



The PHOENIX PATRIOT

“...From the Ashes...”

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Photo By Staff Sgt. Marelise Wood

State Of The Art Hospital Opens In Gardez

Story By Lt. Cmdr. Tracy Less
203rd RCAC PAO

GARDEZ, Afghanistan – Speaking to the doctors who were about to assume the responsibilities of opening and running the most advanced hospital in Afghanistan, the Surgeon General of the Afghan National Army (ANA), Maj. Gen. Ahmad Zai Yaftali, recalled a dream shared by the oldest doctors in Kabul.

“One person from the U.S. will be coming one day to help me,” Yaftali said. “To Gardez from the U.S., someone

will be coming to set up an ultrasound machine and an MRI machine.”

While this seemed like an impossibility just five short years ago, that dream has actually become a reality with the opening of the Paktia Regional Military Hospital, located on the ANA’s 203rd Corps Headquarters Base near Camp Thunder in Gardez.

“Five years ago Afghanistan didn’t have a flag, they didn’t have a border,” Yaftali said. “It was impossible five years ago. There was no way, no route. But today it is possible.”

The new facility can hold up to 100 patients and includes a Level 1 trauma center, the highest possible classification of care. It also has major and minor surgery facilities, and full-service dental and optometry care.

Frederick Neubert is a medical mentor from MPRI, a government contracted security and training company operating in Afghanistan. “State-of-the-art,” is how Neubert, the local catalyst for the grand opening, described the new hospital.

“It has equipment you can’t find in some of the *See Hospital on page 3*

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On Point w/ the CSM

Jungleers,

I hope you are all well and that this holiday season is seeing you in good spirits and health. As you well know from experience, warriors react to stress and change in different ways. For some of our warriors this may be the first time they have been away from their family and friends during this time of year. We need to be sympathetic and watchful over these great warriors as they deal with this separation. Not all warriors are created equal. Some will have significant problems getting through this time of year. Others will sail right through it without any issues at all.

The people most able to identify hurting warriors are their closest friends. If you have a friend that is having trouble, please notify your first line supervisor. A warrior does not have to deal with these issues alone. We have assets here that are available for our warriors to help them through these difficulties. Our chaplains are trained and available 24/7 to help any warrior in need. Our leaders are trained in how to deal with adversity and can help guide the warrior to the proper person or program.

One of the most important things we can do as leaders is to listen. Sometimes our subordinates may not be seeking solutions, but may simply need someone to share what is going on in their lives. So as leaders, pay attention to detail, watch for changes in attitudes, and open up lines of communication with the warriors in your section.

When this is all done, you will remember what you have done here and how you have made some great relationships with your subordinates, peers, and those appointed over you. That is what you will take away from here, along, with the knowledge that you have made a difference to the emerging Afghan democracy. Watch out for each other and we'll get through the hard times and the good times as a unit and as a team.

We are so very proud of all of you and your hard work and professionalism. Keep up the good work!

Brunk Conley
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major



General Guidance

Warriors,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Christmas is a day to celebrate hope and joy. It is also a time to focus on compassion, and marvel at the miracle of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Each of you should know that as a member of Task Force Phoenix, your acts of kindness toward the less fortunate exemplify the spirit of the Christmas season.

We remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, and we ask for God's blessing on their loved ones. We ask God to watch over all of us and the other men and women in uniform serving all over the world.

During Christmas we pray for freedom, justice, and peace on Earth. We give thanks for the abundance of blessings we have received, and for the families and friends we love. This year all of these things seem particularly important because we are far from home serving in a foreign land fighting an enemy who wants to destroy our very way of life.

Today I send my special thanks to each of you for your commitment, dedication and sacrifice to the mission of training the Afghan National Army and Police. Your successes have been unprecedented and you continue to make a difference every day in the lives of the citizens of Afghanistan. Now is the right time to pause to thank your families for their support and sacrifice.

I also ask that you take time to thank your extended family, your fellow members of Task Force Phoenix, who daily display a positive attitude. Your peers are making a lasting and favorable impression on everyone they come in contact with.

Even in this time of war, let us all pray for peace on Earth. I will continue to ask for God's blessings on each of you and the entire Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix Team.

Douglas A. Pritt
BG, USA
Commanding

Fellow Patriots,

There are many thoughts that cross the minds of service members while being away from home this time of the year. Fond memories of smelling holiday goodies, putting up decorations, shopping for special gifts, and spending time with family fill our thoughts.

While we are here with old friends and new, we continue some of our same traditions and create new ones. Task Force Warriors have decorated offices and B-Huts to help get in the holiday spirit. Christmas music is heard around

the Task Force. Presents are picked up at the local bizarre and scurried off to the post office by the truckload.

Although we are far from home, we are celebrating Christmas in our own way. We constantly think of our loved ones, and because of that, we continue to keep our holiday traditions alive.

