



The PHOENIX PATRIOT

“...From the Ashes...”

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ANA Returns From Training With 82nd Airborne

Story and Photos By
Lt. Drew Gonterwitz
201st RCAG PAO

POL-E CHARKI, Afghanistan – For two weeks in late October and early November 42 Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers traveled from their home country halfway around the world to Fort Polk, La. For most of them this was their first trip outside Afghanistan and it took them all the way to America. They traveled to the states with U.S. troops from the 201st Corps to help the 82nd

Airborne Division better understand their ANA counterparts and to improve their ability to work with Afghan Soldiers.

The troops, part of 2nd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, were welcomed home on Sunday the 19th of November with a ceremony to congratulate them on their journey to America. Amid multiple interpreters the crowd listened to Maj. Gen. Monir Muhammad Mangal speak, as well as the 2nd Kandak, 3rd Brigade’s executive officer, Maj. Mattin Adamkham who accompanied them on the trip.

“It was an unforgettable experience

for us,” Adamkham said. “This was a wonderful opportunity for us and the training was excellent.”

Mangal told the group of Officers, Non-commissioned Officer’s, and Soldier’s that he was impressed with the training they had been a part of and because of coalition training exercises like this the joint mission will be more successful.

“You now need to be a model for other Soldiers,” Mangal told them, “and share your new knowledge with all of the Afghan National Army.”

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On Point w/ the CSM

Jungleers,

It's time for a little evaluation.

According to my calculations we are at the half way point. I am using the date that we had our first soldiers from Main Body One place a foot on the ground for the first time in Afghanistan, to the projected date that our first Main Body One soldier will lift his foot for the last time from Afghanistan. I kind of picture it like Mel Gibson in, "We Were Soldiers Once and Young," with the battle starting as he touches down and ending as he lifts off.

Are you where you want to be personally at this point in the mission? Is your unit where you want it to be?

I think this is a great time to reflect on the last half-year and evaluate where we started, where we are now, and where we want to be when we hand this off. I know that some of you have exceeded your expectations. In that case it is definitely time to reevaluate and make sure that the second half meets your new goals.

It's not where you are at halftime that matters; it's where you are at when the final whistle blows. We need to finish strong and make sure that we have done everything humanly possible to make sure that we have laid the groundwork so we can look back and say, "We accomplished our mission, we left the Afghanistan National Army and Afghanistan National Police in better condition than we found them, and we have given the 218th of South Carolina all the tools to accomplish the mission of TF Phoenix VI."

I urge you to take some time to reflect on all of your accomplishments so far, and then renew your motivation to accomplish even more in the next six months.

Brunk Conley
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major



General Guidance

Warriors,

The recent validation of the Operational Mentor Liaison Teams from 13 other nations has expanded our capabilities and further strengthened our team. On a daily basis, members of the Task Force demonstrate the strength that comes from diversity. Our Navy team members have excelled at engineering projects and mentoring the Afghans in garrison operations. Our Air Force team members have set new standards for excellence in the logistical support area. The Marines, serving as embedded trainers, have taught the Afghan Soldiers how to conduct complex operations in the most demanding and unforgiving environments.

Our Soldiers, both U.S. and Coalition, have taken the Afghans to new levels of performance in Infantry, Artillery, Engineering, Communications and Service Support Operations. Our Warriors at the Kabul Military Training Center have expanded the capability and capacity of the Afghan Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training programs from 650 graduates per month to over 1300 graduates per month, without an increase in personnel. Expanding our mission to include training and mentoring some elements of the Afghan Police organizations would not have been possible without the civilian skills some of our National Guard members brought to the Task Force. No matter what job you are performing it is an important one and we will succeed as an organization because of your success as individuals, small groups, and teams.

Task Force Phoenix V is the largest, most capable and talented Task Force Phoenix team ever because of the diversity of our members. Through our diversity comes strength. We have made a formal request to be designated an Official Combined Joint Task Force. Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan has endorsed our request and recommended approval. I will keep you informed on the progress of our initiative in future issues of the Phoenix Patriot.

Douglas A. Pritt
BG, USA
Commanding

To All Who Support The Troops,

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines from Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V and our Coalition Forces want to express their sincere appreciation and gratitude for the support they receive from home. In times of war and operations, it is vitally important that the morale and welfare of our troops be at the highest possible levels. Due to the compassion, kindness, and loving care of the folks back home, we troops receive a variety of items ranging from letters of encouragement and

support to large care packages, which brighten the smiles and warm the hearts of those who sacrifice their lives everyday for freedom and democracy around the world.

