

THE HEARTBEAT

The Official Magazine of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division



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Coverpage!!
Combined Task Force Strike Soldiers with Company A, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, detonate a bomb in southern Maiwand District, Jan. 29. The Soldiers of Company A were attached to 3/2's Company I, during Operation Night Wolf to provide security and eliminate homemade bombs.



CONTRIBUTORS

OIC|Lt. Col. Larry Porter

SENIOR EDITOR|Sfc. William Patterson

EDITOR|Sgt. Joe Padula

STAFF|Sgt. Charlene Moler

STAFF|Sgt. Mike Monroe

STAFF|Pfc. Shawn Denham

STAFF|A.F. Tech Sgt. Kevin Wallace

STAFF|A.F. Staff Sgt. Joseph Swafford

Words from the Top

STRIKE Soldiers, Leaders and STRIKE Families and Friends,
CTF STRIKE continues on the offense while building the defense in order to set conditions for the SPARTANs of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Soon we will conduct the Relief in Place and will redeploy to Fort Campbell. 2/502 and selected key Soldiers from the BCT HHC and the STB will remain and continue serving till the end of May and they will continue to make a significant difference in support of CTF SPARTAN. STRIKE Soldiers and Leaders continue to make progress and we continue to move forward. We have recently focused our efforts on improving the Afghan National Police (ANP) while continuing to operate partnered with our Partners from 3rd Bde, 205th ANA Corps. Recently we have handed over 2 Strong Points to the ANP which is a positive sign of continued progress. The Security Wall continues to grow as we build our defense in order to protect a majority of the population. Security continues to improve as well as the representative District Shura which continues to improve their processes and handling concerns and grievances of the local people. All of these accomplishments are a result of an amazing group



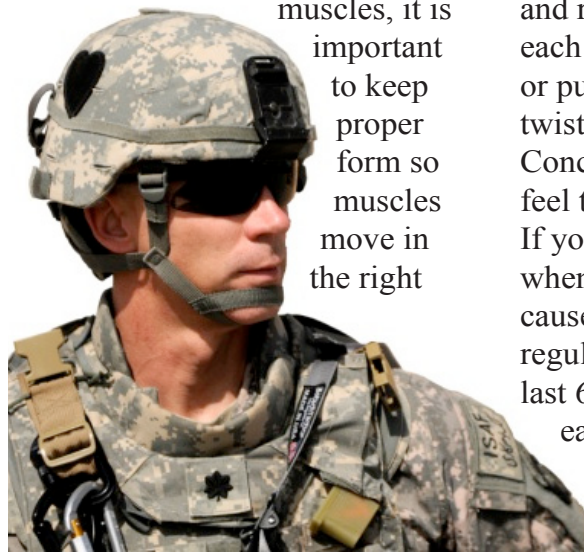
of switched on STRIKE Soldiers and Leaders who understand the importance of our mission and who see the progress we have made. Our legacy will be our partnership and the key locations where we currently operate from our partnered Combat Outposts and Strong Points; all hard fought and hard won differences.

CSM Smith and I remain extremely proud of this incredible Combined Task Force. Be proud of our accomplishments that have made a significant difference to the people of Zharay and Maiwand. From the Cash for Work projects, developmental projects, road improvements, representative shuras and our interaction with our partners and the people we should remain proud of the progress we have made. Remember where we were and where we started last summer and be proud of where we are now. All a result of great effort and significant sacrifice and cost that has resulted in our success.

But do not let up, do not give away your “30 seconds” and remember to keep your head on a swivel and remain switched on! As the SPARTANs arrive they will look to you and to us to gain the knowledge and understanding we have learned from our tough fight in order to continue the progress we have made.
STRIKE!

The Doctor's Orders with Lt. Col Michael Wirt

Common weight training injuries are related to poor technique. Proper execution in weight training reduces chances of injury and gains maximum results. Incorrect form can pull, rip or wrench any muscle in the human body. Lack of control when using barbells or dumbbells can be lethal especially when a beginner starts training. When someone begins to build



muscles, it is important to keep proper form so muscles move in the right

direction and grow correctly. There are people who have slightly deformed muscles partly due to improper form; this causes the muscles to adapt and develop to the incorrect movement. The tips below ensure proper weight training technique.

Learning how to perform the exercise is a prerequisite. Strive to become a technical perfectionist and respect the basic motion of each body part. When pushing or pulling weight you should not twist, turn or contort your body. Concentrate on the movement to feel the muscle moving correctly. If you are distracted or preoccupied when working out, you can cause injury and poor results. A regular training program should last 60 to 90 minutes. Focus on each exercise and increase awareness of your muscle growth. It's simple; the more you concentrate the more

effective the muscle reacts which means more muscle growth. Start with a lighter weight and make sure the technique is perfect. Slowly increase the weight without cheating proper form. Jerking the weight can cause injuries or bad muscle formation.

Professional bodybuilders often lift incorrectly to burn the muscle for complete exhaustion. It is not recommended for casual trainers to practice improper form, respect the integrity of the exercise and skip the last rep if it cannot be completed with proper form. For example, while doing bench press people often arch their backs to press the weight in the final rep. Instead of using poor form ask someone to spot you. A good spotter will give the additional help needed to complete the last repetition properly. Have a good work out and train smartly!

The Chaplain Says... by Chaplain (Maj.) David Beavers

Most of us have heard rumors about an early redeployment. This has affected us all in the same way..... STRESS! Even though we should be excited about going home, for most of us it has brought reunion issues to the forefront of our minds. Those married or in relationships have their own unique concerns, such as "Will she want me like she always has?", "Will he respond to me the way he always did?", "Has she been faithful?" The good news is although all couples go through some adjustment in getting together again; the majority of couples do just fine as long as they practice a few basic timeless principles: **Commitment.** Take time before

deployment, during deployment, and again as you approach redeployment, to affirm your promise and commitment of marital fidelity to each other. Security is a great aphrodisiac! Celebrate being exclusively devoted to each other with each other! **Honesty.** Lies destroy – they destroy love and relationships. Honesty heals and builds. "What happens on deployment stays on deployment" is a myth – both ways... What happens anywhere, anytime, matters everywhere, all the time – that's reality. So if there's been any deception, understand it needs to be dealt with before the relationship can move forward.

Communication. When it comes to sex, it's been said, "men are like microwaves, women are like crockpots". Though a joke, most couples would agree thoughtfulness, conversation, and laughter outside the bedroom make for great fun in the bedroom. They "warm things up" in a big way for most of our wives! **Selflessness.** Practice being a giver, sexually, and not just a taker. Go slowly, talk and touch your spouse in ways showing you are interested in them being comfortable and having their needs met as well as yours.



