just felt like we should do something to help them," said Noonan.

"I think a lot of the time as Soldiers we get carried away with performing the combat portion of our mission. I think it's good to remember we're also here to help the Afghan people – and in this case, we can help their children receive a good education, or at least give them the supplies to continue their education."

-- Army Sgt. Mathew West,
Crew Chief, TF Knighthawk

When the two Black Hawks landed at Camp Kiwi, Jan. 13, the temperature read minus 10 fahrenheit degrees.

With steam flowing from their mouths and noses, the air crews moved the supplies from the back of their aircraft to a connex belonging to Leon O'Flynn, chaplain with the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"There's a girls school here that has 2,000 students and a boys school that has more than 3,000 students attending," said O'Flynn. "These supplies will go far to help them. There's nothing they don't need or won't use. The school supplies and clothing will be gone quickly. We try to get to the

"...I was surprised to hear him make the comparison between what we're doing here to what we did in Japan. It's good to know the people here, even if they're children, understand that in the end we're here to help their country"

-- Spc. Sean Noonan, Crew Chief, TF Knighthawk

more remote villages too. Every little bit we receive helps."

Though the Soldiers didn't have the opportunity to hand out the supplies personally before leaving Camp Kiwi, they took time to talk with the children who live in Bamyan.

One teenager, 18-year-old Qugamali, who also teaches English classes, said in school they are learning about Japan and how after World War II the U.S. helped Japan recover.

"Right now Afghanistan is backwards but maybe we can be like Japan," said Qugamali. "The Americans come in and help us become secure. The Taliban can't make Afghanistan secure."

The quality of English spoken was surprising said Noonan as he and Qugamali con-

tinued to talk. What is more surprising says Noonan is their comprehension of what is going on in their country.

"I know education here isn't what it is back in the states, so I was surprised to hear him make the comparison between what we're doing here to what we did in Japan," said Noonan. "It's good to know that the people here, even if they're children, understand that in the end we're here to help their country."

As they talked, Qugamali said he wants to be a journalist when he gets older.

"To be a journalist in the future you must know three languages," said Qugamali. "If we have the (school supplies) we can learn, otherwise it is very hard for us to learn. It is good that we have help."



(Background) Qugamali, an 18-year-old Afghan who teaches English class, explains to TF Knighthawk Soldiers through concertina wire what school supplies he needs.

Army Sgt. Matthew West, Co. A, TF Knighthawk, removes boxes of supplies from the back of a Black Hawk Jan. 13. The boxes contained school supplies and clothing donated to local schools in and around the Bamyan province.

Combined Action Progress in the Khost-Gardez Pass

Story and photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Stephen J. Otero
Khost PRT PAO

U.S. and Afghan National Army Soldiers are working together to increase security and governance along the Khost-Gardez pass under a new Combined Tactical Operations Center at FOB Wilderness and COP Deysie.

The Khost-Gardez pass, a doorway through the southern Hindu Kush mountains, connects downtown Khost to Gardez City and is a critical route for Afghanistan.

"The (Khost-Gardez) road is the primary route between Khost province, Gardez in Paktya, and in turn, to the rest of Afghanistan," said Army Capt. Neal R. Erickson, 1-40 Cav., 4-25 Inf. Div.

"It is a major supply route and due to the heavy traffic, it provides an opportunity for the local population to improve their economic standing," said Erickson.

Insurgents want control of the road as well, so U.S. and ANA Soldiers are partnering together with combined action.

Combined action takes place at all levels of leadership, from the commanders to the non-commissioned officers.

"As a team leader in an infantry platoon, I train and work with both U.S. and ANA Soldiers," said Army Sgt. Kaylon Ross, 1-40 Cav.

"The improvement of the ANA has been

drastic in the last four months because of combined-action operations. The ANA now know the steps they need to take to get men, weapons, (ammunition), accountability, and other supplies from their leadership and not ours," said Ross.

The partnership with the ANSF and coalition forces in the CTOC are improving day by day, preparing the ANSF for when coalition forces will hand over full responsibilities of Afghanistan.

"Our main task is to mentor the local ANA in order to eventually hand over the region entirely to the Afghan Government," said Army 1st Lt. Sam N. Larsh, 1-40 Cav.

"Since we started combined action op-

erations, the ANA now have a TOC for a place to plan missions," said Ross. "They always have men on their radios monitoring traffic, they track their soldiers when

"They always have men on their radios monitoring traffic, they track their Soldiers when they go on leave, they plan missions, and they are proactive; this was all non-existent prior to our combined action efforts."

-- Army Sgt. Kaylon Ross,
Infantry Team Leader, 1-40 Cav.

they go on leave, they plan missions, and they are proactive; this was all non-existent prior to our combined action efforts."

Combining efforts has led to increased security, and with the help of the CTOC, the government can prove itself to the people.

"We are just one piece of the puzzle and improving our area of operations has a positive effect on both Paktya and Khost, and in turn will continue to build the infrastructure of Afghanistan," said Erickson. ☺



Army Soldiers from C. Troop., 1-40th Cav., work side by side with their ANA, 6-1 Kandak, counterparts inside of the CTOC on COP Wilderness, Dec. 26. COP Wilderness is located in the Khost-Gardez pass, which is the most direct route through the mountains from the city of Gardez to Khost and is a key area of combined action efforts.

(From left) ANA Maj. Shapoor Sharafat, engineer officer, 6-1 Kandak, Army 1 Lt. Jonathan Patten, executive officer, C. Troop, 1-40th Cav., ANA Capt. Ghulam Rabani, intelligence officer, and an interpreter plan missions inside of the CTOC, COP Wilderness, on Dec. 26. U.S. and ANA Soldiers are working together to increase security and governance along the Khost-Gardez pass.



Working Together in Ghazni to Improve Economy and Security

Story and photos by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT PAO

Navy Cmdr. Wilson Marks, commanding officer of Ghazni PRT, and Afghan leaders discuss development and security during a shura held at the Muqor District Center in Ghazni province, Jan. 12. ISAF servicemembers and leaders representing the ANA, ANP and subgovernors from the districts of Giro, Qara Bagh, Muqor and Gelan met to discuss ways to develop their districts while improving security.

Subgovernors from the Giro, Qara Bagh, Muqor and Gellan districts met with ISAF servicemembers during a shura at the Muqor District Center to discuss security and development, Jan. 12.

This group meets monthly with the Ghazni PRT and Polish servicemembers from TF White Eagle to discuss the common issues of their districts.