The time and consideration that our loved ones take to prepare these packages shows us that we are always remembered by those back home. A great number of care packages and letters that come in are sent from corporations and small businesses as well, to Soldiers who they do not even know. In the eye of the receiver, this is an awesome display of admiration and understanding

of our cause, and it does not go unnoticed.

We want to give you our warmest thanks and let it be known that what you do gives us the dedication, motivation, encouragement, and honor that it takes to continue to do the job that so many have done before us. Just as your packages and letters bring happiness into our lives, we hope that our devoted service returns the favor back to yours.

With Our Deepest Sincerity,
CJTF Phoenix V
Afghanistan

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207th Combat Engineers Execute First Ever Mission

Story and Photo By
Staff Sgt. Matt Leas
207th RCAG PAO

CAMP STONE, Afghanistan – In June, 2006, the Afghan National Army (ANA) visited the nearby village of Zangalan, and the villagers pointed out that their Karez (aqueduct) and dam needed reconstruction due to damage from Russian bombing years ago. With water being such an important part of life in Afghanistan, the ANA in conjunction with the 207th Regional Command Assistance Group (RCAG) Civil Affairs department, started drafting a plan to fix the damage.

At first the people of Zangalan were given shovels and pick axes to begin removing the rubble and clearing the

way for future expansion. As they feverishly worked to accomplish this enormous task it became apparent that they were dedicated to the project but needed more resources. In stepped the Combat Engineers from 5th Company, 1st Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 207th Victory Corps.

The engineers mobilized their heavy equipment and moved out to



Local contractors work with Afghan National Army combat engineers from 3rd Kandak, 1st Brigade, to reconstruct the Zangalan dam, damaged during the Soviet occupation. This was 3rd Kandak's first real life mission and promises to succeed.



Afghan National Army combat engineers clear dirt and rubble as part of a dam reconstruction project in Zangalan. The project shows Afghans that their new army is capable of more than fighting.

start digging.

Maj. Sean Gustafson, 207th RCAG Civil Affairs Officer and Combat Engineer by trade said this was the first time that the 207th Corps combat engineers performed a real world mission.

“It was a resounding success,” Gustafson said. “We hope

to be able to use the engineers again in the future to help more villages in the vicinity of Camp Stone.”

In addition to digging the Karez by hand and moving the rubble with heavy machinery, PVC pipe will be laid in the trench to ensure the water stays as clean as possible. This is important due to the large number of animals the Zangalanians keep near the village.

After five months of planning and hard work, the dam is coming along nicely. What was once a bombed out shell of a dam will soon be a fully functioning water supply system delivering fresh water to the hard working citizens of Zangalan.

ANA Successfully Trains In U.S.

Continued from page 1

troops spent two weeks training alongside the 82nd Airborne in exercises including cordon and search of buildings, counter improvised explosive device operations, and air assault operations. The U.S. troops working with them had to learn to conduct joint operations while using interpreters and for many of them this was their first time working directly with Afghan troops. Prior to this experience, the extent of most 82nd member's experience with their foreign counterparts consisted of powerpoint presentations about the ANA.

“To see them in person, work with them, and see first hand what they are capable of was really an eye-opener,” 2nd Lt. Joe Liddell, who accompanied them on their trip, said. “The ANA troops were very professional and showed the 82nd

Soldiers that they are a serious unit.”

Liddell was especially impressed with the executive officer (XO) on the trip, Adamkham.

“Their XO is a great example of what an ANA Officer should aspire to be,” Liddell said. “That guy impressed everyone and I think really surprised the U.S. troops at Fort Polk. He showed that these guys are for real.”

While in the states the troops stayed on post at Fort Polk but were able to enjoy some free time while there.

“We took them to the post exchange, the commissary, and were able to take them out to dinner a couple times,” Liddell said. “The troops were very grateful and cooperative and were a pleasure to work with.”



Maj. Gen. Monir Muhammad Mangal congratulates an ANA Soldier on his training in the U.S.

Story and Photos By 1st Lt. Amanda Straub

GARDEZ, Afghanistan - "If anyone's in the mountains, we're gonna let them know we're here, and we're ready to kill them," said Master Sgt. Dan Stapleton as his Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers set up mortars during a recent operation.

Stapleton and his partner, Staff Sgt. Arthur Perez, both from Texas, are embedded trainers with 3rd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps based near Gardez. They are responsible for mentoring and training ANA leadership to effectively defeat insurgents in the area.

"Sleep's not an option," says Stapleton, "We're either recovering from a mission or preparing for one."