Combat Stress Column

When returning from war, many feel disconnected from society upon their return. Our families, friends, and communities have matured and changed. Children are older and may approach us with trepidation. The question, "How are you doing?" can catch war veterans off guard. Most people hope you'll say, "I'm okay." What most people don't want to hear is, "I feel like crap; my mind is gone. I've just returned from war and months of killing the enemy, sleepless nights, endless work hours, and extreme hardships that you can't even imagine. I'm also angry, feel lost in society, and sometimes even wish that I could return to my unit and war right now." The real answer to the big question about how you're doing would have most people believing you are a cold-blooded killer, crazy or both. It is common in war veterans to desire to return to their unit or the war zone because that was "normal" and others shared the burden. Saying, "I'm fine" hides the truth and causes the veteran to feel more cut off, isolated and alone. To prevent feeling cut off and promote reintegration, it is important for all of us to share our experiences as much as we can. Without revealing classified information, be truthful. Telling your story helps the events and hardships to become bearable. The narration of your story helps others understand and feel connected to you. Without that connection, anger festers, emotions get buried, disconnection with alcohol occurs and families suffer. The feeling of disconnection may take days, months and for some of us, years to mend, but connection starts with letting others in.

The Mayor's Cell

As part of the Army effort to support Soldiers in all areas of life -- physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family fitness -- the Army is requesting that all Soldiers complete the Global Assessment Tool (GAT) as part of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. Because family members are a key component of every Soldier's success, a GAT for families has been

developed as well. Everyone who completes the brief self-paced survey will have access to a wealth of practical information that specifically fits their needs, including local resources and online self-improvement modules. The survey will take about 10-20 minutes of your time and at the end you will be presented with a rapid estimate of your individual fitness. You can get started by going online at <https://www.sft.army.mil/>.



Safety Standards with Safety Mike

Living in STRIKE AO has its challenges, especially in the winter months in Afghanistan. Morning PT may find a person needing their PT jacket and cap, but later that day, they may be working up a sweat while walking to the DFAC. When the sun sets, the temperature cools down and gets chilly on the walk back to the hooch. How you prepare for and handle the cold weather will determine mission success or failure.

The best thing you can do is prepare for cold temperatures. Check weather reports for the week's weather forecast. Important things to note are rain, snow and winds since wet conditions and wind-chill greatly increase the chance of cold weather injury.

Early morning cold temperatures cause ice to form which is extremely dangerous. Many cold-weather

injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, paths, and building entrances and exits. Persons with previous cold injury, especially recent injuries, are at higher risk for a subsequent cold injury. Individuals more sensitive to the cold should take actions to protect themselves. Slow metabolic rate and inability to increase physical activity puts poorly conditioned personnel at increased risk.

Mental and physical fatigue may cause apathy, leading to neglect of cold weather protection principles. Well-trained and disciplined personnel are better able to care for themselves through personal hygiene, care of the feet, changing clothing, and other simple, effective preventive measures. STRIKE Soldiers, take care of yourself! Don't let cold weather injuries take you out of the fight.

First Strike Trains Afghan National Army On Mortars



Staff Sgt. James Kazukietas, a battalion mortar platoon sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, aligns a mortar at Combat Outpost Ashoque, Dec. 30. Kazukietas helps train soldiers of the Afghan National Army's Weapons Company, 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps in operating the crew-served weapon.

Training to take command of southern Afghanistan involves many aspects of combat ability. The capability of bringing mortars online quickly and accurately helps STRIKE Brigade conduct missions throughout the region. These crew-served weapons require skill and knowledge to be used effectively and knock out enemy targets.

The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), trained Afghan National Army soldiers on mortars, at Combat Outpost Ashoque, Dec. 30.

The Mortar Platoon has been training soldiers of the ANA Weapons Company, 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, since their arrival in June. These skills will help the ANA control and maintain security across southern Afghanistan as they begin to deploy across the region.

"The group is eager to learn," said Pfc. Jason Kirell, a native of Long Island, NY, and a mortarman with the company. "They don't have a lot of experience with mortars so we're teaching them everything we know. They take directions pretty well."

The company is training their second group of ANA Soldiers since their arrival, said Kirell.

"Today we're teaching the ANA soldiers how to conduct proper crew drills," said Sgt. Johnathan Collier, a native of Greensboro, NC., and a squad leader with HHC. "We're making sure they're skilled in their tasks."

The training is conducted on a weekly basis at the outpost. All aspects of mortar operations, from preparing ammunition to firing the weapon, are trained and retrained to maintain the ANA's skills.

"They've improved a bit," said Collier. "They'll normally fire around seven to ten live rounds to get the weapon training down. We can't fire today though; we aren't

able to get clear air space to shoot."

The mortar teams provide indirect fire to protect the outpost and provide support when units in their area of operations come into contact with hostile forces, said Collier.

"Mortar fire allows anyone who is pinned down a chance to regroup, pull back and disengage the enemy," said Collier.

The advantages of indirect fire provided by mortars are recognized by the ANA. Their personnel work to improve their capabilities at every opportunity.

"The ANA are doing pretty well out here," said Staff Sgt. James Kazukietas, a native of Lewiston, NY., and battalion mortar platoon sergeant with HHC. "They ask questions and we make sure they understand what we're showing them. All rounds are shot by the ANA soldiers during the training so they get the maximum ability to learn."

This training is part of a larger operation to bring the ANA up to speed with modern fighting techniques. Combined Task Force STRIKE continues to educate and reinforce these methods to their ANA counterparts throughout the brigade's deployment to Afghanistan. This process of preparing the ANA soldiers may help bring further security and stability to the region as coalition forces withdraw from the area.



A soldier with the Afghan National Army's Weapons Company, 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, looks down the alignment sight of a mortar tube at Combat Outpost Ashoque, Dec. 30.

Security in Senjaray Fosters Development



Capt. Nicholas Stout, company commander for Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, briefs his team leaders and the Afghan National Army soldiers on the areas they are covering in Senjaray for a census of the village allowing them to talk to locals.

In war-torn Afghanistan, security is hard to come by and harder still to maintain. This is especially true for the city of Senjaray, nestled in the foothills of Tangli Ghar and sitting between the canal that runs from Arghandab past Kandalai, and Highway One.

To the southeast of Senjaray lay the towns of Monga and Zoldag which were a safe haven to numerous Taliban. That was before Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, moved into the neighborhood.

When Company A took over operations at COP Senjaray from 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division from Fort Carson, CO in May, the struggle for dominance was well underway. Located on the north side of Highway One, COP Senjaray posed an immediate threat to Taliban's main route of travel and line of communication, Highway One.