“Our biggest challenge here is security,” said Fazel Rahman, Gelan district subgovernor. “Security is not only a challenge here, it’s a challenge across Afghanistan.”

ISAF has launched a series of operations in these districts which are located in southern Ghazni. With Afghan National Security Forces leading these operations, combined action efforts have begun to restore securi-

ty to these challenging regions, which previously had been infrequently patrolled by ANSF or ISAF.

“I agree with the need for security in these areas,” said Navy Cmdr. Wilson Marks, the Ghazni PRT commander. “Economic growth and security go hand in hand. You can’t have one without the other. Without proper security, it’s difficult to get contractors into those areas to do projects.”

While the PRT is not specifically tasked with providing security, U.S. Agency for International Development representatives, who work with the PRT, offer capacity-building programs that support self-help efforts in local villages and could lead to increased security.

One such program is a small community

grant program run by USAID, a U.S. government agency that provides economic and humanitarian assistance.

“These are projects that can be done by communities as rewards for cooperating with the government,” said Marks. “We can create projects such as karez cleaning, digging new wells, or irrigation projects.”

“The benefit of these projects is that it provides jobs very quickly. Subgovernors can help coordinate and show support to the government,” continued Marks. “Meanwhile, we can do projects in the more secure areas and hopefully that will expand and create more security. Then, we can go in and do even bigger projects.”

“We think that in time, this will help security overall.”

ANA and Coalition Forces Unite in Wake of Tragedy

Story and photos by Army Sgt. Troy P. Johnson, 304th PAD

When insurgents launched an attack, Jan. 7, on the civilian population in Gardez, Paktia province, the hospital in Gardez was quickly overcome by the volume of casualties.

When the civilian hospital could no longer take any more bombing victims, many of them in critical condition, they were rushed to the Paktia Regional Military Hospital where the Afghan National Army 203rd Medical Corps and coalition partners received them.

What followed was like an old MASH episode, complete with PA system calls for medical support and medical personnel sprinting for the hospital.

The hospital received an overwhelming amount of casualties in a short period of time, 26 casualties in all. Two of the victims died at Paktia and two died after being transported to Bagram Airfield due to the extent of their injuries.

"The sheer number of critically injured patients and the way they (were) presented, via ambulance as well as the back of pick-up trucks – (those factors happening) all at once made it difficult to triage and begin treatment," said U.S. Air Force Cpt. Teresa

A. Dunn, a nurse with the medical embedded training team.

The casualties and number of dead may have been worse if not for the efforts of the ANA 203rd Medical Corp in partnership with coalition medical personnel.

For nearly three hours, working in limited space and understaffed, the 203rd medical staff along with coalition personnel quickly assessed, applied first-aid and triaged victims.

"Back home, we often have the luxury of EMS and on-scene providers helping to triage and control the flow of patients into treatment areas," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Jana S. Kokkonen, an emergency room doctor with the medical embedded training team. "That didn't happen here and we were immediately overwhelmed."

But, the 203rd medical staff was experienced and received the help well.

"We have a very well trained emergency staff. They were able to perform their duties and properly use the help we were receiving from our coalition partners," said ANA 1st Lt. Qudrat Ullah Yousufzai, chief nurse of the emergency room at Paktia Regional Military Hospital.

"Back home, we often have the luxury of EMS and on-scene providers helping to triage and control the flow of patients into treatment areas. That didn't happen here and we were immediately overwhelmed."

Air Force Maj. Jana S. Kokkonen
Doctor, Medical Embedded Training Team.

The conditions may have been unique for even the most experienced team, but many of the coalition staff had just been assigned to Paktia.

"With the majority of our staff being new -- I myself am less than 2 weeks into my deployment -- this was a wake-up call to us newbie's that we are at war and we're not in Kansas anymore," said Kokkonen. "It was the first time several members of our staff had hands on in an actual MASCAL (Mass Casualty), and one in which no-one spoke the language to boot."

Despite a language barrier, the 203rd and coalition forces worked very smoothly together through the event.

"We had a system set up and everything went as well as it could," said Yousufzai. "And, most medical terminology is universal, so communication wasn't as difficult."

The challenges they did face only made the team focus on ways to improve their process.

"This experience highlighted our need for hospital-wide drills and mock-events to ensure things run more smoothly if we are faced with a similar situation again," Dunn said.

With the sun long gone, and most of the immediate action completed, the emergency room of the Paktia Regional Military Hospital looked worse for wear. The cleaning crew did everything they could to keep up, but blood-drenched clothing and once sanitary dressings were scattered about the floor.

Despite the challenges they had just faced, the staff was already preparing for the next challenge.

"We have already replenished the blood and equipment we used. We are prepared, and continue to prepare, for the next possible emergency," Dunn added.

They should handle the next emergency as well as the last one. Despite having to deal with the challenges of limited space and a language barrier the 203rd medical staff and coalition personnel worked well together.

In the wake of the tragedy, unity of the ANA and coalition forces prevailed.

"The success of the experience was a bonding with our counterpart ANA staff (who) we worked alongside with to save as many of these local civilians' lives as possible," Kokkonen said. 🇺🇸



Airmen and ANA soldiers of the 203rd Corps Medical Combined Action Partner Team work together at Paktia Regional Military Hospital, FOB Thunder Jan. 07.

The teams assess and apply aid to victims of a suicide attack in Gardez.

Casualties were brought to the military hospital when the civilian hospital could no longer take any victims.

Through the combined effort of ANA and coalition forces, 24 of the victims were saved.



The Power of Radio

Could it Bring Rule of Law to Afghanistan?

Story by Spc. Spencer Case, 304th PAD

Though a handheld radio weighs only ounces, it's a heavyweight in Afghanistan's fight for rule of law.

Radio has historically been a successful medium in Afghanistan for a number of reasons.

First, they are cheap.

Second, Afghanistan's literacy rate is below 30 percent.

Third, Afghanistan lacks infrastructure and radios can be powered by alkaline batteries, hand cranks or solar energy.

So, if the goal is to foster better, more reliable communication among the Afghan people it is the natural place to look.

Can radio bring rule of law? Probably not by itself, but it can help, said Army Lt. Col. Robert Cooley, deputy commander of Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"Really, what we're trying to do is connect Afghans to Afghans and address the root causes of instability," Cooley said, "and these radios are a means to do that."

He added, "In some cases, these radios are the only connection they have outside of their village elder or mullah."

Radio can educate people about public roles and responsibilities, combat Taliban misinformation campaigns, and give Afghans a way to connect to their political leaders. In this way, radio can help Afghans establish the trust relationships that will hopefully lead to stability, Cooley said.