3rd Company has a difficult job patrolling KG Pass between Khost and Gardez. The dirt road through KG Pass has absorbed a lot of spilt blood throughout the history of Afghanistan. It is a narrow dirt track surrounded on all sides by precarious mountains. A perfect place to set up an ambush. 3rd Company routinely patrols the area hunting for Taliban and Al Qaeda operatives, scouting for improvised explosive devices, and destroying anything that might pose a threat to coalition forces or the numerous civilians traveling the trade route between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"The ANA are the most fierce fighters I've ever seen," says Stapleton, who has also trained Japanese, British, Australian and Singaporean forces. "They will jump off a convoy on the contact side and attack."

Stapleton says that despite the ANA's fierce warrior focus and battle prowess, the most difficult thing to teach the ANA leadership is to sustain the fight. As a fledgling army, whose Soldiers are used to guerilla warfare, the ANA has trouble planning for enough food, water and other logistical support to maintain long-term operations.



Two Afghan National Army Soldiers establish a mortar position in KG Pass to deter enemy activity. Firing rounds establishes their presence in the area and helps them aim.



An Afghan National Army sniper scans the mountains of KG Pass searching for enemy activity. His unit frequently encounters and defeats enemy in the area.

Perez, a veteran trainer of the Iraqi army, mentors the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in 3rd Kandak, while Stapleton mentors the officers. Perez says he focuses on teaching the Military Decision Making process to his ANA counterparts, nurturing them to be strong leaders.

"Their NCOs are good and motivated," Perez said. "Their First Sergeant is very knowledgeable. Every group needs a leader and their First Sergeant is a leader. The Soldiers are always around him. They carry him like a shield."

Stapleton says the hardest thing is to get the ANA to buy into what they are being taught. He and Perez overcome this learning objective by going everywhere with the ANA and participating in all of their operations. This allows the opportunity for

Progress in Mountain Pass

the ANA to learn by example and then learn by doing with guidance. This teaching method has been used effectively by the U.S. Army for years.

“If they’re in a fight, I’m in a fight,” Stapleton said. “I’m 51 years old and humping up a hill kicks my butt, but that’s how we build trust.”

Maj. Christopher Campbell, Battalion Team Chief for 3rd Kandak from Jacksonville, Ark., says his group is scheduled to be fully operational and independent of embedded trainer assistance by June, 2007. He believes they will be ready, depending on the frequency

of operations this winter which will affect training.

“They get better and better with every mission,” Stapleton said. “They’re good Soldiers. It’s their country and they want to fight for it. They put their families and friends in danger by joining the ANA, but they still do this.”

Stapleton says trust is a two-way street with his ANA team and he has seen the Soldiers of 3rd Kandak prove themselves.

“I have no problem going on patrol with these guys at all,” Stapleton said. “I trust them with my life.”



Master Sgt. Dan Stapleton (left) and Staff Sgt. Arthur Perez are two members of the dedicated Task Force Phoenix Embedded Training Team based in Gardez.



Embedded trainers with 3rd Kandak call Explosive Ordnance Disposal to detonate an Improvised Explosive Device discovered in the middle of KG Pass.



An Afghan National Army gunner prepares for the long, treacherous road through KG Pass.

State Generals Spend Thanksgiving With Troops



State generals and command sergeants major were presented with gifts from the ANA on a recent visit to Jalalabad where they visited deployed Soldiers and listened to their concerns.

Story and Photos By Lt. Janette Arencibia

AFGHANISTAN – Tears of joy came from the eyes of grown men during a recent visit from generals and command sergeants major from Oregon, Utah, Montana and Tennessee. Maj. Gen. Raymond Reese, Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett, Maj. Gen. Randall Mosley, Brig. Gen. Patrick Wilson, Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Moe, Command Sgt. Maj. Dell Smith, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael White, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Bennett came to Afghanistan to see Soldiers downrange and share greetings from home.

The visit provided an opportunity for Soldiers to ask questions about their concerns, promotions, employment and future deployments. During the visit at Camp Cobra, Rees talked about career options available to Soldiers upon return.

“We appreciate everything you are doing here and we’ll make certain there is a job for you,” said Rees.

Rees provided guidance on training and employ-

ment options including Operation Warrior Training and the technician program, both of which offer Soldiers long-term employment options upon redeployment. Soldiers who are interested in extending their deployment were encouraged to review extension policies and become familiar with the various aspects of extension.

Wilson shared many messages from the families back at home with Soldiers from Utah and bragged about how well the families were doing. The motto at home is, “Fake it till you make it,” a slogan adopted by the spouses and families of deployed Soldiers that encourages them to be strong even when it seems impossible. Wilson talked of many family functions providing support and encouragement for families at home, comforting Soldiers who worry about their loved ones.