Since their arrival in May, Company A has made tremendous progress in the way of security for themselves, but more importantly for the local populace. Working closely with their Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police partners,

they have accomplished something that has never happened in this area, established security and a solid GI-RoA presence.

With this new sense of protection the local people have ventured out of their homes to participate in the Cash for Work program established in the area, as well as provide Soldiers with valuable information about IED emplacement and local Taliban.

"There were about two months that we had grenades thrown at us every time we went into the city," said Capt. Nicholas Stout, the company commander for Company A. "Now the villagers come up to us or up to the gate with information on where the IEDs are, weapons caches, or even people of interest."

It was from the local people that Soldiers learned there was a person in the village responsible for recruiting for Taliban and emplacing IEDs. The people of Senjaray are taking steps to ensure the safety of their town, showing they want Taliban gone.

The close proximity of Monga and Zoldag to the city of Senjaray has made this area very hostile to Coalition Forces. Where other units

were unable to secure this area, Alpha Company has found a way.

"We spent a lot of time learning where and how they fight," said Stout. "What we had to do then was ask ourselves, how are we going to mitigate that?"

During Operation Dragon Strike, Company A led clearing operations throughout Senjaray, pushing Taliban and the fighting out of the city and into what is known as the Green Zone.

Once the fighting and the threat of Taliban were taken out of the city, Company A was able to help the locals begin building up their village. At the beginning of October, the Senjaray Cash for Work program was launched.

The first day only about five people showed up, so they were put to work, at the end of the day they were given their wages, said Stout. When the townspeople saw this approximately a hundred people showed up to work the next day, stated Stout.

A lot of progress has been made in Senjaray through the Cash for Work program, including cleaning up the area around the bazaar and putting down gravel. The villagers worked to create ANP checkpoints on route Senjaray, which is the only road into the Pir Mohammed School, and the local elders voted that the workers clean the canal that run along the southern side of town.

"Our aim here is to give the local people something to want," said Stout. "Give them something to work for and they are more willing to protect it."

That is exactly what Company A has done for the city of Senjaray, they have given the locals the opportunity to build up their resources, given them a part in creating their security, and working to give the younger generation more for their future.

Building a True Partnership

Working with new people is rarely easy, but when they speak a different language the difficulty increases, a challenge that didn't slow the integration of the Afghan National Army soldiers with Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

The extensive area Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment is responsible for is split up between platoons.

Soldiers from the mortar platoon are partnered with the ANA mortar/weapons company at Combat Outpost Ashoque while the scout platoon is partnered with 4th Company 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, at Strong Point Makuan.

On COP Ashoque, Soldiers with more specialized jobs work with a counterpart from the ANA. The STRIKE platoon leader works very closely with the ANA platoon leader to create a more seamless partnership.

"Involving the leadership is what makes this partnership work," said 1st Lt. Clayton Hammer, the mortar platoon leader. "1st Lt. Sherzad Sultan and I have spent many hours going over what needs to be



Soldiers with Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division and Afghan National Army soldiers, pull security along a road leading into the village while keeping an eye on the traffic of Highway One.

done. I sat down with him and laid out what patrols needed to be done, how often and then I let them create the schedule for patrols. Making the ANA more involved in the decision process gives them a sense of responsibility for the outcome."

Since the ANA platoon joined HHC's mortar platoon three months ago, the ANA has been integrated at every level. From planning to rehearsals to training and finally execution of the mission. The importance and significance of this full partnership can be seen in the ease with which they conduct daily patrols.

"It has been proven that patrols that go out without their ANA counterparts have double the chance of being attacked," said Hammer. "The people in the villages talk more willingly to the ANA, when we go into a village with the ANA leading the patrol they are able to get more information than we have been able to."

The basic Soldier skill training occurs at least every other day, from medical training, to Marksmanship, to Battle Drills. The ANA are very receptive to the training and eager to learn.

"They have improved steadily in Soldier skills; on patrols they know when to take a knee, keep their intervals and they are continuously improving," said Spc. Jarrod Kapp, the HHC mortar platoon combat medic. "If it is something they want to learn, they pick it up quickly."

There are a few challenges to this partnership; the ANA are very keen on their times



A Soldier with Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, on a joint patrol with Afghan National Army climb over grape furrows in Zharay district.

for lunch and prayer. Once explained why routine is detrimental to their mission here, that routine with patrol times and location is dangerous, they were able to adapt and overcome.

"When the ANA soldiers see what the US Soldiers are doing, they are very quick to mimic their actions," said Hammer. "You have to make sure that the Soldiers are doing the right thing as well as the ANA and hold them to the standard. They actually appreciate it."

Each patrol is concluded with an after action review with comments contributed from both US Soldiers and ANA soldiers on what went well in the patrol and areas that could be improved or techniques they want to include in the next patrol. There is a true partnership at COP Ashoque, each side helping to make one another better, both working to accomplish the mission.

Security, Operations Improve at Combat Outpost Senjaray



The village of Senjaray on a cold winter morning, from the 'Crow's Nest' viewing platform at Combat Outpost Senjaray, Dec. 27. The area is provided with security by Soldiers with Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment and continues to develop as better trust and cooperation is built between the local populace and Soldiers.

A base of operations is needed for any military operation. Coalition bases dot the landscape along southern Afghanistan and provide protection and a staging point for missions. These are the homes of Soldiers during their deployment with Combined Task Force STRIKE.

Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), work to improve Combat Outpost Senjaray during their 2010-2011 deployment to southern Afghanistan.

While living in combat zones can be tough, the Soldiers of Alpha Company began improvements immediately upon arriving in June. These developments have gone a long way in making life better for the Soldiers stationed at the small base.

Building a base from the ground up takes time, patience and dedication. Every base in STRIKE Brigade's area of operation has a mayor, a Soldier dedicated to the ongoing task of daily operations throughout the base. Their job is to develop and maintain the base and handle any operational necessities that may arise during their time in theater.

"I do it all," said Sgt. Jeff Kellen, a native of Houston, Tx., and mayor of COP Senjaray. "Every detail, construction, necessity, I maintain and take care of."

Improving security was the first concern. Better housing, more porta-johns, a gym and a Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center are also important as they help boost morale, said Kellen.

Improvements to the base are just part of Kellen's responsibilities. He helped establish strong points for Afghan National Police to conduct security missions and hire contractors to help with security along Route Senjaray, the one road providing access through the district.

Interacting with the local populace helped build rapport and improve security in the area, said Kellen.

Around the base, many of the Soldiers recognize the additions since their arrival. The development of their amenities has had a direct impact on their lives and morale.

"It's ridiculously better since we got here," said Pfc.