ISAF has done much in Afghanistan to promote the use of radios.

In Khost province alone, ISAF troops have given tens of thou-

sands of hand crank/solar powered radios to Afghan district governors and ANSF for distribution among the general populous, said Army Maj. Matthew Gregory of the 4th BCT, 25th ID.

Gregory expressed confidence that at the very least, half of all the people in Khost own a radio; he added that the true number is likely closer to 80 or 90 percent.

In addition, ISAF troops have helped Afghans acquire portable, low-power radio broadcast systems to overcome line of sight difficulties caused by mountainous terrain.

When 4-25th ID arrived in February 2009, there were only three provinces where radio broadcast systems operated. By the time they leave in January 2010, there will be 18, almost all of them fitted with internet connections so local DJs can discuss national and international news, Gregory said.

Most of the material broadcasted from these systems is music, but about 10 to 15 percent is news, public service announcements, and commentary.

To see how these radios can help, one need look no further than locally educated Khost native, Hamid, who has been an outspoken proponent of rule of law.

Hamid's weekly radio program invites the public to discuss such questions as "what is corruption?" and "what rights and obligations do Afghans have under the law?"

He takes callers on his show, and in one segment offers prizes to those who can give correct answers to questions regarding rule of law.

No one was able to answer the questions when his show first began three years ago. Today, callers give correct answers regularly.

In one of the more dramatic responses he has received, a woman not allowed by family to call in, wrote the answers on a single sheet of paper and mailed it to him.

Another recent caller said before listening to Hamid's show, he had no understanding of his legal rights or obligations. Having become a regular listener, he now knew enough to take a claim to court.

"When there is no rule of law in a society, there is no justice in a society," said Hamid. "In three decades of war the people of Afghanistan have really been away from the rule of law.

"It is therefore the need of the time, the demand of the time, to do something regarding rule of law."

Hamid said he sees his show, which he runs for free, as a way of advancing rule of law.

Many broadcasters in Khost province have been the target of threatening phone calls, violence and harassment by those who do not want to see rule of law come to Afghanistan.

One broadcaster recently had the door blown off his home while he was away and was forced to relocate his family to a safer location.

Nevertheless, there are many broadcasters like Hamid who refuse to give in to terrorism.

"I feel it is important for my country," Hamid said. "It is not part of my job. It is my responsibility to do something."

94.1 FM



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or

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Rising to the Challenge

A squad of paratroopers climbed a mountain Jan. 11, performing a combat patrol to resupply scout snipers at an outlying observation post.

A routine mission most of the time, but this particular outing was the precursor to a special event for one of the Soldiers.

At nearly 3,800 feet above sea level, atop Baba Saheb Ghar Mountain, most of the Arghandab river valley can be seen and it is here that Army Sgt. Aaron Ivory Teutsch of Headquarters Co., 2nd Bn., 508th Parachute Inf. Regt., a native of Bloomington, Ill., chose to hold his re-enlistment.

Every couple of weeks the Soldiers living on the mountain switch out; soon it will be Teutsch's turn. From so high up, they are able to see patterns of life and any suspicious activity in the area. This security measure helps give peace of mind to the Operational Coordination District Center located at the base of the mountain.

"I think Sgt. Teutsch picked the location because it's something that he can send home. He didn't want to do just a regular reenlistment, he wanted to do something special," said Army Capt. Patrick Heim, commander of Headquarters Co., 2nd Bn., 508th Parachute Inf. Regt.

This was Teutsch's second re-enlistment and his second deployment to Afghanistan. In a warzone far from home, Teutsch signed up for three more years. He has been stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C. for the five years he has served in the Army.

He is married to Jessica Ellen Teutsch and they have two daughters, Mckenna Marie and Jessalyn Ann.

While on the mountain, Teutsch longed to have his wife be there to see him re-enlist.

"Sweetheart, I wish you were here," said Teutsch. "I miss you, you're absolutely beautiful and thank you for everything that you do for me."

Teutsch said he knows his wife is proud of him and would have been supportive whether he decided to re-enlist or not. Being a former Airman, she has a good understanding of the military way of life, he said. Teutsch knows his parents would like him to come home, but he feels the choice to re-enlist is in his best interests.

"Job security, my family . . . there's a lot of things in the Army that I haven't gotten to do, that I want to do still," said Teutsch.

Some of these things include finishing college, going to Ranger school and becoming a jump master.

Teutsch has been debating on whether to stay in the Army or get out for the past three months. After discussing his options in length with his commander, Teutsch made his decision.

It's a decision Heim thinks benefits Teutsch and the Army.

"Sgt. Teutsch is one of Americans finest. He has chosen to serve his country in a time of war, when most Americans would not," Heim said. "The Army is where his heart is."

Story and Photos by
Air Force Staff Sgt. Christine Jones, 22nd MPAD

Army Sgt. Aaron Ivory Teutsch with Headquarters Co., 2nd Bn., 508th Parachute Inf. Regt. stands at the top of Baba Saheb Ghar Mountain where he re-enlisted, Jan 11.



Soldiers of Headquarters Co., 2nd Bn., 508th Parachute Inf. Regt., stand at attention during the re-enlistment ceremony of Army Sgt. Aaron Ivory Teutsch, Jan 11.

The re-enlistment ceremony took place at an observation point atop Baba Saheb Ghar Mountain.

The OP sits at 3,800 feet above sea level and overlooks most of the Arghandab river valley.

Warrior Profile #52

Displaced Submarine Officer

Story and photo by Spc. B. Todd Willis, CJTF-82 PAO

In today's armed services, America's best are often required to quickly master and perform duties that are outside their area of expertise.

Navy Lt. David M. Bartles, 29, is one of many servicemembers here in Afghanistan who rise to the occasion to fill the role required of them during wartime.

Bartles, who spent three previous years of duty on a nuclear submarine, is now the night-shift battle captain for the Combined Joint Task Force-82 Information Operations section.

"It's definitely a big change from what I am used to, but it's pretty exciting - the work I mean," Bartles said.

The information operations section here at Bagram works with other sections in the Communications Action Group to do a variety of duties, including generating content that appears on radio and television stations throughout eastern Afghanistan.

The servicemembers who accept duties that are outside their area of expertise incur some unique challenges.

"The most difficult thing thus far is the pace. You have to learn your job and the organization very quickly," said Bartles. "You're expected to be effective from day one and failure here can have profound effects."

Those working with Bartles are quick to give their opinion.