With sincerity and emphasis Wilson told the troops, “We are dang proud of you and I could be happier if you were all home, but I can see that you all believe in your mission



Major Kendall M. Topham enjoys reading a letter from a school student in Utah that Brig. Gen. Patrick Wilson and Command Sgt. Maj. Dell Smith brought to Afghani-

and the opportunity to give others a chance at freedom.”

Wilson also said sharing the holiday season in Afghanistan with new American and Afghan friends will be a wonderful experience.

“Friendship means sitting side by side without ever having to say a word,” Wilson said, “and I can see that in your friendship with the Afghans you are training.”

The visiting leadership brought many cards and letters from home for deployed Soldiers. They also stayed long enough to serve Thanksgiving dinner to the Soldiers and share the holiday meal. The tradition of upper leadership serving Soldiers meals shows their appreciation for the hardwork and sacrifice of every Soldier and symbolizes their commitment to serve their subordinates just as they serve their countrymen.

The day after Thanksgiving, the visiting leaders headed back to the states, back to the families, back home to share the smiles and hugs from Soldiers to their loved ones, back to tell the good news of the work the United States Soldiers are doing in Afghanistan.



Visiting military leadership from the U.S. serve Soldiers a traditional Thanksgiving dinner thanking them for their service.

KMTC Graduates First Class of ANA Team Leaders

Story By Petty Officer 1st Class

Cheryl Medeiros

Photos By 1st Sgt. Donald Weber

Training Assistance Group PAOs

KABUL, Afghanistan – A group of 68 ANA soldiers, ranging in age from 16 to 37, became the first graduating class of the Team Leader Course held at Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC). The graduation ceremony was held on November 16, 2006.



A proud graduate of the Team Leader Course at KMTC holds his certificate swearing allegiance to his country.

This new, intensive two-week course requires an entry exam prior to enrollment and stringent evaluations throughout the course. Soldiers in the team leader course learn how to take care of their Soldiers and develop the skills of Non-Commissioned Officers: leadership, ownership and accountability. The class includes training in conducting After Action Reviews, marching, proper wear and inspection of uniforms, attendance policies and physical training standards.

Although the first class was taught by American Soldiers, Sgt. 1st Class David McAfee and Sgt. 1st Class John Mosby with the assistance of an interpreter, the ultimate goal is to have Afghan Soldiers as instructors.



The first class of trained Afghan National Army Team Leaders listens attentively during their graduation ceremony.

The first 68 graduates successfully passed the final exam for this course which included making a nine-line medical evacuation request, performing an in-ranks inspection and presenting a class to other students.

As each student received his diploma at graduation, he raised it high and called out in Pashto, "For Afghanistan I serve my life!"

ANA 205th Corps Selects NCO, Soldier of the Year

Story and Photo By

Cmdr. Chad Snee, 205th RCAC PAO

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - The 205th Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) chose two outstanding Soldiers for special recognition during a brief ceremony held November 16, 2006 at Camp Shir Zai.

Sgt. 1st Class Babrak Jan of Jalalabad was selected as the noncommissioned officer (NCO) of the year, and Soldier Mahfooz Khpalwak of Parwan was chosen as the Soldier of the year.

Command Sgt. Maj. Kaifayatullah, 25th Corps Command Sergeant Major, read the award citations as Maj. Gen. Rahmatullah Raufi, 205th Corps Commander, handed the awards and a \$25 cash incentive to the two motivated men.

"I am very proud that we have such good Soldiers as these two in our ranks," Raufi stated. "I hope we can recruit more good Soldiers."

Jan, 30, joined the ANA three years ago and was extremely pleased with his selection as NCO of the year.

"I am very happy. It is our duty that we do our best for our country and our people," Jan proclaimed.

Khpalwak, 21, whose youthful features mask the dedicated, determined warrior within, also is a three-year veteran of the ANA.

"It is powerful for me and my friends that I was selected for this honor in this corps," Khpalwak asserted. "I will continue to do my best, and I know my fellow Soldiers will try their best to be nominated next year."

Command Sgt. Maj. Al Jellum of 1st Brigade, 205th

Regional Corps Assistance Command explained that the two men and their fellow nominated Soldiers were required to stand before evaluation boards conducted at the company, battalion, brigade and corps levels.

"The Soldiers were evaluated on their military skills and on leadership skills within their company," Jellum explained.

Jellum said that both Jan and Khpalwak are excellent Soldiers who immediately stood out among the other nominees.

"Given the significant conflict in this part of the country, it is impressive that they continued to study diligently and prepare for their boards," Jellum said.