Joseph Robinson, a native of Eugene, Or., and a forward observer for the company. "We now have showers, a fortified mortar firing point, an MWR with several phones and computers and better housing conditions."

Having more living quarters gives Soldiers more room during their down-time and boosted morale, said Robinson.

Besides housing, the dining facility and gym tent have also made strides towards improvement. This gives Soldiers nutritious meals and a place to conduct physical training.

"The food has definitely improved since we first got here," said Sgt. John Whalen, a native of Sierra Vista, Az., and non-commissioned officer in charge of voice and data services. "The gym is also nice for us to be able to use. I like to work out a lot."

Besides housing, dining and exercise locations, all military bases need medical facilities to properly treat any casualties. The medics of Alpha Company arrived to COP Senjaray to find a medical station ready, but in need of refurbishing and supplies.

"The medical station had no floors, just a tarp to catch any blood," said Sgt. Ryan Dutton, a native of Fort Campbell, Ky., and a medic with First Strike's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, attached to Alpha Company. "We refurbished the facility and provided supplies and tools to make sure we could treat whatever we may encounter."

Local nationals, Afghan National Army and ANP personnel are occasionally treated in the facility as well, before being sent to Kandahar Airfield for further treatment, said Dutton.

"There are a lot of vehicle accidents out here, and the injuries that go along with that," said Dutton. "We make sure [local nationals] are stabilized before sending them up to KAF."

The Soldiers of COP Senjaray have taken large steps to improve their base and their area of operations. These Soldiers work hard to make life better for themselves and civilians in Senjaray everyday as they serve to protect and defend the local population.

Improving Soldiers' quality of life

From a simple field to a Combat Outpost in just over two months, the Soldiers of Apache Troop and Chaos Company, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment along with the assistance of a few of the Navy SeaBees have built up the Army presence at Kolk.

Named for the major town of the area, COP Kolk is situated between Patrol Base Chaos and Strong Point Sablughay along Route Victoria. Prior to the construction of COP Kolk, Taliban had a hold on the area, but with the continued improvement of the COP, STRIKE has shown its intention to maintain a presence in the area.

"With the push of Operation Evictus, [part of Operation Dragon Strike] we have shown the people of the area that we mean to stay," said 1st Sgt. Larry Breland, first sergeant for Chaos Company. "It has shown our intention to ensure that security, governance and education are established in this area."

Within a day the first Hesco wall was built, the SeaBees were not wasting time. The skeleton of the COP was built in twenty-one days, consisting of the outside Hesco walls, the concrete t-walls just beyond that and a handful of tents to house the Soldiers. However the leadership for Strike Cav was not done there.

Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Totaro, designated the Mayor of COP Kolk, has continued making improvements to the area since his arrival to the base in early December, including the building of the Command Post, the construction of a dining facility, a Morale Welfare and Recreation center, a gym and the overall organization and layout.

The idea was to simplify and organize, said Totaro. With the continued additions to the COP there was a lot of equipment that wasn't vital to what we are doing out here so that was put aside. The goal is to have all the amenities here that are necessary to Soldiers while they are here. The next thing to be constructed is a laundry facility, said Totaro.

During the initial construction of Kolk, Route Victoria ran straight through where the Tactical Operations Center and the CP buildings now sit, so the road was re-directed. For the last month and a half the improvements of the COP have not been the only focus, but have continued on Route Victoria which now runs alongside the COP.

Due to the increase in US Army presence in the area, Taliban who were pushed back to the city of Didar, which lies to the northwest of the COP, would go out at night and threaten the locals. It was necessary to reassure the local people the Army presence was here to stay.

The Cash for Work program was implemented in the area to demonstrate that Combined Task Force STRIKE was here to help. The current projects include cleaning out a canal to the northeast of the COP as well

as building a shura hall just outside the entrance to the COP. The continued efforts of STRIKE along with their Afghan National Army counterparts, have shown results in the increased amount of people who come to the area to attend the shura. The first one in the area only twelve people attended, the last shura held had over 160 people attend.

With constant patrols, improving and providing security the integration of the ANA soldiers with the Soldiers is increasing in those regards. The ANA work alongside their US counterparts. The ANA commander works at the same desk as his US commander counterpart ensuring they understand what is going on and what needs to happen on missions, tracking troops on ground. This close partnership has increased effective communication.

Consistency has been the key to success in achieving this close partnership between CTFS Soldiers and their ANA counterparts. It has been the same US Soldiers working with the same ANA counterparts that has built a level of trust allowing the partnership to flourish.

In a constant game of hide and seek with the sometimes elusive enemy, the Soldiers and Leadership of Apache and Chaos have found what will ensure their overall success, trust.

"I trust them with my life," said Breland about the ANA soldiers from 2nd Company, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps. "Our partnership has improved. Our intent is to set the next unit up for success, and I think we have done that."

Although the end of this tour is in sight for the Soldiers of Widowmakers, they do not let it affect what they are doing here. Their focus is still on the task at hand, with preparation at night for the next day's mission. Always diligent and with their head on a swivel, watching for the enemy, will ensure the safe conclusion and



Soldier from Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), enjoy the new Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility at COP Kolk, January 18. This is one of the many new additions to the COP allowing Soldiers to keep in contact with family and friends back home.

Governments Working Together Show Progress

Representatives of local government and elders met with military officials to discuss the progress made throughout the district and the issues still plaguing the Zharay district, Jan. 29.

Niyaz Mohammed Sarhadi, the Zharay district governor, met with Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Bannister, the Deputy Commanding General for Operations, 10th Mountain Division, in the Zharay District Center along with representatives from the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, newly appointed government prosecutors and shura members to talk about present security and how to strengthen it with the approach of spring.

“The security is much better... elders and leaders can now come to the shura,” said Sarhadi. “The Zharay district is a strategic location due to its close proximity to Kandahar City. If we have security in Zharay, there is security in Kandahar City.”

Sarhadi appreciates the hard work of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), with their numerous operations throughout the district to force out the enemy.

“Ten months ago the people of the district came to the government and the American military and asked for an operation to help fight against Taliban,” said Sarhadi. “The operation brought security to the region.”

With the success of operations such as Operation Dragon Strike, Operation Dragon Wrath, and Operation Dragon Descent, great progress was made in the Zharay district, but the new challenge to the district



Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Bannister, Deputy Commanding General for Operations, 10th Mountain Division listens to Niyaz Mohammed Sarhadi, the Zharay District Chief of Police at a shura in the Zharay District Center, Jan. 29. The shura was held to discuss the progress of security in the district.

will be to keep the territory.

“Zharay has come a long way from a year ago,” said Bannister. “Security has improved, there is a new district governor, a new chief of police, Zharay even has prosecutors now. We are going to be here until your security forces can stand on their own.”