"I am definitely surprised at how quickly Lt. Bartles made the transition from

working on a nuclear submarine to this," said Army 1st Lt. Christopher L. Hunt, day-shift information operations battle captain.

After earning a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Virginia Military Institute, and a master's in engineering management from Old Dominion University, Bartles received two years of training in nuclear engineering in preparation for his duties on a submarine.

During his six years serving in the Navy, Bartles received two Navy Commendation Medals, two Navy Expeditionary Medals and five Overseas Service Awards.

"The best thing about working on a submarine is the camaraderie. The crew is pretty small and we have to depend on each other to get through the day," said Bartles. "We build strong relationships by sharing the hardships of life underwater."

Growing up in Falling Water, W. Va, Bartles is the youngest son of Melissa and David Bartles. He has two sisters and a brother, who is also in the Navy.

"The hardest part of military service for me is being away from my family and friends," Bartles said. "I have been able to keep in touch using the internet, and it will be nice to take the family out for dinner when I get home."

Bartles acknowledges that his new duties have benefited him.

"I've gotten to work with people from other services and field areas. This has given me a better perspective on our effort here in Afghanistan," said Bartles. ☺



BUDDY WATCH



Photo by Army Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander

Be Willing to Listen...
Not All Wounds Are Visible

Marine-Afghan Partnership Grows With Training

Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Christian M. Harding,
Marine Corps Forces Central Command



ANA Col. Mohammad Aslam Mohammad Hashim Hashmi, and ANA Lieutenant Col. Sayed Mohammad Gulakai Malekzai, from the 205th Corps, observe actions by a Marine Transition Team at a simulated vehicle checkpoint during a visit Jan. 14. The Afghan officers observed scenario training specifically designed to improve the partnering capabilities of the teams as they work with Afghan forces to combat terrorism and conduct counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. The delegation also observed and participated in simulated patrol missions, vehicle check points and detainee actions offering unique insight to role players and training teams.

Band of Brothers



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Quinones, 82nd Airborne Div. Band

ANA 1st Lt. Shams Ul Din, ANA ceremony music commander, conducts a joint band composed of ANA and 82nd Airborne Div. Band members during a concert on Bagram, Jan. 6th. The national anthems for both countries, as well as various American and Afghan music were played. It was the first time an ANA Soldier conducted American troops.

Story by Spc. Jay Venturini, 304th PAD

There are very few things that can bring completely different cultures together. Music is one those things and a select group of CJTF-82 Soldiers are using their skills to bridge the cultural gap.

The 82nd Airborne Div. Band is continuing the mission of mentoring and preparing the ANA bands to be able to represent their government and country.

The 82nd Band is currently working with two of the eight ANA bands, and invite them to Bagram Airfield every month to conduct four days of training and mentorship.

“Working with the ANA Band has probably been the most revealing, educational experience I’ve ever had,” said Army Chief Warrant Officer Russell Houser, 82nd Airborne Div. Band master.

“The idioms they use to describe music, what they value in music, how their culture views it, is completely different. Every conversation is a learning experience.”

In the Afghan culture music is viewed as a social medium, with much of the music open to individual interpretations. Because of this, one of the main focuses of the training is teaching the ANA Band the technical side of music.

“Most of the ANA Band members are relatively new musicians so the one-on-one mentorship is really important,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class Shelby Barber, musical performance team leader. “They are very eager to learn and have made vast improvements since we’ve been here.”

After months of working and practicing together, the two bands combined for their first ever joint concert in front of coalition forces at BAF, Jan. 6. Music played included national anthems for both countries as well as various American and Afghan music.

During the Afghanistan national anthem, the ANA ceremony music commander, 1st Lt. Shams Ul Din, conducted the joint band. It was the first time an ANA soldier conducted U.S. troops, said Houser.

“The concert demonstrated how universal music is and that these two nations can come together for a common goal,” said Army Sgt. Brian Cox, a 82nd Airborne Div. Band clarinet player.

Through the mentorship of the 82nd Band, the ANA Band will begin performing to entertain their troops, represent their government, and perhaps even recruit soldiers to serve their country. 🌐

Goodwill across Afghanistan: ISAF and ANP Reaching Out



A child from the Tagab valley carries a blanket that was given to him by the ANA during a TF La Fayette bridge operation. During the three-day operation La Fayette and the 203rd Corps visited different villages in the Tagab valley and established the location of a future bridge.

Photo by French Army, Sgt. Maj. Dominique Dhe, TF La Fayette



Photo courtesy of TFI Mountain Warrior

Afghan children receive toys from the Laghman Agri-Business Development Team and Laghman PRT, Jan. 7. The Laghman ADT and PRT provided school supplies and toys to the local orphanage as part of an ongoing humanitarian assistance project in the area.

Army Lt. Col. John Cunningham, commander of 1st Sqdn., 221st Cav. Reg., Nevada National Guard, hands out small car toys to young Afghan children outside the Marawara Health Clinic in Marawara, Jan. 14. Cunningham was in the area visiting his soldiers assigned to the Kunar PRT who were securing the area while members conducted a health assessment at the local clinic.