The future development of the ANA is on a firm upward trajectory because of the dedication, honor and patriotism of Jan and Khpalwak and their fellow brothers in arms.



Sgt. 1st Class Babrak Jan, left, and Soldier Mahfooz Khpalwak were selected as the ANA 205th Corps' noncommissioned officer of the year and Soldier of the year, respectively.

Featured Patriot - 2nd Lt. Scott Lundell

Story and Photo by
2nd Lt. Jeffrey Fullmer

I didn't know very much about infantry tactics when I went to Camp Shelby. In fact, any random civilian is probably tougher than me. But I was deployed to be an infantry embedded trainer and I swore I would learn.

It was as hot as hell in Shelby. No, it was hotter. Upon arrival, we piled off the dirty bus, and I cringed at our ramshackle barracks. I stood in shock, Shelby was far from the Hilton.

"You coming man?" a towering man called out. I read his nametag: Lundell.

Scott Lundell was a second lieutenant, an engineer officer in the 19th Special Forces Group, out of Utah. He was a big man with a big heart. He majored in Economics and we would frequently debate the merits of Adam Smith and Karl Marx in our muggy barracks. He was one of few people that could put up with my tedious rants. But most importantly, he taught me how to be a Soldier.

Scott went out of his way to teach me how to fire my rifle and how to draw my pistol. He taught me how to knife fight, just in case. He was the best infantryman that I ever knew.

Then it was time to graduate from Shelby University. When we arrived at Kandahar Air Field, our unit was split

apart, blown by the four winds. He became an Infantry Company Mentor and I did not.

Scott immediately went to Tarin Kawt after arriving at Kandahar Air Field. Major Lear, who was Scott's Team Chief in the 3rd Kandak of 1st Brigade, 205th Regional Corps Assistance Command, said that he was, "instantly impressed with Scott, he was dedicated entirely to the Special Forces Mission."

A few weeks later, Scott came back to Shir-Zai, to train the Afghan National Army (ANA) 2nd Company of the 3rd Kandak. He oversaw the refitting and training of that company with so much skill that his training program became the standard four-week training program for the ANA in the area.

After his company completed its training cycle, it left for Deh Rawood. Scott led them in roughly six arduous combat missions and was involved in enemy contact several times.

In the third week of November, in the cold of the late autumn, Scott learned that the Taliban were preparing to set up a massive ambush. He courageously rushed to the fight, to prevent the ambush from becoming fully developed. Several dozen Taliban were assembled. He heroically led the ANA into a crucial battle that led to the destruction of the mammoth Taliban force. Tragically dur-



2nd Lt. Scott Lundell was a true American Patriot who gave his life for the mission in Afghanistan.

ing the fierce firefight, Scott was killed.

Yet this is the road he chose for himself, a path of heroism and self-sacrifice. His noble destiny was to serve his country.

Words cannot do justice to the kind of man that Scott was. So I won't try. Let me just say that he was one of the rare types who sees life as a quest to do good. He was in the Army to help people, to be a hero. He got his wish, his heroism helped Americans and Afghans get closer to freedom and security with his own blood. He made me want to be a better Soldier.

Scott Lundell, you will be sorely missed.

Sound Off - The Most Interesting Thing You've Seen Here?



"I saw this guy cooking. He was washing his pots in the same water with his feet. That was pretty interesting."

SFC David Cook
FLE NCOIC
A CO, LTF
Milwaukee, Ore.



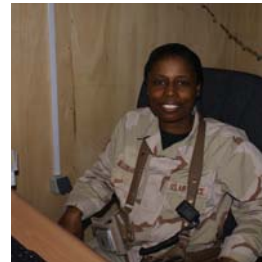
"I've seen some jingle trucks piled so high you wonder why they don't tip over. They're not real safety conscious of their load plans over here. I wonder how they do it."

1LT Oliver Grover
FLE OIC
A CO, LTF
Milton-Freewater, Ore.



"I watched an ANP guy control a crowd with a stick and a rock once. It wasn't very effective. An old lady walked up and slapped him in the face."

SSG Koreen Frazier
Motor Pool
Sergeant
B CO, LTF
Aloha, Ore.



"Climbing 9,300 feet up 'The Rock' and looking back over the base. I never thought I would make it up that rock."

TSgt Chandra Shellenbarger
Supply NCO
355th LRS
Tucson, Ariz.



"When I did payroll I learned that the [ANA] guys offer their pay as a sign of respect and charity. They'll beat each other in the eye to get to the front of the line, then they give it away."

LT Lisa Tonmar
S-4 Mentor
Houston, Texas