



# The Main Effort

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## Afghan army engineers train hard in Terin Kowt

By CDR Chad Snee  
205th RCAC PAO

Afghan National Army (ANA) engineers assigned to the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 205th Corps trained with the Australian Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Terin Kowt in November.

Terin Kowt is approximately 100 kilometers north of Camp Shir Zai, the home base of the ANA engineers.

“The objective was to pull the ANA engineers out of the [area of operations] of Shir Zai so they would be free to focus on engineer missions rather than the typical combat missions they were being assigned,” explained Maj. James Francis and Master Sgt. Brian Sartin, in an informative report submitted to the 205th Regional Corps Assistance Command (RCAC).

Francis and Sartin are engineering company mentors with the U.S. 1st Brigade, 205th RCAC, which also is based at Camp Shir Zai.

The move turned out to be most productive for all concerned.

Francis and Sartin said that the Australians volunteered to teach the ANA soldiers engineering tasks as well as incorporate them into engineering missions.

“This relationship between the ANA and Australians has proved to be beneficial for both units and has brought considerable success for both,” stated Francis and Sartin.

The ANA engineers have participated in two training cycles, Francis and Sartin said.

In the first cycle, the engineers were exposed to basic tasks, including: sandbag and fortification techniques, wire obstacles, raft construction, first aid, tool safety, construction materials,

rigging and lashing, and improvised explosive device (IED) awareness.

These fundamentals allowed the Australians to evaluate the skill level of the ANA engineers and to develop appropriate training.

“The second training cycle focused on vehicle and personnel searches, concrete mixture and forms, IED awareness and review of previous training,” stated Francis and Sartin. “Both of these training cycles have helped the level of ability in the ANA soldiers. While basic, they have set the framework for more technical skills.”

Operational requirements during the training period saw the ANA engineers conduct daily presence patrols, along with reconnaissance of hospitals, bridges and Afghan National Police checkpoints.

Casting an eye toward the future, Francis and Sartin are working with the Australians to develop additional training topics. Among the lessons being considered are carpentry, advanced concrete, basic rifle marksmanship and driver training.

Francis and Sartin noted only a couple of minor equipment and supply issues related to vehicle readiness and issuance of phone cards to the ANA soldiers.

“On the positive side, the Dutch Provisional Reconstruction Team here has provided the soldiers with helmets and flak jackets for use on missions. In addition, the Australians [coordinated] with the Dutch to get the engineers actual carpentry, masonry and pioneer



**A group of Afghan National Army engineers assigned to 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 205th Corps at Terin Kowt, Afghanistan, relax with two of their Australian engineer mentors, Sgt. Russ Peel, center, and Cpl. Dan Andrews, behind Peel.**

kits,” they remarked.

The ANA engineers are performing admirably during their stay at Terin Kowt, and they are fostering positive relationships with the local population.

Francis and Sartin are decidedly optimistic about the engineers’ continued strong performance.

“Overall, the engineer deployment to Terin Kowt has been a success in many ways,” they stated in their report. “The ANA have received excellent training and are being able to utilize that training in missions focused on engineering tasks.

“In addition, the local population has been able to interact with the ANA, allowing them to see the national government as a legitimate force focused on helping them, rather than just another warlord.

“The close interaction could go a long way to stabilizing the area around Terin Kowt, as reconstruction projects pick up.”

## ANA corps public affairs officers attend conference

By CDR Chad Snee  
205th RCAC PAO

Approximately 30 public affairs officers representing the five corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) gathered at the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) in Kabul Dec. 5-7 for an informative conference that equipped them with guidance and recommendations for performing their jobs more effectively.

U.S. public affairs officers from the five Regional Corps Advisory Commands in Afghanistan also attended the conference.

The MOD hosted the conference and was responsible for the content. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan public affairs office provided guidance to MOD and participated in the conference.

In keeping with Afghan custom, the conference opened with a melodic recitation of verses from the Koran, the holy book of Islam.

During his introduction, Brig. Gen. Mohamad Azim Mujahid, first deputy of public affairs, parliamentary and social relations at the MOD, set the tone of the conference.

Mujahid impressed upon the attendees the importance of the conference and the necessity of learning from the presentations and taking lessons learned back to their commands.

He also stressed the need to share information with United States and coalition forces.

“We need to report accurately the news, so the people will believe us,” Mujahid declared.

Mujahid then yielded the floor to Col. Mohamad Isaq Paiman of the MOD public affairs office.

Paiman covered a wide array subjects, including public affairs program management, planning, PAO duties and responsibilities, and budget management.

The importance of communication was a theme running throughout Paiman’s presentation.