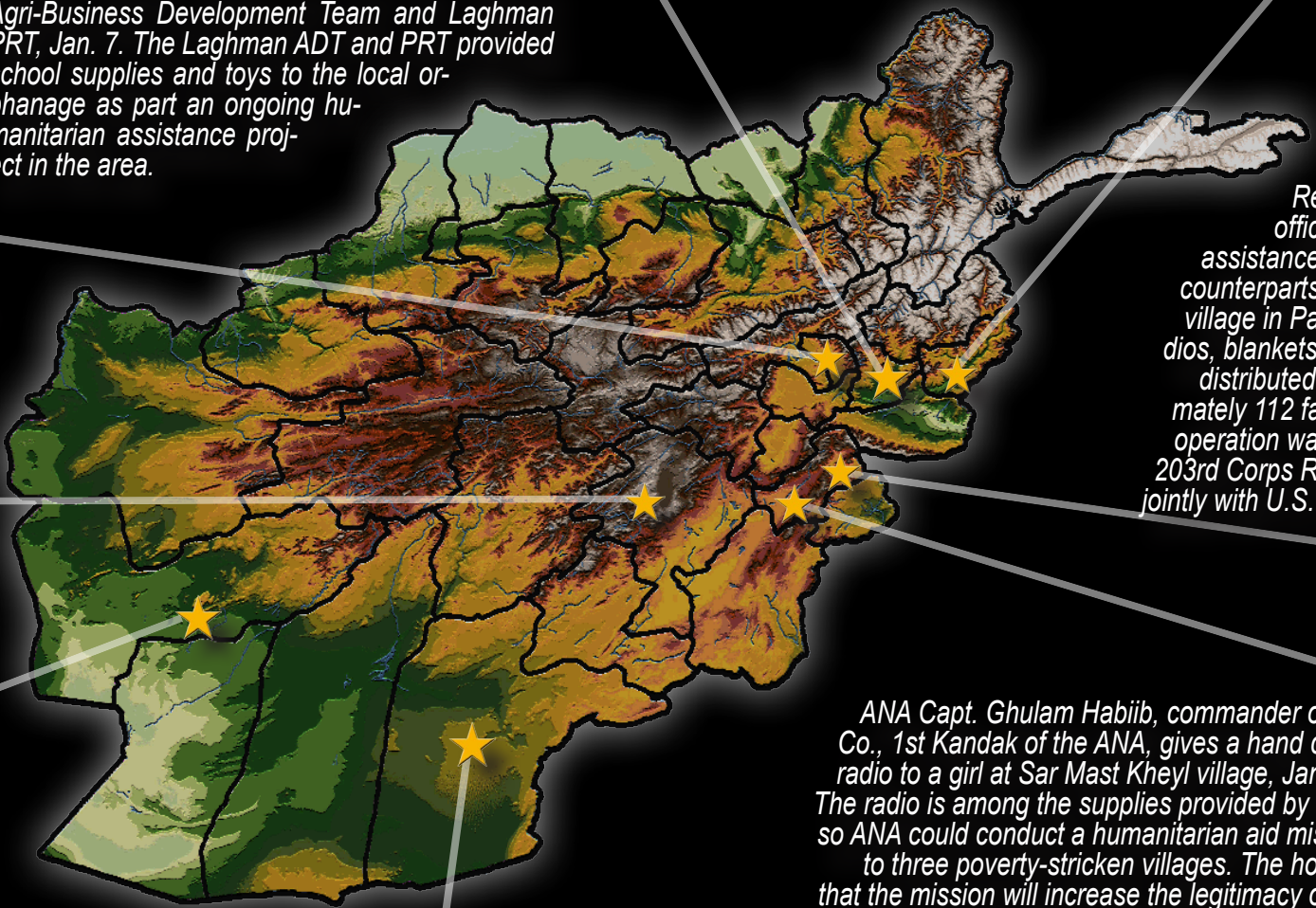


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Boisvert, Kunar PRT



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

Katargrzyna Wojtusik, a social issues specialist assigned to the Ghazni PRT, passes out coloring pencils during a visit to Gungay, Dec. 14. Members of the PRT visited Gungay as part of a winter presence patrol to let villagers know they haven't been forgotten and will be supported and looked after during the winter months.



A village woman accepts supplies from the 203rd Corps Religious Cultural Advisory office, which conducted a civil assistance mission jointly with U.S. counterparts, Jan. 6, to Sahlahdbeyg village in Paktya province. Food, radios, blankets and other supplies were distributed to the villagers. Approximately 112 families were helped. This operation was entirely planned by the 203rd Corps RCA office and conducted jointly with U.S. counterparts via support from Gardez PRT.



Photo by Army Sgt. Troy P. Johnson, 304th IAD



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Tracy DeMarco, Farah PRT

With the help of an ANP officer who lives in the Farah City District V Refugee Camp, Provincial Director for the Department of Refugees and Repatriation office Abdul Khaaleq Amini distributes donated items sent from the US and delivered to the refugees by the Farah PRT, Jan. 9. There are currently 150 refugees living in mud structures which are less than seven feet tall, some without roofs.



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Dayton Mitchell, Joint Combat Camera

ANP distribute humanitarian aid at a Kuchi camp near Hatal, Kandahar province, Jan. 5. Soldiers from 5th Stryker BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. and members of the ANP provided medical assistance and humanitarian aid to the Kuchi people living here.

ANA Capt. Ghulam Habiib, commander of 3rd Co., 1st Kandak of the ANA, gives a hand crank radio to a girl at Sar Mast Kheyl village, Jan. 16. The radio is among the supplies provided by ISAF so ANA could conduct a humanitarian aid mission to three poverty-stricken villages. The hope is that the mission will increase the legitimacy of the ANA and ANP as institutions and counter Taliban misinformation about the government.



Photo by Spc. Spencer Case, 304th IAD

TAKING CONTROL

ANP Demonstrates Progress in Practical Exercises



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

Photo by Army Sgt. Teddy Wade,
CJTF-82 Combat Camera

After one month of intense police skills training, ANP officers in Shutol district put their newly acquired techniques to the test in Panjshir province, Jan. 6.

The Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Teams Police Mentoring Team developed and executed the three-hour practical exercise to test what they had taught the Afghan police officers: crime and accident scene management, first-responder actions, search and seizure, and investigative and suspect controls techniques.

“We designed this exercise to be both practical and realistic,” said Army Staff Sgt. Dustan Johnson, Panjshir PMT team leader. “These scenarios allow the ANP to demonstrate the processes and tactics they’ve learned in situations they are more likely to encounter here in the valley.”

The first scenario involved a simulated vehicle accident with injuries and an argument between the vehicle drivers. The ANP first evacuated the simulated injured person, who was suffering from a broken leg, from the wrecked vehicle. Applying first aid, they made a splint from a cardboard box and secured the leg with fabric, and then loaded him on to a truck for transport.

An investigator was then called to the scene to determine what happened, as the ANP directed real-world traffic around the accident scene. The investigator mediated between the two drivers before determining who was at fault, then issued a citation to appear in court.

“Their procedures are based on Afghanistan’s rule of law, which mimics our own,” Johnson said. “They weren’t trained for this particular situation, but they did the right thing by calling the investigator in. They didn’t break down the scene before the in-

vestigator could determine what happened, and that’s what we wanted to see.”

The second scenario involved an anonymous report of a weapons cache and bomb making activities to test leadership and their ability to determine where weapons were stored and what actions should be taken.

The ANP entered the building in a tactical manner, breached the rooms, secured personnel and conducted a thorough search.

“They did exactly what we taught them to do,” said Spc. Nick Ferrara, an MP officer from the 410th MP Co. out of Fort Hood, Texas.

“They entered the rooms with authority, applied handcuffs to suspects, and set up a good collection point to hold us until they could sort out the facts. I feel they had full control of the situation.”

-- Spc. Nick Ferrara, 410th MP Co.


