



# The Main Effort

Monthly Newsletter of the 205th RSAC  
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## 205th personnel deliver shoes, toys to Shir Zai kids

By 2LT Jeffery Fullmer  
1st BDE, 205th RSAC

It was a cold day in late December. I could see 1st Sgt. Brian Sheldon's breath as he spoke.

"We did well today, everybody. Good work," Sheldon said to the assembled group.

More than 30 people from 1st Brigade, 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC) gathered that morning to give out candy, hygiene products and shoes to the Afghans that reside in the bombed apartment complex between Kandahar Airfield and Camp Shir Zai, home to the Afghan National Army (ANA) 205th Corps.

The building is an old one and was once a warm resting place for Soviet officers and their families, during the 1979-89 war in Afghanistan. It has been bombed repeatedly and is now merely a shell of what it once was.

There is no running water, and the electricity is unreliable. Dozens of Afghan children run barefoot through the muddy road.

We met early on the morning of Dec. 30 to stuff stockings full of soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, candy, and toys, which we gave to the kids. Most of the items were sent to 1st Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Allan Jellum from various service organizations, private donors and clubs.

We formed a gauntlet in front of the shelled apartment complex. The children rushed through, getting as many things as they could.

Each child's hand was stamped with a black 'X,' to prevent them from reentering. Like a mighty river, they streamed through the gauntlet and took whatever they could.



**Air Force Sr. Airman Aruni Jinowat, center, helps pass out clothing and toys Dec. 30 to children who reside in the apartments near Camp Shir Zai. (Photo by Sr. Airman Leah Steele.)**

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Dorothy Perry and Air Force Staff Sgt. Thane Ojala washed the feet of crying children before they fitted them for shoes. With tears in her blue eyes, Perry remarked on how badly it makes her feel when she sees children running barefoot. Much of the project was orchestrated through her initiative.

Some of us provided security, some gave children shoes, others gave them stockings. All of us were happy to help.

1st Brigade is an engaged unit, full of soldiers who mentor the ANA. We're not a service unit, and humanitarian assistance is not our primary function. Yet most of us came out in the bitter cold to assist the project. We did it all for the kids.

We realize that we must defeat the enemy; but to win this war, we must win the hearts and minds of the people, from the children up. I think there are few units who do this as well as we do.

We departed in a hurry, before the situation became dangerous, and I looked back to the dilapidated apartments.

That old apartment complex, with the pink bricks that rise above all else in the area, is a paradigm of the past. It captures the feeling that pervades everything we do.

The Soviets have been toppled, leaving only rubble, and we must rebuild. That is precisely what we did through this humanitarian project — we helped repair and heal the hearts and the minds of the people.

## 205th Soldiers awarded Bronze Star for gallantry

**By CDR Chad Snee  
205th RSAC PAO**

Capt. Ronald Smith and Sgt. 1st Class Sean Mishra received the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device (for valor) Dec. 15 for gallantry in action.

Both Soldiers are assigned to the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC), based at Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan.

During a ceremony conducted at the 205th RSAC headquarters, the two men were recognized for their heroic efforts in separate operations conducted in late August and early September.

[Editor’s note: Smith, medical officer for the 205th RSAC, was promoted to Major Nov. 14.]

According to his award citation, Smith was honored “for gallantry in action while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as an embedded tactical trainer and senior medical provider serving with coalition forces during Operation Medusa.”

Specifically, Smith “distinguished himself by engaging enemy forces and risking his personal safety by crossing an open field under intense enemy fire



**Sgt. 1st Class Sean Mishra, center, and Maj. Ronald Smith, right, received the Bronze Star Medal Dec. 15 for valorous service during separate combat operations conducted in late August and early September.**

to render medical treatment to seriously wounded Canadian soldiers.”

Indeed, Smith’s decisiveness and medical expertise directly led to saving

the lives of the Canadians under his care.

Mishra distinguished himself “while serving as a member of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan,” the award citation stated, “by engaging enemy forces and rendering aid to a seriously wounded soldier after his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device, all while ignoring his own injuries.”

During the same ceremony, nine other Soldiers received significant awards for dedicated and honorable service during combat.

Sgt. 1st Class Mishra and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Pickett were awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in action.