The progress made in Zharay can be seen from all levels, from the local people, to the Afghan security forces, to the government officials.

“You coming together shows how much you care about your district and your country,” said Bannister. “Keep coming together and let us know about the problems so we can help, but also let us know what is going well so we can share that knowledge. Zharay is at the forefront of Afghanistan. What works here will be shared with other districts.”

Tired of the threat of violence, the people of the Zharay district are standing up against terrorism.

“Terrorism is bad here,” said Sarhadi. “They want to destroy Afghanistan; they are the enemy of everyone. After 32 years of war, this country is destroyed. We need to work on rebuilding, little by little. If we help one another we will win, we will beat the enemy and push them out. If we win, we win together.”



Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Bannister, Deputy Commanding General for Operations, 10th Mountain Division with Lt. Col. Alan Preble, Battalion Commander for 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Jan. 29. Brig. Gen. Bannister is visiting Forward Operating Base Wilson to sit down and talk to the district governor and shura members about security progress in the district.

Rule of Law at Work in Zharay District



Lt. Col. Joseph Krebs gives Vice Adm. Harward a tour of the Zharay district center located at Forward Operating Base Wilson, January 15. Vice Adm. Harward's visit to FOB Wilson is to see the progress of rule of law in the Zharay district.

Representatives from the United States government and Military personnel specializing in Rule of Law met with the newly appointed Afghan national security prosecutors to discuss the progress of the Afghan government's new judicial system, Jan. 15.

Vice Adm. Robert Harward, the commander of Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435, with Brig. Gen. Mark Martins, the com-

mander of the Rule of Law Field Force, Afghanistan, met with Mohammad Abdul Raheem and Mohammad Naquibullah, the appointed Afghan prosecutors to express their combined hope of governance moving forward in the Zharay district.

"It is so striking to see the difference in Arghandab, Panjwa'i and Kandahar now that

there is real and actual justice," said Vice Adm. Harward. "Now there will be fair and rapid justice offered to the people of these districts."

In an area where justice was determined and meted out by Taliban members, the offer of unbiased justice to the people of Afghanistan is a step forward.

"We are making commitment to put as much effort on

this as we have on fighting," said Harward. "The United States will assist Afghanistan on this matter to make sure it's done right."

Assurance of further advice and assistance in the development of Afghan Rule of Law was given to the Zharay government representatives.

"I am in constant communications with Brig. Gen. Martins," said Rosa Brooks, the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Rule of Law and Humanitarian Policy. "If there is anything we can assist with, please let him know. We will do what we can."

The US advisors also visited the Saraposa Prison, the Chel Zeena Criminal Investigative Center, the Operations Coordination Center – District Arghandab, and a tour of the Kandahar Air Field Detention Site. All these stops and the meeting with the National Security prosecutors allowed them to see the progress of rule of law in the Kandahar Province.

Working through the claims process in Zharay

In a meeting of the minds, Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), met with key personnel from 10th Mountain Division, to discuss the claims process, Jan. 19.

Maj. Gen. James Terry, commander of the 10th Mountain Division, met with Lt. Col Joseph Krebs, the Deputy Commanding Officer for the STRIKE Brigade, to discuss the progress of the claims process in the Zharay district and to address some of the issues in the system.

"When we reduce infrastructure we've always tried to involve the leadership [of the area]," said Maj. Gen Terry. "Compensation is the responsibility of the United States. The process simply needs to be quicker."

When damage occurs, the unit at that location fills out a battle damage card. The card records the location and extent of the damage. This ensures compensation for damage from the current fight.

"What typically is the case around Kandahar is that locals leave their homes," said Maj. Benjamin Hastings, commander for Company A, 431st Civil Affairs Battalion. "When they return they find their property damaged. They are directed to the local shura or the nearest Combat Outpost to get the Battle Damage Card that is necessary to submit the compensation claim."

The claims process has been streamlined since Niyaz Mohammed Sarhadi became district governor. Sarhadi explained the process to the residents of Zharay, in lieu of property ownership documentation, the village elder could vouch for the owner. Once the claim is submitted, Sarhadi sends an appointed council member to investigate the claim.

"The biggest issues are the claims from June or July," said Hastings. "The people were told to return to the claims center with proof of ownership of the property and most never returned."

Claims are done on specific days of the week; two days are by appointment only, Wednesday is open for anyone and Tuesday is specifically for women to present their claims.

"We were seeing from thirty to forty women a day to begin with," said Sgt. 1st Class Abraxas Blaisdell, the civil affairs non-commissioned officer in charge. "That was due to a backlog, things have been slowing down recently. Most of the time the women who come in just need help, and we have been able to expedite things for them."

The claims team for the Zharay District Center is working to update the claims card to be more concise. The aim is to make the process quicker while ensuring that the right person receives payment.

STRONG POINT OFFERS SAFETY, AID TO LOCAL POPULACE



Soldiers with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and soldiers with the Afghan National Army conduct a patrol near Strong Point Haji Rahmuddin, Jan. 16. Security patrols help protect the local populace in the Zharay district during the STRIKE Brigade's deployment to southern Afghanistan.

Providing security to southern Afghanistan requires a network of bases from which coalition forces can operate. Many bases dot the Afghan landscape and range in sizes from large airbases such as Kandahar Airfield, to much smaller Combat Outposts and Strong Points. Regardless of size, all of these bases give assistance to their surrounding areas.

Combined Task Force STRIKE Soldiers with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, recently established SP Haji Rahmuddin in the Zharay district, Kandahar province, Afghanistan during their 2010-2011 deployment.

The SP is designed to provide security and humanitarian aid to the populace of the surrounding area while giving both American and Afghan National Army soldiers a location to work and train

together. This has helped bring stability to the region in recent months.

"Kids wouldn't play at all around here," said Spc. Michael Szendrey, a native of North Pole, Alaska, and a scout with Troop B. "Taliban wouldn't let children do anything out here. Now, [Taliban] are gone and the kids play outside a lot. We see them playing soccer almost every day now; it's a big improvement."

The Soldiers working in the region not only offer security to the populace, but give humanitarian aid in the form of food items, blankets and other necessities, said Szendrey.

"We plan missions and go out to talk to people," said 1st Lt. Bradley Portwood, a native of Portageville, Mo., and a platoon leader with the troop. "The base has been operational since October and gives us the ability to interact with people

farther out in the district."

The Afghan National Army's 2nd Company, 2nd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, works alongside the CTFS Soldiers on every patrol, said Portwood.

"Everywhere we go, they go," Portwood said. "We don't do anything without each other in the region. We always work together."