“They entered the rooms with authority, applied handcuffs to suspects, and set up a good collection point to hold us until they could sort out the facts. I feel they had full control of the situation.”

The final two scenarios involved an accidental shooting

set up to look like a murder with several suspects, one of them a child, and a simple breaking-and-entering incident. Neither scenario had an apparent culprit and called for extensive questioning and crime-scene analysis.

“These last two focused on leadership and investigative technique,” Johnson said. “We wanted them to go deeper than what appeared on the surface and uncover the truth. That’s exactly what they did.”

Overall, Johnson deemed the exercise a success. Shutol ANP patrol shift commander, Dellagah, thanked the PMT and praised them for the training, saying that it helped make them better police officers and prepared them for situations they are most likely to face.

Training ended with a graduation ceremony, Jan. 7, where each participant received a certificate officially recognizing them as police officers in the Panjshir valley. 

(Opposit Page) An ANP officer from the Shutol district, Panjshir province, secures a “suspect” played by Spc. Nick Ferrara, Panjshir PRT Police Mentoring Team member, during a mock crime scenario, Jan. 6. The scene was part of a training exercise developed by the PMT to test the abilities of the local ANP.

Frontline Females

Unlocking the World of Afghan Women



Spc. Sydaless Watson, a supply Soldier with the 97th MP Bn., shares a laugh with an Afghan boy in Rajan Qala Village in Arghandab river valley during Operation Fazilat, Jan. 10.

Story and Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Christine Jones, 22nd MPAD

It's a scene that has played itself out countless times across this war-torn country. A team of Soldiers pass through a doorway into a room. Women and children stare back at them. Their eyes seem to show their resignation, and perhaps indignation, at the intrusion into their homes.

But, this time it is different.

As the women and children inside the home look at these servicemembers from different lands, they see something different looking back at them – women.

"We came along to search any females, to reassure them of coalition forces' good intentions," said Army Capt. Karolyn Miller, commander of HHC, 97th MP Bn., from Fort Riley, Kan.

Miller, a Baltimore, Md. native, and her four-woman team are currently deployed to Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar.

"We've modeled ourselves after the female engagement teams the Marines have in the Helmand province," Miller said. "Women and children felt a lot more comfortable when maneuver forces were coming through if they saw females there."

Miller's female engagement team conducted its second mission Jan. 10 in Rajan Qala village during Operation Fazilat in the Arghandab river valley. They were assisting Afghan national police, U.S. and Canadian forces in a coalition effort to clear the area of IEDs and establish a presence in the community.

Canadian Army Cpl. Melissa Gagnon of Thunder Bay, Ontario, worked with the team for the day.

"They actually smiled when we came in," Gagnon said. "It seems like there may not have been women here before."

Coalition forces are building bonds with the women and children in the villages because these children are the future of Afghanistan, Miller said. In many ways, she feels, Afghan parents are like parents everywhere.

"I think they want what is good for their children, too," Miller said. "We talk to them as much as we can about education, making sure their children go to school so they have opportunities other than joining up with gangs or the insurgency when they grow up."

Sitarn Shah has been an interpreter since she returned to Afghanistan from California nine months ago. A student of Islam and a practicing Muslim, it is important to her for Afghan children to know what the Koran actually says.

"The kids today said to me 'You're a Muslim why are you working with them?' I told them to go to school and learn Islam. In Islam, you're supposed to be good friends with everyone – no matter how they look, or what religion they have," Shah said.

The cultural differences between Americans and Afghans makes searching a difficult task. Male U.S. Soldiers must be careful to respect Afghan culture. Afghan women are often only seen by family members. They don't leave their homes and must cover their faces so that no man but their husband can see them, Miller said.

As with any culture, women should always search women, said Spc. Rebecca Gut-

knecht, an MP with 97th MP Bn. American men would surely feel uncomfortable with another man coming into his home and searching his wife too.

"It's disrespectful and rude for males to go in to search females, so most of the time they skip that. Without a female search team, the locals are more likely to hide stuff in the females' rooms where they know males aren't going to enter," Gutknecht said.



Army Capt. Karolyn Miller, commander of Headquarters Co., 97th MP Bn., and Sitarn Shah, a female interpreter, speak to a woman in Rajan Qala.


The inclusion of female engagement teams on these missions adds a new dimension, and greater access to areas of homes – and interaction with people – normally considered somewhat off-limits; it allows coalition and Afghan partners a vital tool to assist in providing security for the Afghan people.

"We're here to help them. The more information they give us, the more we can

help them push the [insurgents] out of here so they can live a better life," said Spc. Sydaless Watson, a supply Soldier with the 97th MP Bn. and native of Killeen, Texas.

In the future, Miller would like to take the team on a joint operation with female Afghan national police officers in Kandahar City. That way the ANP women can communicate directly with their Afghan sisters, Miller said.

At the end of the day, the female engagement teams are about more than just searching women for explosives, they're about building trust with the other half of the population.

"They can look into the face of another woman and hopefully know that everything is going to be alright ... they can trust us more than they would trust a male Soldier," Miller said. 

STORY

Snapshots

764th Explosive Ordnance Team in Action

Paratroopers Getting it There the Hard Way



Photo by Army Sgt. Stephen Decatur, 4th BCT, 82nd Airborne Division PAO

Paratroopers from 2nd Bn., 508th Parachute Inf. Regt., 82nd Airborne Div. deliver supplies by foot to an OP on the Baba Saheb Ghar Jan. 11 in Arghandab district. Afghan and coalition forces have occupied positions all over the district as part of plan to thwart Taliban influence in the area.



Army Sgt. Benjamin D. Parker, an explosive ordnance disposal team leader from Cincinnati and Spc. Chase Donnelly, a robotics operator from Minnesota, prepare their robot to inspect a suspected IED in the Nangarhar province.

The device was discovered by a construction crew working on a road in the Dih Bala District and was safely detonated in place by the 764th Explosive Ordnance Team, TF Mountain Warrior.



Photos by Army Sgt. Tracy J. Smith 48th IBCT PAO

Coalition, ANA Host 'Contract Rodeo'

Air Force Capt. Edgar A. Jimenez of Milpitas, Calif., a civil engineer with TF Mountain Warrior assists one of the more than 135 potential contractors with the sign-in process during a joint Afghan-Coalition contractors' rodeo. Potential Afghan building firms were able to walk through the ruins of a late 1800-era British fort, also used during the Soviet occupation, to assess the scope of work and eventually bid for three separate projects.