“It is essential that you consult with your corps commanders and readily share information with your leadership on a regular basis,” Paiman advised.

Paiman stressed that public affairs is “critical to the ultimate success of ANA combat operations. When negative incidents occur, advise your commander of the best process for minimizing negative media coverage.”

“Be flexible and allow for unforeseen events. Telling the truth is always best-people are more angered by lies than by the incident itself.”

Among the duties and responsibilities of a PAO, Paiman emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards.

“Producing high quality news releases and stories keeps the media informed and builds the credibility of your office as a reliable news source,” he stated.

Paiman touched upon press conferences and told the PAOs that MOD is still crafting the official



**Maj. Mohamad Esa, public affairs officer for the Afghan National Army 205th Corps, prepares to comment about news coverage in his area of operations, during the public affairs conference held Dec. 5-7 at Camp Eggers in Kabul.**

guidance that will allow ANA corps commanders to conduct them.

He also said that the so-called “Soldiers’ Messages to Home” program might begin sometime in January.

Day one of the conference, Dec. 5, also focused on the organization of the Afghan government (with emphasis on the MOD) and its relation to the conduct of public affairs.

Col. Paiman returned to the podium to give a brief but informative

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## *ANA PAO conference provides valuable guidance*

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 presentation on accounting for and managing equipment.

He discussed the necessary documentation and commander approval required to make purchases, as well as the importance of conducting inventory spot checks.

On Dec. 6, the second day of the conference, topics discussed included media relations, writing news stories, media analysis and media support.

Lt. Col. Noman, director of media analysis for the MOD, told the attendees that media analysis is “very important. We don’t want the media spreading falsehoods about the ANA.”

Noman said that the PAOs should follow radio and television news reports and read local publications for reports about the MOD and the ANA.

The conference concluded Dec. 7 with a question-and-answer session moderated by Col. Paiman.

Many of the attending PAOs commented very favorably on the content of the conference.

“The procedures for conducting press conferences, especially when foreign journalists are present, were



**Maj. Gen. Mohamad Zahir Azime, chief of public affairs, parliamentary and social relations for the Afghan Ministry of Defense, addresses Afghan National Army public affairs officers Dec. 7 in Kabul.**

most useful, stated Maj. Mohamad Esa, PAO for the ANA 205th Corps.

Esa’s assistant, Capt. Rahullah, remarked that the presentations were

easy to follow. “I have a clearer picture of my duties and responsibilities,” he said.

Both men stated that they would welcome additional training.

Suggestions for the next conference, which is scheduled to take place in about three months, included giving presentations on the approval and credentialing of media, and the use of recording and video equipment.

Maj. Gen. Mohamad Zahir Azime, chief of public affairs, parliamentary and social relations for the MOD, closed the conference by reminding the PAOs that they must keep the public informed about the activities of the ANA.

Azime then concluded with some words to motivate the PAOs as they traveled back to their commands.

“We are working toward a democratic country and government. I hope the information presented in this first conference will be the foundation for our success in the future.”



### COMMANDER’S CORNER



**By COL Michael Petrucci  
 Commander, 205th RCAC**

This month’s stories reflect continuing themes — the development of the Afghan National Army and our work alongside our coalition partners. Both are marks of success.

The ANA soldiers of the 205th “Hero” Corps are showing the Afghan people that the government cares and that the way to the future is bright. It’s hard to convey how that is accomplished other than to say that when soldiers work alongside their fellow Afghans, trust is built.

An investment of time to build a bridge, dig a well or build a school does far more to cement a relationship than any combat operation does. Our

coalition partners — British, Dutch, Romanian — further this through their presence and commitment to the Afghan people. Their representation and involvement demonstrate that the world stands behind what’s being done and reinforce the strength of the Government of Afghanistan.

As we celebrate this Holiday Season, we need to reflect on what’s been accomplished. We need also to remember those who have given their lives in support of this mission and their families who suffer the loneliness of their loss. Please know that each of your Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines stand tall in honor, service and pride, carrying you in their hearts everyday.

You should be proud of them. I am.



## British OMLT, ANA charging hard in Helmand

**By LT H.E. Montgomery  
45th Commando Royal Marines**

The British 45th Commando Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) has been at Forward Operations Base Tombstone in Helmand

service in the southern town of Garmseer.

The latest ANA kandak (battalion) conducting operations impressed coalition forces with its soldiering skills, particularly in the urban patrolling en-

the mentors of the logistics kandak is the high level of illiteracy among the ANA soldiers. Plans are in place to include literacy and number training to resolve this issue.