Since pushing insurgent forces out of the region this past summer,

more people are commonly seen in the area, Portwood said.

"We now conduct [Key Leadership Engagements] almost every day with the elders in the area," he said. "They tell us what's going on, if anything's wrong and what their people need. They're starting to trust us more."

The Strong Points across Afghanistan give forces both an edge in combat and in supporting the people of Afghanistan.



Soldiers with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), walk through Strong Point Haji Rahmuddin after arriving for an eight day rotation, Jan. 16. The SP provides security to the Zharay district and provides coalition forces a location to operate from.

CASH FOR WORK PROVIDES JOBS, INCOME

In a desert region where agriculture is the primary means of economy, many local nationals are enticed into Taliban service with the promise of high pay. Many people in the Zharay district need jobs to support their family and end up having to work for insurgents to cover their necessities. Coalition forces have developed a strategy to help combat this trend and assist the people of southern Afghanistan help themselves.

Local nationals find employment at the 'Cash for Work' program at Combat Outpost Pashmul South, during Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment's deployment to southern Afghanistan, 2010-2011.

"The program pays Afghans to work around their villages and districts as they clear canals, remove unused buildings and improve their general surroundings," said Staff Sgt. Daniel LaBelle, a native of Herrin, Ill., and non-commissioned officer in charge of fire support for the troop. "This brings money to the region for the people who are willing to work."



Local nationals dig canals throughout the Zharay District near Combat Outpost Pashmul South for the 'Cash for Work' program, Jan. 1. The program has helped extend and improve the canals throughout the region, which will benefit the farmers with irrigation for their crops.



Pfc. Loren Buffalo, a scout with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), photographs a local national at Combat Outpost Pashmul South, Jan. 15. The Soldiers of the troop catalogue and identify people for the 'Cash for Work' program to aid in the payment process and identifying possible threats.

The biggest priority of the program was the clearing and development of canals, said LaBelle.

"The canal brings water to their fields," said LaBelle. "They really want that [canal] there to help their farms."

Since the 'Cash for Work' project began in November, it has grown significantly in numbers and projects. This is beginning to have a noticeable impact on the populace as teams are developed into multiple teams to work on different areas. The number of individuals seeking employment rose from a just a few to 962 people attending daily.

With people coming to the COP for work on an almost daily basis, it is important to keep track of everyone both for security and payment purposes. Identifying, logging and carding local nationals has become a full time job.

"We make cards for every worker here," said Pfc. Loren Buffalo, a native of Hot Springs, Ark., and a scout with the troop. "I take their photo and thumbprint to help

identify them and find out if they're a local civilian or an insurgent."

The cards contain basic identification information, a photograph and other details, said Buffalo.

"We hand out the ID cards everyday to the guys as they show up," said Buffalo. "It identifies them for the project and helps us track who's showing up and who isn't. It's a security measure so we know who is safe, who isn't; who comes here and who doesn't anymore."

The cards are collected back at the end of the day for re-issuing the next time the cardholder arrives for work. This helps with the payment process and headcount of people attending the 'Cash for Work' program.

The 'Cash for Work' program has helped improve conditions throughout Zharay and southern Afghanistan. This is another step for the people of the region as they help develop their country.

'Cash for Work' Program Works

On an unseasonably cold and rainy morning in southern Afghanistan, hundreds of local villagers approach a small strongpoint manned by the Afghan National Army and Soldiers from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Approaching the seemingly endless lines of concertina wire that surround the strongpoint, they line up in rows for the chance to do what many Afghans want to do: make an honest living to support their families.

Sgt. Robert Smith runs the "Cash for Work Program" that employs so many Afghans. Because of the compound's location, it is vital to clear the area of debris and deny the Taliban concealment. That's where the local Afghans come in.

"We pay them to trim tree branches or cut them down altogether," Smith said. "This place used to be surrounded by tree lines that provided Taliban cover. This removes their advantage and puts the local community to work."

Smith said as many as 250 Afghans show up every day for



Sgt. Robert Smith of 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, looks into a pit of unexploded ordnance turned in during the Cash for Work Program at Strongpoint Dog, Afghanistan, Jan. 29. The program provides partnership with the local community by providing income for day labor and the turning in of unexploded ordnance.

work with some walking more than an hour for a chance to earn money.

"I didn't know how massive this was going to be at first," Smith explained in his obvious Texas drawl. "Most of these people have very meager possessions. Many of them had farms south of Highway One. Taliban pushed them out and now they live in a massive camp with a lot of other displaced locals, but now that we're pushing the Taliban out, some are moving back to the south to reclaim their land."

With the help of Khan, an English teacher from Kabul and one of the strongpoint's interpreters, and ANA soldiers, Smith assigns jobs to the Afghans. The bigger, stronger workers remove trees, while others dig or remove branches and other debris.

"This is a very good program," Khan said in near-perfect English. "These people have a chance to earn an honest living. More importantly, it removes them from Taliban influence and builds trust."

While Khan went to direct younger Afghan workers on where to place tree branches, Smith explained along with the work

the Afghans provide and sometimes information on Taliban activity in the area, some of the workers show up with interesting items that give the Soldiers more work of their own to do – unexploded ordnance.

"We see everything from old Russian munitions, land mines, mortars, grenades to 107 [mm] rockets," Smith said with a slight grin. "Depending on what they bring us, they can earn some extra money. This makes the program worth it because even if they don't do any work and bring in only one IED, lives are saved."

Standing next to a big hole in the ground filled with all kinds of explosives, Smith pointed and laughed as he said, "EOD is going to [freak out] when they see all this."

By giving local Afghans jobs that decrease the amount of Taliban attacks in the area, Afghan farmers now understand the benefits of the program and are more forthcoming to the soldiers by providing information.

"At first they came up and asked if they can farm on their land," Smith said. "They seemed a little intimidated. We told them, 'Of course you can farm here. We're not going to deny anyone a chance to make a living.' That opened the doors for us to communicate more openly with them."

With all the progress made so far, there is still a lot of work to be done. As the ANA and Dog Company expand the strongpoint, Smith excitedly said he is really looking forward to fortifying security when the workers complete a moat around the entire compound.



An Afghan digs a pit during the Cash for Work Program outside Strongpoint Dog, Afghanistan, Jan. 29. The program is run by Dog Company, 2-502, 101st Airborne Battalion and provides partnership with the local community by providing income for day labor and the turning in of unexploded ordnance.

CAV Medics Teach ANA Combat Lifesaving Skills

With the constant dangers Soldiers face when in conflict, knowing basic first aid can be the difference between life and death. Medical personnel from Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), trained their Afghan National Army counterparts on trauma lanes, Jan. 25.