Photo by Army Sgt. Tracy J. Smith 48th IBCT PAO

Echo Troop 'Makes the Mission Happen'



Army Sgt. Nick Trakas from Barker, N.Y., performs maintenance on a fuel pump generator at the Camp Wright Forward Armament and Refueling Point, Jan. 18. Trakas is a member of Echo Troop, 3rd Squl., 17th Cav. Regt. The FARP soldiers are responsible for fuelling and arming helicopters supporting battle space owners and maneuver elements within TF Mountain Warrior's area of operations.

Photo by Air Force Capt. Tony Wickman, Kunar PRT PAO

ANA Recieves Howitzer Certification



ANA Capt. Rahman Gul, commander of the FA section of the 4th Kandak, 2nd Bde., 201st Corps, on FOB Kalagush, presents Army Lt. Col. Michael Forsyth, 2nd Bn., 77th Field Artillery Regt. commander, with a thank you gift for helping his ANA Soldiers complete the certification on the Delta 30 Howitzer, Jan. 9.

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

Nuristan Female Engagement Team Holds MEDCAP for Children



Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Kathleen Leach, operations specialist and native of Smithfield, R.I., and a female interpreter teach young girls how to brush their teeth in a personal hygiene class that the Nuristan PRT Female Engagement Team conducted Jan. 16-17.

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

Ghanzi PRT Taking Note



Army Sgt. Jesse Reder, Civil Affairs District Economic Development operations chief, Ghazni PRT, takes notes during a key leader engagement in Qaryeh Ye-Bakhtiar, on Jan. 6. Members of the PRT met with villagers directly following an operation conducted by ANA Soldiers in the village.

Photo by Tech Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey, Ghazni PRT

Kentucky ADT Works to Improve Irrigation



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Billy Vincent, Kentucky ADT

Army Lt. Col. Ruth Graves, Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team, meets with Jahan Masudi, director of operations for the Agriculture Department at the Kabul University, to discuss irrigation equipment in Parwan province, Jan. 2. The Department of Agriculture has 40 faculty and staff that work with 1,200 students from all over Afghanistan and will be introducing this type of modern irrigation techniques to the students.

ANA Graduates to M16A2's



Photo by Army Sgt. Andrew A. Reagan, 304th PAB

An ANA Soldier proudly displays his completion certificate during the graduation ceremony for the NATO weapons training course at FOB Thunder, Jan. 7. The NATO weapons course, which focused on familiarization with the M-16 rifle, is an integral part of the ANA's partnership with U.S. forces because the ANA Soldiers become proficient on the same weapon that their U.S. counterparts use.

Marines Draw Out Taliban in Helmand



Photo by Lance Cpl. James W. Clark, Regimental Combat Team 7, 1st Marine Div./PA

Marines with A. Co., 1st Bn., 6th Marine Regt. open fire on enemy insurgents taking cover in an abandoned compound during a firefight in Helmand province, Jan. 18. Patrols have been increased in an effort to push the Taliban back and create a buffer for villages friendly towards coalition forces in the region.

Paktika PRT Assesses School Facilities

Members of the Paktika PRT visit a school and talk to local officials, including Abdul Mateen, the subgovernor of the Khayr Khost district, about making repairs to the facility near Seghanna, Jan. 10. The school supports approximately 600 students, grades one through six, from the surrounding villages and is in need of repairs for the upcoming school session.



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Dallas Edwards Paktika PRT/PAO

TF Cyclone Visits OCC-P in Panjshir



Photo by Army Lt. Col. Mike Brady, TF Cyclone/PAO

ANA Col. Rajeb Khan, currently the commander at the Operational Coordination Center - Provincial in Panjshir province, greets members of TF Cyclone during a visit to the headquarters in Panjshir province, Dec. 22. The visit was to assess the current conditions and to thank the members of the OCC-P for their dedication and service to their country.

On Point at the Afghan/Pakistan Border



Spc. Sarath Chea, Cloak Troop, 8th Regt., 1st Cav. Div., tallies the vehicles coming and going through the Freedom Gate (Afghan/Pakistan) Border Checkpoint at evening rush hour. The tally is taken from the rooftop of the Afghan Border Patrol Compound in Wesh, Zabul province, 300 yards from the border.



Photos by Army Pfc. Casey Collier, 22nd MPAD

PRT Assesses Schools in Farah

Just a spattering of the over 1,400 girls who attend school at the Farah City District III Girls School weave in and out of the 17 tents that have been set up to serve as classrooms inside the school's compound on Jan. 4. "We have the best teachers and the best students here," said Homarair Iubi, the headmaster for the school. "Now we just need room for them all." The Farah PRT is preparing a report on the school for the Ministry of Education in Kabul to ensure that the government is aware of the school's issues.



Photo by Air Force 2nd Lt. Karl Wiest, Farah PRT

Teachers Learn First Aid



Photo by Army Sgt. Teddy Wade, CJTF-82 Combat Camera

Air Force Staff Sgt. Abraham Jara, from North Hollywood, Calif., and Air Force Capt. John Stamm, from Youngstown, Ohio, demonstrate how to perform basic 1st aid to Afghan school teachers at a school in the Dara District of Panjshir province, Jan. 3. The Panjshir PRT medics taught teachers and school staff on how to respond to choking emergencies, bleeding management, disease prevention, wound care and splints.

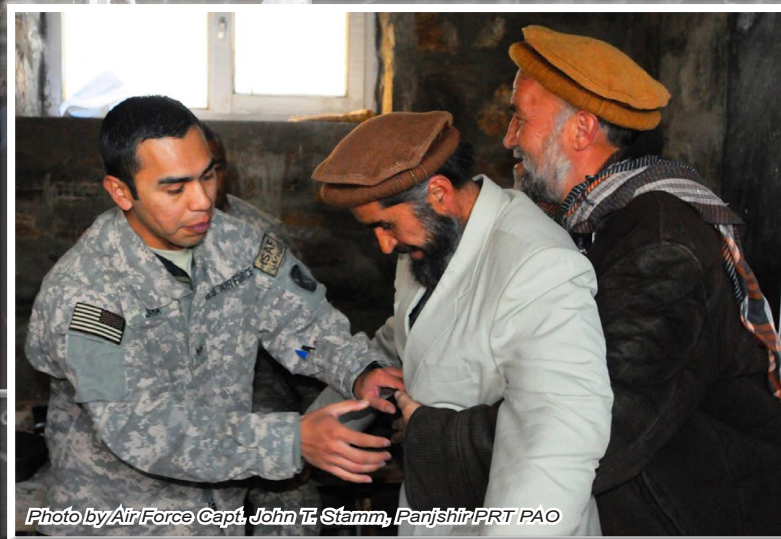


Photo by Air Force Capt. John T. Stamm, Panjshir PRT PAO

Calif. National Guard ADT Holds VETCAP



A local Afghan veterinarian works with Army Staff Sgt. John Carter (left), California National Guard's 40th ID Agribusiness Development Team security forces squad leader from Oakland, Calif., to help vaccinate farm animals near Camp Wright in Asadabad, Jan. 15.