Sgt. Anthony Tavoloni received the Army Commendation Medal for “exceptionally meritorious achievement while serving in support of Operation Medusa as a combat medic for Task Force Phoenix.”

The Combat Infantry Badge (CIB) was awarded to Staff Sgt. Edwin Burgos and Maj. Onel Colon. Both received the CIB for the performance of their duties while engaged in active ground combat.

The following Soldiers received the Combat Action Badge (CAB) for the performance of their duties while actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy: Capt. Stephen Marteen, Staff Sgt. Bruce Newcomb, Sgt. 1st Class Robert Pickett and Staff Sgt. Matthew Sanderson.

Col. Mark Hatfield, deputy commander of the 205th RSAC, presented all of the awards.

“These awards are the real deal,” Hatfield stated. “We owe a debt of gratitude to those who were recognized today. I thank all of you for dedicated service to Regional Command-South and the 205th Corps.”

The bravery of all of these fine Soldiers was an inspiration to all who attended the ceremony.



### COMMANDER’S CORNER



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

You’ll notice that there has been a change in our name — we’re now the Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC). Why the change? Simply because we now have the additional responsibility of mentoring and developing the Afghanistan National Police (ANP).

The way ahead for Afghanistan lies in the assurance that people can move about freely, there is economic growth and a stability that will encourage others to come and help with development. That’s not achieved only by ridding an area of the Taliban. Nor is it achieved if the Afghan National Army

(ANA) has to act as an internal police force. To date, there’s been no directed effort to build the police as we have built the ANA. That has now changed.

We will provide mentors and resources to serve along side the police. We’ll help organize, train and deploy these forces into areas to complement the ANA. As important, we’ll be able to help demonstrate the Government of Afghanistan’s commitment to the future.

It will be an exciting and challenging time for all of us as we focus on translating success in training the ANA into success in training the ANP. Our goal: A secure Afghanistan secured by Afghans.

## ANA 205th Soldiers graduate from D-30 training

By CDR Chad Snee  
205th RSAC PAO

A motivated group of 40 Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers from 1st Brigade, 205th Corps completed training on the D-30 howitzer gun and received their graduation certificates Dec. 24. A total of 91 ANA 205th Corps Soldiers successfully finished the D-30 course at Tarnak Farms range near Camp Shir Zai.

The other 51 Soldiers, belonging to 2nd Brigade and 3rd Brigade of the ANA 205th Corps, had returned to their bases prior to the graduation ceremony. They will receive their certificates at a later date.

Col. Saed Zainodin, the ANA 205th Corps artillery commander, opened the ceremony with a brief welcome: "On behalf of the 205th 'Hero' Corps commander, I welcome you to the ceremony. Thank you for coming."

Following the recitation of a passage from the Holy Koran, Col Zainodin returned to the podium.

"Every day, the ANA is becoming stronger, and we are learning to use different weapons," Zainodin told the audience.

Zainodin then asked Maj. Gen. Rahmatullah Raufi to present certificates to those soldiers who successfully completed the course. Raufi is the commander of the ANA 205th Corps, which is based at Camp Shir Zai.

"We have a powerful army. This training will allow us to fight more effectively with the enemy," Raufi stated, before handing out the certificates. "I am very happy that our soldiers passed the D-30 training.

"It is our responsibility to train other soldiers how to use the D-30. I am hopeful that we will have newer artillery in the future."

Three days before the graduation, on Dec. 21, the ANA Soldiers capped their intensive training with a live-fire exercise comprising two batteries of



**On Dec. 21, ANA soldiers from the 205th Corps capped their training on the D-30 howitzer gun with an impressive live-fire exercise at Tarnak Farms range.**

six guns each. The exercise was conducted at Tarnak Farms range, a few kilometers from Kandahar Airfield.

The 12 guns fired approximately 120 rounds at targets 4,000 meters to 6,000 meters down range.

The overall success of the live fire was due in no small part to a cadre of 21 Mongolian Army Soldiers who came to Afghanistan to train the ANA Soldiers.

Capt. Jason Wilde, 37, the officer-in-charge of the D-30 training, was extremely impressed with the Mongolians' artillery expertise and discipline.

