



The Main Effort

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Winning hearts and minds, one picture at a time

By CDR Chad Snee
205th RSAC PAO

In the seven months that I have been in Afghanistan, I've learned that a picture often is worth more than 1,000 words.

The feelings and emotions that are conveyed through the camera lens can do far more than mere words on a printed page when it comes to winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

Consider the photo pictured nearby. It was taken March 6, during a village medical outreach to Salo Kolay, a small village in Kandahar province, near Kandahar Airfield.

The picture was brought to my attention by Sr. Airman Christopher A. Beyer, an intelligence analyst on the staff of the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC).

When I first looked at the picture, I was struck by all the activity that was captured in a single moment: children gathered around a US Soldier; another US Soldier, situated in the turret of an armored humvee, performing checks on the vehicle's crew-served weapon; a young girl, in the pink outfit, carrying a child.

And there in the center of the picture, the moment that really captured my attention: a Soldier assigned to the Afghan National Army (ANA) 205th "Hero" Corps reaching down to shake the hand of a small child.

Although taken from a distance the picture clearly shows Soldier and child making eye contact, an intimate connection, if only for a few seconds.

Perhaps the ANA warrior offered some words of encouragement. "Don't worry, we are here to keep you safe,"



A Soldier from the 205th "Hero" Corps of the Afghan National Army makes a tender connection with a young child from the village of Salo Kolay. Another child from the same village took this photo during a village medical outreach visit conducted March 6.

he might have said.

We cannot know if the memory of this brief encounter will stay with the child for years to come, but there is no doubt that the gentle handshake provided comfort and helped lay a foundation of trust.

The picture demonstrates that winning hearts and minds can and should extend beyond the adult population.

Indeed, positively influencing younger generations of Afghans is essential to the future prosperity of their country.

Finally, I find the photo compelling because of the circumstances under which it was taken.

Airman Beyer provided this explana-

tion: "I had given my camera to an Afghan kid to let him take a couple of pictures and realized after we left that he took this picture of an ANA Soldier bent over helping another Afghan kid.

"I thought between the picture and the fact that it was taken by a [member of the village], it might have some value."

Beyer's comments should inspire all of us in the 205th RSAC who are out there on the front lines documenting our efforts to support the Afghan people and reinvigorate their war-torn country.

If you have pictures and stories to tell, send them to CDR Chad Snee at charles.snee@swa.army.mil.

Embed reporter reflects on deployment experiences

By Scott Kesterson

Embed reporter, 205th RSAC

A year ago, I stood in an armory in northeast Portland, Ore., watching the final goodbyes of the families and the soldiers that I had yet to come to know.

As Bravo Company was called to formation, the order was given to move out, and the cold chill of reality set in. It was a moment of finality, in which everyone one present said farewell to the person they were and accepted a fate of unknown change.

As the soldiers moved with quick steps out the back door and onto the waiting bus, a little girl's voice pierced the moment with an echo that I have heard everyday since: "Goodbye, Daddy."

We now sit with less than three months remaining on this tour. We have come full circle.

When we settled into Camp Shelby last March, home seemed so close, its memories working to pull the focus from the training and daily pace of regular Army life.

And now home has come into focus once again, as we sit less than 90 days from our return. The issues are no

longer training, but completion, and the closing of this chapter of our lives.

But unlike Camp Shelby, the loss of focus here carries a risk of consequences that affect our physical well-



A U.S. Soldier and an Afghan elder shake hands: a simple act that mirrors many of our accomplishments.

being. As my father would say to me when I was growing up, "The last five miles from home are the most dangerous part of the journey."

I have seen a great deal over this past year, and interacted with as many as I could. I have experienced the extremes and the quiet moments, as well as the many places in between.

I have lived the lives of soldiers through my lens and through my

words, always remembering that little girl's parting voice.

There are some daddies who won't come home. For those of us that do, we need to be thankful and embrace all that has been given and all that has been gained.

Every soldier is a hero. I wrote it in the beginning, and I write it again now. It matters not where your place was on this tour, only that you served for something that you believed in, something greater than self, and something you gave over a year of your life to.

The efforts of this year won't change a country, nor will it bring peace or the closing to this war.

Afghanistan is a country that is like the many stones of its landscape, each with a history and reason for being, each willing to be used for the construction of something greater, but only able to be moved slowly and with caution.

The efforts put forth over this past year, however, will leave a lasting impression, offering hope and evolution through the process of time. Soldiers have become the modern emissaries of change.

In my reflections of the year, I found myself looking over photos of the many faces that began back in Portland.

We have all changed. There is an innocence of sorts that is lost, as the eyes now peer back not with eagerness, but with introspection.

What began as duty, is now winding down with a realization that each of us has become citizens of a world in between. I have watched it pass through my camera, recording a change that is expressed in the many moments of the entire year.

The world of our home and the world here are destined to be memories, as we step forward and embrace a new view on all things we only thought we knew.

This is the gift of the citizen-soldier.



COMMANDER'S CORNER



By COL Michael Petrucci
Commander, 205th RSAC

There is a stir in the air and it's not caused by enemy activity or loud noises. In fact, it's being caused by a bunch of papers about one and one half inches thick. The operational order taking us home has just been released, and now the excitement begins.

First things first. We'll soon welcome in the 218th from South Carolina who will fall in as Phoenix VI. They're doing what we did not too long ago. Training at Camp Shelby and Fort Riley is ending, leaves are being taken and good-byes said. They're in contact with us and we've sent some people back to help with their transition and

travel. Won't be long before the right-and-left-seat rides begin and they get to experience what we have — the rewards of new friendships and helping develop an Army and, by default, a Nation. They'll have all of our challenges and ones we can't imagine. They'll do well.

Take a look at Scott's article on this page and let yourself reflect on what you're taking back: the memories and experiences that will last long after we depart. You've done well, and it's been my privilege to serve along side you.

But I also ask you to stay vigilant, focused and safe. The staff will work the process of getting us home; you take care of one another.

20 ANA 205th Soldiers complete intelligence training

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

Twenty Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers assigned to the 205th "Hero" Corps completed basic intelligence training and received their graduation certificates Feb. 1.

A brief ceremony recognizing the Soldiers' achievements was conducted at Camp Shir Zai, home to the ANA 205th Corps.

Brig. Gen. Hoja Murad, deputy commander of the ANA 205th Corps, presided over the ceremony and gave brief opening remarks.

Murad congratulated the Soldiers for completing the four-week course and encouraged them to use their newly acquired knowledge for the betterment of the ANA.

Robert Halsell, an intelligence specialist in the employ of Military Professional Resources Incorporated who helped develop the ANA intelligence course, also addressed the graduates.

"You did a great job, and I'm extremely proud of you," Halsell stated. "Take what you've learned and teach others in your shops.

"Your job is to predict what the enemy is going to do so the commander

can go and destroy him.

"With your teamwork and the help of the coalition forces, we can build a strong Afghanistan."

Following Halsell's comments, the US and ANA personnel involved in the course lined up on the stage to present the graduation certificates to the eager Soldiers.

As each Soldier's name was called, he sounded off with a loud "Here!" before walking to the stage to receive his certificate.

After receiving his recognition, each Soldier turned to face the audience, displayed his certificate for all to see and announced in a robust voice his commitment to serve the ANA and Afghanistan.

Such overt patriotism was truly inspiring and speaks volumes about the dedication and loyalty of the ANA.

The ANA 205th Corps presented gifts to the US civilian and military instructors, as tokens of appreciation.

Sgt. Nicole Coleman, the intelligence noncommissioned officer-in-charge at the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC), ex-

plained that the course covered fundamental intelligence topics, including intelligence preparation of the battlefield, security management, intelligence briefings, map reading (to include symbology and overlays) and after-action reports.

Overlays are templates placed on maps to indicate friendly and enemy situations on the battlefield,

Coleman said.

"The most important skill for them to learn was map reading," Coleman said. "It was a challenge for them because the maps were printed in English, not Dari."

Coleman was very pleased with her interactions with the students, who respected her expertise and were eager to learn from her, she stated.

One of the more dedicated students in the course was Col. Ezmari, intelligence officer for the ANA 205th Corps.

"Col. Ezmari was very enthusiastic about doing intelligence analysis and expanding his skill set," Coleman recalled. "Before, there wasn't much interest in the subject."

With the knowledge gained from the course, the Soldiers of the ANA 205th Corps will be able to take the fight to the enemy with improved accuracy and precision.



Col. Ezmari, intelligence officer for the ANA 205th "Hero" Corps, holds the graduation certificate signifying his completion of the basic intelligence course at Camp Shir Zai Feb. 20.



Sgt. Nicole Coleman, center, instructs Soldiers of the ANA 205th "Hero" Corps in basic intelligence techniques. On Feb. 1, 20 ANA Soldiers completed the basic intelligence course at Camp Shir Zai. Coleman is the intelligence noncommissioned officer-in-charge at the



Spotlight on Service: IT3 Cody Bailer



**By CPT Joshua Thompson
2nd Brigade, 205th RSAC**

“Okay, try it now,” says IT3 Cody Bailer to me after attaching a power cable to a speaker in my 1114 up-armored vehicle.

“Thunderbolt 45 has you Lima Charlie,” blasts back at us so loud I’m recoiling from the noise. “I think it works,” says Bailer laughing.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Cody Bailer, an information systems technician, is a Navy individual augmentee here in Afghanistan on assignment from the USS Iwo Jima.

When writing a Spotlight on Service piece, it’s always hard to choose just one deserving serviceman from all of 2nd Brigade, 205 Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC).

However, IT3 Bailer’s supervisor, Capt. David Bock, heard I was talking to people about possible candidates, and he convinced me that Bailer was my man.

“You’ve got to do a story on Bailer, he’s earned it,” says Bock. “He’s the

hardest working Soldier I’ve ever had, and he’s not even a Soldier, he’s a Sailor!

“Although he’s an information technician, he has mastered the installation, troubleshooting and maintenance of the Army’s tactical communication systems. He’s self-taught on the SINCGARS, Blue Force Tracker, AN-PRC 117, and the AN-PRC 148 MBITR for crying out loud. The guy’s a stud!” says Capt. Bock.

Capt. Bock explained how IT3 Bailer stepped up and fulfilled the role of maintaining the communications in the brigade’s fleet of vehicles, in the absence of the Army’s Tactical Radio Maintainers. “It is because of his initiative and drive that the brigade has been mission capable in the absence of the radio maintainers.”

Bailer was born in Petoskey, Mich., but says he didn’t spend much time there.

He’s really from Hillman, Mich., where he went to high school and where his family still resides. He’s

only 20 years old and has served a mere 18 months in the Navy on active duty. Yet he’s already been deployed aboard the USS Saipan and has been here in Afghanistan since October 2006.

When I asked IT3 Bailer about his most memorable experience thus far in Afghanistan, he quickly said it would have to be visiting our remote forward operations bases (FOB) and learning about the Army’s new communications systems.

Bailer has traveled to several FOBs throughout Zabul province, and he has definitely seen more than most of his Navy counterparts, especially the information technicians.

An information systems technician’s job in the Navy is the maintenance of the computer infrastructure aboard the ships.

Here in Afghanistan, keeping the Internet up and running at FOB Apache, home to 2nd Brigade, is Bailer’s meat and potatoes. He has added self-taught knowledge of the Army’s communications systems as the gravy on top.

Another project he participated in was the installation of the phone system in the Afghan National Army’s new 2nd Brigade Garrison, an \$85 million complex in Qalat, Afghanistan, just a quick drive from FOB Apache.

I asked Bailer what he liked to do in his free time, and he said that he can usually be found working on his personal computer or playing computer games.

“I prefer the first-person shooters,” he says when asked about his favorite games.

I asked if he had any big plans when his time here is up, to which he replied, “Not really. I’m just looking forward to going home and being with my family if I don’t extend.”

Bailer is proof positive that Navy Sailors can hold their own along side the Army and perform well.



IT3 Cody Bailer of 2nd Brigade, 205th RSAC performs maintenance checks on the internal communication system in an up-armored vehicle.