The purpose of trauma lanes is to simulate a combat situation, so Soldiers can practice their medical skills under stressful conditions similar to combat. With units continuously integrating their ANA counterparts more fully into operations, training them in lifesaving skills is crucial.

“We are working hard to train the ANA medics and their physician assistant because they will need to be able to treat their own guys once we leave,” said 1st Lt. Jason Kim, a medical platoon leader for HHT, “The ANA medics must be able to provide both clinical and combat medical care for over 600 soldiers in 2nd Kandak.”

Eight ANA soldiers and the ANA physician’s assistant attended this session of training covering tourniquets and how to move a wounded soldier out of harm’s way. Six of the ANA soldiers were new to the unit and this was their first experience with medical training.

“For being new, they did a good job,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Martin, the squadron surgeon. “They need to continue practicing with the equipment they carry and what they have to work with.” Martin explained the mechanics of the tourniquet and demonstrated the proper application of a tourniquet,

placing it above the wound and tightening it down the correct amount, so it functions as designed.

“When using a tourniquet only twist it three to four times,” said Martin. “If that doesn’t stop the bleeding don’t continue to twist it tighter, apply a second tourniquet above the first.”

When demonstrating how to apply tourniquets Martin also showed the ANA soldiers how to put pressure on the artery to slow the bleeding while they emplace the tourniquets. This is a useful technique to know, especially when there is only one soldier present to render aid.

When the soldiers demonstrated the understanding and ability to apply tourniquets correctly, the next portion of the exercise was added, moving the wounded soldier to safety.

With one soldier as a simulated casualty, working in buddy teams they emplaced tourniquets. Using a two man variation of the cradle drop drag, the soldiers moved the injured soldier approximately 25 meters to a SKED litter.

Martin explained the correct way to strap the wounded into the litter to ensure the person was secure. Once the soldiers strapped in the wounded, they dragged the litter around the compound.

“It is harder than it looks,” Martin told the ANA soldiers. “Imagine having to drag a larger Soldier, and remember their body armor gets strapped down on the litter with the Soldier. Everything gets transported with that Soldier except the weapon.”

Every Afghan soldier had hands-on practice with each step of the training demonstrating their understanding. Another trauma lane exercise teaching different skills was scheduled for the following week to continue building their medical knowledge.

“They have significantly improved in their skills and are independently running sick call operations for the Kandak,” said Kim. “They will continue to improve on all fronts with more practice and learning more skills.”



Spec. Robert Perkins, a medic and Lt. Col. Christopher Martin, the squadron surgeon with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), demonstrate a modified version of the cradle drop drag to Afghan National Army soldiers during trauma lanes training, Jan. 25. This is a quick way to move a wounded Soldier out of danger to render first aid.



Spec. Robert Perkins, a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), shows his Afghan National Army medical counterparts the correct way to apply a tourniquet, Jan. 25. This was part of trauma lanes training to increase the ANA soldier’s knowledge of basic lifesaving skills.

WOLFPACK CONDUCTS OPERATION NIGHT WOLF



Soldiers with Company A, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), detonate a bomb in southern Maiwand district, Jan. 29. The Soldiers of Company A were attached to Company I during Operation Night Wolf to provide security and eliminate homemade bombs.

The Maiwand district of the Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan contains a lot of terrain that has not yet been explored by coalition forces. Reaching out to the people in the district is a priority of Combined Task Force STRIKE and their Afghan National Army partners.

Company I, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, attached to the STRIKE Brigade, conducted Operation Night Wolf near Strong Point Iron, Jan. 29 and 31.

The Soldiers of Company I worked alongside the Afghan National Army's 6th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, as they talked with the local populace and searched southern Maiwand for weapons caches. The search was conducted by the ANA, with coalition forces providing security.

"It's important for the people here to see the ANA doing the search first," said 2nd Lt. Corey McCaigue, a native of Sussex, Wis., and a platoon leader with Company I. "This is helping to connect the people with their government."

This is especially important considering the area being patrolled is considered hostile territory where

Taliban have a presence, said McCaigue.

"The people support their own soldiers," said McCaigue. "The ANA can search places, like graveyards, where we aren't able to search."

The ANA searched compounds and fields, then requested military working dogs to come through and search for any hidden weapons or bombs. Coalition forces followed close behind, to intercept possible threats to security and search outlying fields for anything suspicious.

"We provided support to the mission," said 1st Lt. Stephen Baxter, a native of New Orleans, La., and a platoon leader with CTFS's Company A, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion. "Me and my Soldiers looked for caches and [improvised explosive devices] and used demolition charges to clear paths for patrols."

During the patrol a suspicious footpath was found and an Anti-Personnel Obstacle Breaching System was used to clear the area of any hidden bombs. The system uses a rocket to launch a series of small explosives across a stretch of land. After several seconds the explosives

detonate, causing bombs within its blast radius to explode as well.

"We got a sympathetic [detonation] after firing the APOBs," said Baxter. "The APOBs destroyed a hidden bomb that could have killed someone."

The ANA and Coalition forces swept the surrounding area looking for more explosives, but found none. Afterward, members of the Human Intelligence Team and Psychological Operations spoke to village elders, gathering information and discussing concerns.

"This is the first time we've had the chance to talk to anyone out here," said McCaigue. "The [strong point] was established within the last couple of months and we haven't been able to push out this far before."

The operation expanded the influence of the ANA and STRIKE Brigade throughout their area of operations, further reducing insurgent's abilities throughout the province.



A Combined Task Force STRIKE Soldier with Company I, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, photographs bomb-making material near Strong Point Iron, Jan. 31. The materials are common parts of bombs built by insurgents throughout Afghanistan.

Working Dogs Sniff Out Trouble, Protect Soldiers



Spc. Mason Brown and his working dog, Atilla, with 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), search around a building near Strong Point Iron, Jan. 29. Working dogs patrol side-by-side with Soldiers as they clear fields and compounds across Afghanistan, locating and destroying weapons and explosives along the way.

Working dogs detect hidden explosives and defend Soldiers from would-be attackers. These dogs are a large part of patrol operations during 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)'s deployment to Afghanistan.

Working Dogs with Strike's Company A, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to Company I, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, patrolled near Strong Point Iron, Jan. 29 and 31.

The working dogs searched compounds and fields in the southern Maiwand district during Operation Night Wolf. The dog handlers guided their dogs through previously uncharted locations considered to be under Taliban control.

"We searched for bombs in the area with the [Afghan National Army] and American Soldiers," said Spc. Mason Brown, a native of Whittier, Calif., and a dog handler with Company A. "It was pretty difficult; we were out most of the night until early afternoon, walking all the way. Atilla [the working dog] is only 18 months old, but he held up really well during the patrol."