The ADT worked hand-in-hand with village elders and Afghan veterinarians during a Veterinarian Civic Action Program event to administer vaccinations to more than 550 farm animals belonging to more than 100 local farmers. In addition to the vaccinations, local farmers who brought their animals received solar radios, booster packs of medicine to keep their animals healthy and local children were employed to help keep the animals corralled and the holding pens clean.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Brian Boisvert, Kunar PRT PAO

Get the rest of the story

CJTF-82.com

UNIT SPOTLIGHT

TEAM WARHAMMER, EMBEDDED TRAINING TEAM 93

Mission

To train and mentor Soldiers of the 1-2 Inf. Kandak, Capital Div. on all aspects of military operations to prepare them to successfully defend Kabul Province and destroy enemy insurgents, without assistance from coalition forces.

History

Team Warhammer was first formed April 2009, at Fort Riley, Kan., as part of the 1st Inf. Div. While there, they conducted training focused on combat actions, tactical procedures, and essential cultural awareness training in preparation for the upcoming deployment. The team arrived in Afghanistan on July 14.

Why they stand above the rest

During the presidential elections and inauguration, Team Warhammer assisted the Capital Div. in developing a security plan for Kabul and its surrounding districts. The entire team deployed to remote locations in the Kabul province and provided the ANA with additional combat power. The 1-2 Kandak Soldiers played a major role in neutralizing several suicide bombers and insurgents, discovered a Russian-made Boyevaya Mashina -1 rocket, a large cache of high explosives and various small arms weapons hidden in remote areas of Kabul province.

The unit has also conducted more than 12 humanitarian assistance missions, three civil medical assistance and medical drop missions, and more than 15 key leader engagements with ANSF. The resulting HA and CMA missions have provided critical food, medical supplies, clothing, educational equipment, winter clothing and blankets to at least 5,000 local Afghans.

Each Soldier on Team Warhammer has played a critical role in mentoring and advising the 1-2 Inf. Kandak. This mentorship has resulted in a unit that is now capable of conducting various types of missions without support from coalition forces.



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Shooting for Perfection

Sharpening Skills and Building Camaraderie

Story and photo by Spc. William E. Henry
TF Cyclone, 38th Inf. Div. PAO

“...they do the training nicely. I am very happy for the team who trained my men, they are good people. They work hard like the Army, but they behave like our friends.”

-ANP Col. Mohammad Hamidi
Sayed Khayl District Police Chief



Army Pvt. Daniel Cross, TF Gladius, 1st Plt, B Co., 82nd Airborne Div. STB, watches an ANP officer from the Sayed Khayl district fire his AK-47 rifle during a live-fire exercise in Bagram district, Parwan province, Jan. 10. Cross, a resident of Hoquiam, Wash., and his task force members provide training and support to police and add to security in the Parwan province area.

Paratroopers from 1st Plt, B. Co, 82nd Airborne Div. STB, assigned to TF Cyclone, conducted live-fire range training with Afghan National Police of the Sayed Khayl district police department at a firing range in Bagram district, Parwan province.

About 20 policemen attended to brush up on their firing skills with the help of the Soldiers.

According to the district police chief, ANP Col. Mohammad Aref Hamidi, marksmanship is a skill much needed in their line of work. He also indicated that the training was something enjoyed by all in his unit.

“This was very good training for us,” said Hamidi. “It’s been a long time since we

came to the range to fire.”

This is the next-to-last stage of the new immersion training program standards initiated by CJTF-82.

The immersion training, a 30-day program, is designed to refresh and continue the policemen’s education on a wide variety of law enforcement procedures.

According to TF Gladius’ Army 1st Lt. Sam Drzewianowski, 1st Pltn leader, 82nd Airborne DSTB, the next step will be a validation process where their knowledge and skills revitalized by the training, will be put to the test. He is confident they will perform well.

“This is definitely one of my better districts

as far as participation and attendance,” said Drzewianowski, a native of Northampton, Mass. “The men have been showing a great deal of discipline.”

Drzewianowski said the training has been a great experience for his Soldiers.

“The younger Soldiers in my platoon have progressed a lot, teaching for the classes and going over materials,” said Drzewianowski. “We take what we know and learned from (U.S. Army) classes and put that together with what we know and learned from being over here.”

Through this unique training relationship, Drzewianowski, his fellow Paratroopers and the ANP have developed a comraderie

with each other.

“My Soldiers have done really well and bonded with the ANP,” said Drzewianowski. “The police in this district have been the most vocal during the training scenarios, adding their own perspective to the training.”

Hamidi had similar thoughts on working with the Soldiers of the group.

“We appreciate the Coalition Forces, they do the training nicely,” said Hamidi. “I am very happy for the team who trained my men, they are good people. They work hard like the Army, but they behave like our friends.”



We Want Your Story

Photo Of The Month

Your photo could be featured next month!

Entries must include:

Who, When, Where, and What
Branch, Rank, Full Name, Unit and FOB.

Put your Unit in the Spotlight!

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

See page #34

Send all submissions to
FreedomWatchAfghanistan@swa.army.mil

PHOTOS

From the Field



Army Sgt. Jason Graham (left side in the Black Hawk) and Army Staff Sgt. Darcy Munoz (right side of Black Hawk), both with C Co. MEDEVAC, TF Brawler, conduct live hoist training with a Soldier from the 27th Engineer Bn., TF Tiger, Jan. 12 at FOB Shank.

Photo by Army Sgt. Scott Tant, TFBrawler UPAAR, TIF Falcon

"The photo is from FOB Bostick. My soldier and I had to go do a mission there and one day we just saw our flag fly so freely and it gave me such pride to do what I do."

Army Sgt. Normandie Landeros



Photo by Army Sgt. Normandie Landeros and Spc. Derrick White, 255th Medical Det

Photo by Spc. Grant Marzolf, Crew Chief, TF Knighthawk



Photo of the month:
A MEDEVAC UH-60 Black Hawk from Co. C, TF Knighthawk, flies over the Afghan countryside.