"They are absolute, unabated artillery geniuses," Wilde stated. "They are very good with artillery geometry and conducting effective fire missions. I've learned a ton from them."

Wilde's comments highlight the fact that Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, now into its seventh year, is most definitely a concerted team effort among the United States and Coalition forces.

More important, the completion of this essential training moves the ANA toward becoming a more disciplined and effective fighting force for the people of Afghanistan.

As the ANA stands up and takes charge of the protection and security of the country, we can stand down and come home.



**Maj. Gen. Rahmatullah Raufi, commander of the ANA 205th Corps, presents a graduation certificate Dec. 24 to one of 40 ANA 1st Brigade, 205th Corps Soldiers who completed training on the D-30 howitzer gun.**



## Radio host Jeff Kropf interviews US, ANA Soldiers

**By CDR Chad Snee  
205th RSAC PAO**

Portland, Ore., radio talk-show host Jeff Kropf visited the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC) Dec. 16-18 to interview United States service members from Oregon and Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers.

First on Kropf's itinerary was a Dec. 16 visit to Camp Palomino, located on

ANA 205th Corps public affairs officer, and interview six hard-charging ANA Soldiers.

Kropf asked about working relationships between the Oregon National Guard Soldiers and ANA Soldiers. All of the assembled warfighters responded that they enjoyed working with their U.S. counterparts and were grateful for their guidance and advice.

A question about Soldiers from dif-

the United States that progress is being made, that the ANA is getting stronger," Kropf stated.

Kropf returned to Camp Shir Zai the afternoon of Dec. 17 to interview U.S. Army Capt. Douglas Bragg and Sgt. Maj. Wahab, the command sergeant major of the ANA 1st Brigade, 205th Corps. Bragg is assigned to 1st Brigade, 205th RSAC.

Kropf asked Bragg what will stick with him the most when his deployment is over.

"The sense of compassion and brotherhood working with the Afghans," Bragg replied. "I've learned a lot about giving of myself to a worthy cause."

During his interview, Sgt. Maj. Wahab, who speaks English quite well, stressed the need for the continued presence of U.S. and coalition forces in his country.

"We have come very far," Wahab noted, "but our army must become stronger."

Portions of the interviews were later broadcast on Kropf's show, which is aired on Saturday and Sunday on News Radio 750 KXL, in the greater Portland, Ore., area.

Kropf concluded his second day with a discussion with some of the young Afghan men who serve as interpreters for the 205th RSAC.

Over cups of hot chai (tea), Kropf repeated his message of support for our mission in Afghanistan and expressed his admiration of the interpreters and their willingness to work toward a better future for their country.

On Dec. 18, Kropf visited Tarin Kowt, to see the new medical clinic, which he described as "most impressive."

Kropf was very pleased with his visit to the 205th RSAC and said that he had many good stories to share with his listeners in Oregon.

"Great things are being accomplished in Afghanistan, and I intend to return in the near future," he said.



**Portland, Ore., radio talk-show host Jeff Kropf, right, records Christmas greetings for several Air Force personnel assigned to Camp Palomino: Lt. Col. Tim Olson, left; Lt. Col. Jim Gregory, center; and Capt. Tori Habas, next to Kropf. The well-wishes were later broadcast on Kropf's show. (Photo by Sr. Master Sgt. Ralph Lehman. Author is in the black jacket.)**

Kandahar Airfield.

Kropf, 47, met and had lunch with Air Force personnel assigned to Camp Palomino. Kropf also recorded Christmas greetings for 15 Airmen that he later broadcast on his show.

The Palomino visit was followed by a stop at Camp Shir Zai, home of the ANA 205th Corps, to chat with Oregon National Guard Soldiers and record their Christmas greetings to their families back home.

On Dec. 17, Kropf had the opportunity to met Maj. Mohammed Esa, the

ferent provinces serving in the ANA brought a quick reply from Sgt. Maj. Kafayatulla, the command sergeant major of the ANA 205th Corps.

"It is not important from what province we come," Kafayatulla asserted. "It is important that we are part of a national army for Afghanistan."

Kropf told the ANA Soldiers that he is a strong supporter of Afghanistan and of the efforts of U.S. and coalition forces to help the country stand tall once again.

"I am here to tell the people back in