Atilla's sense of smell is very sensitive and he can tell the difference between the smell of explosives and harmless smells in an area, said Brown.

"[Atilla] is well-trained and knows his job," said Brown. "If anything is out here, he'll find it."

The ability to detect hidden explosives gives Soldiers an edge on the underground threat of improvised explosive devices. Without the dogs, Soldiers rely on metal detectors, out of place items on the ground and signs of buried objects; methods that aren't always accurate.

"The dogs contributed a lot to the mission," said Spc. Zane Henson, a native of Tuscumbia, Ala., and medic

with Company I. "They searched the area pretty thoroughly; they didn't find anything and that's good."

Having the dogs on patrol increases the confidence of Soldiers that they will be safer while on mission, said Henson.

"There's no doubt in my mind; these dogs keep us safe," said Henson.

On the last day of the operation, a working dog identified wires and other electrical components used in making bombs buried in a grape-drying house. Without the dog's ability to sniff-out the material, the parts may have been overlooked during the initial search.

"The dog hit on [the materials] immediately, we just had to dig it out," said 2nd Lt. Corey McCaigue, a native of Sussex, Wis., and platoon leader with Company I.

The working dogs of Combined Task Force STRIKE help bring security to both Soldiers and local nationals as they help clear threats from Afghanistan.



Spc. Mason Brown and his working dog, Atilla, with 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) search a building near Strong Point Iron, Jan. 29. Dog handlers such as Brown give Soldiers more security while providing a better chance of finding hidden explosives and weapons caches.



Spc. Mason Brown and his working dog, Atilla, with 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), search a compound near Strong Point Iron, Jan. 29.

Flushing out Taliban

Combined Task Force STRIKE are flushing out Taliban fighters in southern Afghanistan by installing barriers in various locations in an effort to funnel everyone through security checkpoints and compounds.

In a once volatile area of the country, insurgent activity is reduced, even on this unseasonably warm day along Highway One.

“We used to see a lot of contact here,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Allen Anders, of a distribution maneuver team with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, “In the past we would not be walking out here. Now it’s pretty safe.”

The team puts up about 30-40 barriers every day. Their biggest day so far is 68 barriers. Commerce is also going up along with the barriers.

“The people are happy,” said Anders. “They give us the thumbs up when they drive by and we’re seeing a lot more activity at the bazaar and farmers’ market.”

The task of getting the barriers installed has been a long process, but the team works every day to make this region of Afghanistan safer for the local population and coalition forces.

“We’ve been at this since October,” said U.S. Army Spc. Kyle Marlin, HHC 2-502, 101st ABN Div.



Spc. Kile Marlin and Spc. Jeremiah Mays, Distribution Maneuver, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, maneuver a barrier into place in Spinpir Village, Afghanistan, Jan. 28. The barriers will enhance the security of the area by forcing insurgent movement toward checkpoints and compounds.

“Some of the farmers were irritated at first, but now we give them PVC pipes to go under the barriers for water irrigation.”

Anders agreed and said people did complain at first, but now they understand. Afghans noticed less IED’s and more commerce so they definitely see the benefits of these barriers now. Also, insurgent activity is down, which is always a good thing.

Patrols Increase Business for Local Shop Owners

Afghan National Civil Order Police and coalition forces patrolled a bazaar along Highway One outside of Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad.

The patrols are accomplished a few times each week to increase security and establish trust between the ANCOP and local population. One of the goals is for Afghan police to establish familiarity with the shop owners and find out what they need so profits continue

to increase.

“We go in to maintain a record of shop owners and check on the progress being made,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Steve Surface, Mortars, Headquarters, Headquarters Company 2-502, 101st Airborne Division.

Not only is security better, the bazaar is busier than ever and more shops are opening.

“A lot of the owners are making more money we see more people shopping every time we go there,” Surface said. “More shops are moving here from other locations because security is better and they feel safer.”

One gas station owner, sitting outside his shop sipping tea with friends, agreed. He said they were fired upon regularly a few months ago, but now the shootings have stopped.

“We are very busy now,” explained Said Mohammad through an interpreter. “I have more business and we feel safer.”

Surface said they do these patrols with Afghan law enforcement so the ANCOP can talk with the shop owners and earn their trust. When the people trust their law enforcement officials, they’ll report suspicious activities. The Afghans see what good security can do for business and they want it to continue and improve.



Staff Sgt. Steve Surface, a Combined Task Force STRIKE Soldier with the mortar platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment and an Afghan interpreter verifies that a shopkeeper’s information is correct during a joint patrol with Afghan National Civil Order Police at the Howz-E Madad Bazaar in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, Jan. 28. The joint patrol’s purpose was to help foster a better relationship between local law enforcement and the local population.

THE FACES OF STRIKE



WE WILL NEVER FORGET



Honoring Our Fallen



Sgt. Zainah Creamer, 28, of Texarkana, Texas, died of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked her dismounted patrol with a improvised explosive device. She was assigned to the 212th Military Police Detachment, attached to 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Division.



Spc. Joshua Lancaster, 22, of Millbrook, Ala., died of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked Kandahar airfield with indirect fire. He was assigned to 723rd EOD Company, 184th Ordnance Battalion. 52nd Ordnance Group.



Cpl. Nathan Carse, 32, of Harrod, Ohio, died of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit using an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 595th Engineer Company, 2nd Engineer Battalion, 176th Engineer Brigade.





STRIKE ZONE AFGHANISTAN



STRIKE Zone Afghanistan is the brigade's Tv show dedicated to keeping its viewers up to date with unit's events and missions during its deployment to Kandahar Afghanistan.

Learn about each company, battery and troop and be a part of their high-speed missions by checking out the STRIKE Zone Afghanistan. Look for it on the Brigade Facebook Page.


STRIKE HONORS



*A weekly look
at STRIKE's History*

The Brigade Facebook Page

The STRIKE Brigade is in the social networking world with the Brigade Facebook Page. On it are images and videos of the great missions and actions involving the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. Join to start conversations and leave comments about everything the Team is doing. Watch the Brigade's Tv show, the 'Strike Zone' with monthly updates of our time in Afghanistan, read about the illustrious history of 2nd Brigade in the weekly edition of 'Strike Honors'. The page is an awesome way to stay close your Soldiers, even while they are far away.

To be a part of the STRIKE Brigade via the internet; log onto your Facebook page, click in the search box and type 2nd Brigade Strike. When the 502nd  comes up click on it and then click 'like'. Join the already thousands of viewers keeping up with the STRIKE Brigade!

First Name:

Last Name:

I am: Select Sex:

Birthdate: Month: Day: Year: