



# The Main Effort

Monthly Newsletter of the 205th RCAC

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## Medical supplies, clothing donated to Shir Zai clinic

By CDR Chad Snee  
205th RCAC PAO

Twenty large boxes of basic medical supplies were donated Dec. 14 to the medical clinic at Camp Shir Zai, home to the 205th Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA).

Col. Abdul Bassir, the ANA 205th Corps chief surgeon, accepted the generous donation on behalf of his grateful staff.

“We are very pleased to receive these supplies, which will help us give better care to our soldiers,” Bassir said during a brief ceremony conducted at the clinic.

The materials, which were gathered and mailed by Xerox Business Services and some of its affiliates in Canada, include an EKG machine, linens, surgical gowns, diapers, intravenous equipment and various first-aid supplies.

Some of the boxes of supplies are shown in the nearby picture.

Col. Bassir explained to those gathered the basics of care and treatment provided to ANA 205th Corps soldiers.

Bassir said that the materials will be put to use immediately, because of the high level of conflict and engagement with the enemy in the 205th Corps’ area of operations.

During the past nine months, 150 ANA soldiers have been wounded in action, and 87 have been killed in action, Bassir stated.

Although the ANA medical staff has expanded in the 205th area of operations, Bassir acknowledged that it is a challenge to attract more personnel to serve here.

“We still have a problem getting medical

personnel to serve in our area. It is dangerous here, and some personnel don’t want to come,” Bassir explained.

There are four doctors and 35 physician assistants (PA) in the 205th Corps, Bassir said, but ANA manning guidance calls for 12 doctors and 109 PAs.

The force behind the donation is Sgt. Shawn Denty, 34, a hard-charging reservist serving in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In early November, Denty visited the civilian hospital in Kandahar, as part of security escort team for a high-ranking Canadian officer.

“I saw the level of care at the Kandahar hospital and realized that there was a need,” said Denty.

He began writing to family and friends and initially arranged for medical books to be sent to the Shir Zai clinic.

Denty, who hails from Oakville, Ontario, started his donation drive with Xerox Business Services, his former civilian employer. The Xerox firm then networked among its associates, to gather more items.

Denty affirmed the importance of telling about the good things that Canadian and other coalition forces are doing in Afghanistan.

“Bringing in the medical supplies was a small thing for me,” he stated, “but it makes a big difference here. We can’t keep the news within our own borders.”

Denty was scheduled to return home in mid-December, but he wishes to come back to Afghanistan, to keep making a difference on behalf of the Afghan people.

“I want to come back as soon as possible,” he affirmed.



Col. Abdul Bassir, center, chief surgeon for the Afghan National Army 205th Corps at Camp Shir Zai, fields questions concerning a donation of medical supplies to the Camp Shir Zai clinic Dec. 14. At right is Canadian Sgt. Shawn Denty, who spearheaded the donation.

## 205th Soldiers honored for courage under enemy fire

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

Four Soldiers assigned to the 205th Regional Corps Assistance Command (RCAC) received the Army Commendation Medal Dec. 11 for exceptional valor, following the ambush of their convoys in late July.

The Army Commendation Medal also was awarded to two Soldiers for the performance of their duties in the transportation section of the 205th RCAC, and two other Soldiers belonging to the 205th RCAC transportation section received the Army Achievement Medal.

Lastly, a Soldier was welcomed into the Order of St. George, the United States Army's honorary organization for Armor and Cavalry Soldiers.

Col. Michael J. Petrucci, commander of the 205th RCAC, presented the awards during a brief ceremony held at Kandahar Airfield, in southern Afghanistan.

Spc. Ricardo Inciarte, Spc. Gregory Mannen, Spc. Jesse Mitchell and Pvt. 1st Class Joseph Munch received the Army Commendation Medal for the performance of their duties during separate engagements with the enemy



**Col. Michael J. Petrucci, commander of the 205th Regional Corps Assistance Command, awards the Army Commendation Medal Dec. 11 to four 205th soldiers for their valorous service during engagements with the enemy in late July.**

in Garmsir district, Helmand province, in southern Afghanistan.

Inciarte, Mitchell and Munch were turret gunners in a four-vehicle reconnaissance convoy that was ambushed July 24. Mannen was a gunner in a four-vehicle presence patrol that came under fire July 27.

The quartet's award citations state that their actions are "in keeping with the finest traditions of military heroism."

According to their award citations, Cpl. Robert Gillem and Spc. Shi Herrin received the Army Commendation Medal for their "tenacious work ethic and unwavering 'can do' attitude" during a five month-period that saw the successful training of more than 5,000 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers.

Both Gillem and Herrin were recognized for their "superior skills and willingness to go above and beyond" their assigned duties.

Spc. Alonza Escorza and Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Gallardo, also assigned to the 205th RCAC transportation section, were awarded the Army Achievement Medal for the superior performance of their duties.

"Escorza's innovative practices were a pivotal point in accomplishing all logistical movement in [Regional Command] South," stated his citation.

Gallardo's citation acknowledged his "initiative, dedication and attention to detail [that] were evident in the planning and execution of the numerous successful transportation missions throughout Regional Command South and the Task Force Area of Operations."

In a nod to fraternal tradition, Staff Sgt. Joe Ping was welcomed into the Order of St. George.

As Col. Petrucci draped the medal around Ping's neck, the citation was read to those assembled: "To All Here Present Know Ye That SSG Joe O. Ping, having been recognized for long and honorable service to Armor and Cavalry, is hereby admitted as a Distinguished Knight in the Order of St. George."

Following Ping's recognition, Col. Petrucci asked for applause for the awardees.

Petrucci then commended them for their service and said that they should wear their awards "with pride, because you have earned them."



### Focusing Down Range



**By CSM Martin Deck  
205th RCAC CSM**

In just a few short weeks, our Air Force personnel will be rotating back to the United States. Now is the time to thank them for all of the hard work and effort that they gave to the mission.

They will be sorely missed and leave some big shoes for their replacements to fill. I don't think we remember what it was like here, before they came on board as part of our team. Can you remember the long hours we had to pull before they arrived? I cer-

tainly do. Do you remember all of the complaints we had due to the lack of personnel in the various sections?

These people stepped up to the plate and filled those voids, and they did an exemplary job. Take time to thank these people for serving, and thank them for the jobs they did while they were here.

You might not think that they did much, but there will be a gap in time before their replacements arrive to remind us of how much they did for us. My thanks go out to all of the Air Force personnel in the 205th Corps.



## Spotlight on Service: SGT Nolan Kerr



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

Everything was new to me. I had never been deployed before, and I was linking up with a new unit, doing things I had never done before.

We were all packing our gear to get ready to go to Afghanistan, when I saw a tall man with a happy smile. His name was Sgt. Nolan Kerr, and he was the first person I made friends with in I Corps Artillery.

As we packed personal items into our Contiko storage boxes, I realized that you could tell a lot by what a person packed.

Bibles, chewing tobacco, books: each item is a gateway into our souls. Sgt. Kerr packed a Star Wars pillow. I'll never forget that.

Kerr is a mild mannered man. He speaks softly.

I can see his frosty breath in the cold air as he relates to me his life story.

He was a student and a carpenter before he deployed. But above all, he is a husband to his partner, Shandra, and a father to his two cute little girls, Kaitlyn and Kelsey.

He is also the group jokester, doing anything for a laugh, from getting a Mohawk for the Sergeant Major to dressing up like a Ninja.

He was like a lot of us. He was a civilian, through and through. It would have been perfectly alright with him if he never had to put on an Army uniform. Yet here he was.

Like many of us, he joined the National Guard because he wanted to defend his nation after the 9/11 attacks. "I didn't want another man to do the fighting for me," he spoke as we walked in the cool December air.

For him, the Army was the best of times, and the worst of times. It was a time of pain and sorrow, of joy and relief. It was a stressor and a stress reliever.

Yet he never regretted joining to serve his country.



**Sgt. Nolan Kerr snapped this picture of himself, shortly before heading out on a convoy from Terin Kowt to Deh Rawod Nov. 24. That convoy was the first between these two locations in more than three years.**

Then he got word that I Corps Artillery, his home unit, would deploy to Afghanistan.

Since then, he admits, "My experiences in Afghanistan have shown me the bigger picture, my mind has changed about a lot of things."

Being here has helped him realize that although the job is tough, it is worth doing. Someone has to do it, and it may as well be us, he told me.

Now he wants to work himself out of a job.

As the signal company mentor in the 5th Kandak (Battalion), 1st Brigade of the Afghan National Army (ANA), his goal is to make the ANA completely self-sufficient. A noteworthy objective to strive for.

In late November, the 5th Kandak forged destiny by being the first unit in more than three years to brave the treacherous route between Terin Kowt and Deh Rawod. Completing that convoy was one of his proudest

moments while deployed. "We did the convoy to prove that it could be done," he said.

This deployment, as with all things, will soon come to end.

Kerr has simple goals for the future, things like spending more time with his kids and finishing college.

He is both ordinary and unique, all at the same time. His story is the story of thousands of deployed National Guardsmen, yet that fact doesn't make his life any less precious. He is a true patriot, a man who detests fighting, but will fight for his nation.

Thomas Paine famously said, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

Sgt. Kerr will not shrink from this crisis because he is a hero who is here with us today.

## TACMAV training enhances capabilities in 205th

By CDR Chad Snee  
205th RCAC PAO

What weighs less than 1 pound, has a wingspan of less than 2 feet, can fly at altitudes in excess of 1,000 feet, and can provide valuable information about the battle space in real time?

The answer is the Tactical Mini Air Vehicle, or TACMAV, for those of you more comfortable with military acronyms.

On Dec. 18, trainers and several U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 205th Regional Corps Assistance Command (RCAC) gathered on a range about five kilometers south of Kandahar Airfield to learn how to operate the TACMAV.

The training syllabus, which lasts five days, teaches students to program, preflight, launch, fly and recover the TACMAV, as well as to retrieve and analyze visual information that the TACMAV gathers in flight using its on-board cameras.

The TACMAV is hand-launched, just like a paper airplane. A laptop computer with GPS capability is used to program the TACMAV for a given mission.

A simple joystick connected to the computer can be used to control the highly maneuverable aircraft. Alternatively, checkpoints can be plotted in the computer, so the TACMAV can fly



**The Tactical Micro Air Vehicle (TACMAV) carries onboard cameras and is used to provide real-time information about the battle space. In mid-December, several Soldiers assigned to the 205th Regional Corps Assistance Command trained to operate the TACMAV.**

unassisted. A small battery inserted into the fuselage provides power to the engine and flight controls.

One of the TACMAV's biggest advantages is its portability. The wings are made of flexible nylon and may be folded around the compact, carbon-

fiber body, which allows the tiny plane to be stored in a lightweight, rigid tube that is easily transported in a backpack. The two blades of the propeller also fold back, facilitating storage.

The TACMAV is used for five main purposes: route reconnaissance, battle damage assessment (BDA), surveillance, target acquisition and convoy operations.

According to an American Forces Information Services article published Aug. 12, 2005, the TACMAV "enables lower-echelon units to 'see' short distances ahead and at far less cost than an unmanned aerial vehicle."

Staff Sgt. Chris Baughman, who works in the 205th RCAC operations department, is a firm believer in the capabilities of the TACMAV. "The TACMAV is a real force multiplier, and we need more of them because they definitely save lives," Baughman stated.

## Guard Bureau seeks Phoenix V photos

The National Guard Bureau is seeking photographs to commission a series of prints to commemorate the mission of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V.

Personnel assigned to the 205th Regional Corps Assistance Command are asked to submit photos that are broadly representative of our efforts in southern Afghanistan. Photos that show interaction with the Afghan National Army and the Afghan people are particularly desired.

Submit photos in .jpg format to the 205th RCAC PAO, CDR Chad Snee, at charles.snee@swa.army.mil. Photos must be accompanied by a brief caption describing the photo and the photographer's full name, rank and home state. The submission deadline is Feb. 14.

The top four photos from among those received, as judged by the 205th RCAC Commander and PAO, will be submitted to the CJTF Phoenix V public affairs office at Camp Phoenix.