Two recent key events for the ANA 3/205 have been the arrival of the combat support kandak and the move into a purpose-built super garrison, Camp Shorabak.

The arrival of the combat support kandak introduced artillery, engineering and reconnaissance skills to the brigade. There are mentors for each of these disciplines, drawn from the 29th Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, the 28th Engineer Regiment, the 59th Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers and the Royal Tank Regiment.

The combat support kandak is scheduled to go operational in mid-January, following an intensive, eight-week training period.

Camp Shorabak is currently in the process of being handed over to the ANA 3/205 and represents a marked improvement in living quarters, management infrastructure and storage/workspace capacity.

The new camp also includes a helicopter landing site to enable air operations to be conducted.

The brigade has already moved into its barracks and office buildings. Several storage and workshop buildings remain under construction.

Lt. Col. Duncan Dewar, commanding officer of the 45th Commando Royal Marines, said of the tour so far: "Strong mentoring and advice from the OMLT, added to a good deal of courage from individual Afghan soldiers, has ensured that the ANA has prevailed despite taking a significant number of casualties.

"I have every confidence that the capability of the ANA will go from strength to strength and that the ANA will continue to contribute fully to the long-term security of Helmand province."



**British Sgt. Gaz Reid, third from the left, conducts urban operations training with a group of Afghan National Army soldiers assigned to 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps. Reid is a member of the British Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team training the ANA in Helmand province. (Picture by WO2 Scott Lawrie)**

province since mid-September and has made consistent progress.

The OMLT is mentoring and serving alongside the 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA).

During this period, the ANA demonstrated continuous improvement and earned three citations for gallantry for

environment of Lashkar Gah.

Specialized training courses have been run by mentors in order to enhance the logistics kandak. The first driver-training courses recently finished, providing 10 trained drivers to the brigade.

One of the main problems faced by

### 205th Soldiers report positive HEP experiences

A handful of soldiers assigned to the 205th Regional Corps Advisory Command (RCAC) participated in the Hometown Engagement Program (HEP) during the past month.

All reported very favorable experiences when telling the folks back home

about their activities in Afghanistan.

Giving a HEP presentation while on leave allows the charging of only 13 days of leave for a given 15-day leave period. To learn more, contact Cdr. Chad Snee, 205th RCAC public affairs officer, at [charles.snee@swa.army.mil](mailto:charles.snee@swa.army.mil).

## Kandahar governor, officials visit ANA 205th Corps

By MAJ Mohammed Esa  
ANA 205th Corps PAO

The honorable Asadullah Khalid, the governor of Kandahar province, and other distinguished persons visited the 205th “Hero” Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) Nov. 30 at Camp Shir Zai.

Other dignitaries in attendance included Lt. Gen. Muhammad Ashaq Noree, the deputy to the general chief of staff of the ANA; Qayoom Karzai, the elected representative of Kandahar province in the lower house of the Afghan parliament; and Ahmad Walee Karzai, an elder of Kandahar province.

Ahmad Karzai is a brother of Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan.

Maj. Gen. Rahmatullah Raufi, commander of the ANA 205th Corps, provided a detailed brief about his command and its activities in southern Afghanistan, the 205th Corps’ area of operations.

Next to address the audience was Lt.



**Maj. Gen. Rahmatullah Raufi, left, commander of the 205th “Hero” Corps of the Afghan National Army, hosted Ahmad Walee Karzai, right, and other important officials at Camp Shir Zai Nov. 30. Karzai is a brother of President Hamid Karzai and an elder of Kandahar province.**

Gen. Noree, who gave more information about the ANA. Noree told the audience that he was pleased with the

combat operations of the ANA, and he discussed the need to increase the number of ANA soldiers in every part of Afghanistan.

“The Ministry of Defense and the ANA chief of staff [Gen. Bismullah Khan] are proud of you and your activities,” Noree stated.

Kandahar Governor Asadullah Khalid and various elders from Kandahar province also spoke. They said that they are happy for the lasting peace and security in the southwest part of the country.

The gathering in the large conference room at Shir Zai ended with the offering of prayers for the country of Afghanistan and for the Afghan people and society.

Following the conclusion of the meeting, Gen. Raufi gave the dignitaries a tour of Camp Shir Zai.

The first stop was at the Shir Zai mosque, which is under construction. The mosque will be completed in the near future.

The last stops on the tour included the artillery, infantry and maintenance workshops of the 205th Corps.



**The honorable Asadullah Khalid, the governor of Kandahar province, addresses Soldiers of the ANA 205th “Hero” Corps and other dignitaries Nov. 30 at Camp Shir Zai.**