For our friends who are fortunate enough to spend their leave with family during the holidays; enjoy your time. That time will go by quickly, so take pleasure in your holiday goodies, welcome home hugs, and the bright shining faces of your family members.

For our friends and families at home, our only Christmas wish is to be sharing the holidays with you. Please be safe and remember that your love and support helps makes our mission successful. Continue the holiday traditions and understand that there is nothing we would rather be doing than sharing special moments with you.

Happy Holidays!

CJTF Phoenix V Public Affairs Staff

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ANA Teams With Coalition For Afghan Education

Story and Photos By
Lt. Cmdr. Frank Dukas
209th RCAG PAO

MAZAR-e Sharif – “Today is a great day for the Ministry of Education, the Pusht-i-Baqh village, and for the current and future students of the Ustad Salih Mohammad High School,” said Mr. Mohammad Ghul, principal, at the groundbreaking ceremony for renovations on his school. “I would like to thank the Ministry of Education, the District Governor, the Afghan National Army (ANA), village elders, the U.S. Army, and ISAF for coordinating this effort to renovate and add to this school.”

The groundbreaking ceremony was held to celebrate the start of construc-

tion for an addition to the existing school which includes eight classrooms, a staff room, a new principal’s office, bookstore, kitchen, and all associated furnishings. The old ten-classroom facility will also be refurbished. The old school is in such a bad state that parts of the ceiling are falling on students’ heads during classes.

The population of the school has grown so fast that there are serious problems accommodating all the local children that want to learn. Without adding more



Mohammad Ghul, principal of Ustad Salih Mohammad High School, addresses a crowd at a groundbreaking ceremony near Mazar-e Sharif. The ceremony marks the beginning of a project to expand and refurbish the existing school.



209th Corp ANA Maj. Amanulla speaks with Aria Moqadas Construction Company (AWCC) workers and a student before the groundbreaking ceremony.

capacity, the school would not be able to accept additional children that desperately want an education.

The local contractor in charge of the project is making every effort to minimize disruptions to classroom time by working with the school principal and staff. The additional classrooms are under construction now, once the new building is finished the students will move in, allowing the contractor to repair the

old school house.

The 5th Kandak Medical Company Commander identified the school as needing assistance. He worked with coalition forces seeking assistance and, together, they were able to provide a truckload of school supplies and arrange for the additional classrooms and rehabilitation of the old building.

“I am happy that we will be able to help current and future students learn in better conditions,” Maj. Amanullah said. “The existing facility is not large enough to accommodate all students indoors so tents are currently being used.”

The new school will serve 1,100 boys and 900 girls. The project is expected to be completed in the middle of April, 2007.

Hospital In Gardez Promises Hope For Healthcare

Continued from page 1

U.S. hospitals,” Neubert said.

The Paktia Hospital provides modern diagnostic, medical and surgical techniques and offers in-patient and out-patient care, including services in cardiology and orthopedics. It also has a well-equipped laboratory and operation theaters. As Neubert pointed out, its diagnostic and treatment technologies are state-of-the-art, including computer tomography scanning, general radiology, ultrasound, and a well-stocked pharmacy.

The establishment of a partnership agreement among various ministries within the government of Afghanistan followed the inauguration of the advanced medical facility. The five-way agreement is an understanding between the Minister of Public Health, the Minister of Higher

Education, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Defense as part of the Afghan government’s long-term health care and development strategy. The partnership is intended to help establish a public healthcare system for all of Afghanistan.

Not only is it a beginning, but it’s a radical departure from what’s been available in the country in the past.

“This is a dream for Afghanistan,” Yaftali said. “This is not a single picture. This is a movie.”

With the opening of the ultramodern hospital in Gardez, and more importantly, the signing of the Ministry’s five-way partnership, the citizens of Afghanistan finally have something substantial to give them hope for a real public healthcare program and, as a result, a better future.

The new Paktia Regional Military

Hospital in Gardez is poised to provide superior health care to the Afghan military, and will serve as a model of excellence for medical education and improvement throughout the country.

Yaftali’s movie just started.



Photo By Staff Sgt. Marelise Wood

ANA senior generals visit a wounded Soldier in the newly constructed Paktia Regional Military Hospital.

Story and Photos By
Lt. Janette Arencibia

MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan – Hands-on practicum in education is, for some, the best method of learning. Kinetic learners, or those who learn best by doing, comprehend new skill sets best by having an opportunity to apply skills by doing. For kinetic learners, the use of training aides and props can assist in overcoming communication barriers between American Embedded Training Team (ETT) members and their Afghan National Army (ANA) counterparts. This method of instruction usually proves to be effective in learning comprehension. One ETT has found a successful way to teach auto mechanics by introducing NASCAR stock car racing to the ANA.

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Buck was assigned as an ETT to the 209th Corps in Mazar-e Sharif to train the ANA Soldiers in the maintenance shop. During his first two weeks, he observed the Soldiers working in order to determine their skill level. The ANA's vehicles, mostly Ford Rangers, are routinely maintained by civilian contractors. But Buck realized that to enable the ANA to be self-sufficient and sustainable for long-term operations, he had to teach them the skills to perform vehicle maintenance on their own. He began crafting an innovative program for the Soldiers.

Embedded Trainer Uses NASCAR

It was obvious that safety needed to be emphasized in the new curriculum that would develop the ANA as auto mechanic technicians. Buck's goal was to develop the skill level of the ANA auto mechanic from Level 10, an operator level, to Level 30, that of an auto mechanic with the ability to rebuild engines. Once his evaluation of their current skills was complete, and he felt he had an accurate idea where to begin with a curriculum, he announced, "This shop is closed. School is open!"

All Ford Ranger mechanics ceased their everyday duties and every other day they conducted safety classes. Safety equipment was acquired for the ANA Soldiers, including welding hoods and gloves. The equipment was utilized during safety classes and during training.

Culturally sensitized to the importance of chai, but challenged with the opportunity to augment partnerships and discuss more about auto mechanics, Buck broached the topic of NASCAR one day during chai with the ANA. Formerly, the ANA knew nothing about race cars. They viewed Alexander with new respect and admiration of his expertise after he showed them a video of himself and his wife driving a stock car in Las Vegas.

"The ANA might appear to be lazy sometimes," Buck said, "but they just get bored easily. You have to find a way to keep their interest. For these guys, it was NASCAR."



SCAR To Teach Maintenance

After the video the ANA Soldiers showed their appreciation shouting, “Hoobas!” Meaning, “good” or “cool.” All it took was sharing a passion for cars and racing, new concepts for the ANA, and they become instant NASCAR fans.

As a result of the Soldiers’ new found enthusiasm, they eagerly learned about mechanics and the concept of horsepower. In an attempt to demonstrate the efficiency of a gasoline engine, Buck acquired a Russian Jeep with a gasoline motor. The Jeep served as the perfect teaching aide to introduce the new found ANA stock car fans to gasoline engines. Over the course of 20 classes the ANA Soldiers successfully extracted the motor from the Jeep and reinstalled it.

“The concept of extracting a perfectly good engine was foreign to them,” Buck said.

When Buck began training the Soldiers, they only knew how to use regular wrenches to change tires. He taught them to use socket wrenches, and eventually, pneumatic tools. Once the engine was apart, Buck introduced ways that the engine could be enhanced to develop more horsepower. Hoobas!

Buck continued to show the ANA clips from NASCAR races placing emphasis on the work of the pit crews. The Soldiers were completely amazed that the pit crews could

change the tires, fuel and service a race car in a matter of a few seconds. Alexander modeled his training on the pit crew system pulling the Jeep into the shop at a screeching halt and challenging the ANA to service it faster and faster.

While Buck introduced the ANA to NASCAR, and a passion for cars and mechanics, an artist came to the shop to paint the garage. Alexander had an idea. He took a picture of the Daytona Speedway, and a picture of the Afghan hills, and asked the painter to create a landscape incorporating both pictures. The result was a full mural covering one wall of the shop instilling pride and ownership in the ANA mechanics.

At the end of every class, Buck conducted a feedback session to assess the progress and interest level of the class. The ANA Soldiers were very satisfied with their learning and excited, like never before, about their jobs. They learned new mechanical techniques and increased their skill levels in safety and shop procedure as well.

Buck’s deployment to Afghanistan is now over. He said that when he left it was very emotional for him to say goodbye to the group he had bonded with over projects and new found common interest. But, Buck is confident that the lessons he taught, like the mural on the wall, will last for a long time to come.



Task Force Soldiers Survive Enemy Attack

Story and Photos By
1st Lt. Amanda Straub

GARDEZ, Afghanistan – What’s it like to live through an insurgent ambush? Three Task Force Phoenix Soldiers found out on October 27th. Spc. Harold Bishop, Troutdale, Ore., Spc. David Lee Pearson, Ashland, Ore., and Spc. Michael Philbrook, Banks, Ore., were in a five-ton truck on a routine convoy through the Khowst-Gardez Pass when explosions and bullets suddenly began peppering their vehicle.

“We were very lucky that day, that’s all I can say,” Staff Sgt. Eric Wright, convoy commander, said. “It was a very well planned ambush.”

Philbrook was the medic on the trip and co-driver of the five-ton. He thought it was just another long, uncomfortable drive to drop off supplies when they started out.

“Right before it went off I thought, ‘Man I’m really tired. I hope we get there soon,’” Philbrook said.

As the convoy entered the narrow valley on the floor of the pass, an explosion went off in between the five-ton and the lead Hummer. Philbrook said he thought it was an improvised explosive device, usually a single explosive buried in the ground. Then he heard gunfire.

Pearson, the turret gunner, looked at the mountains and saw men with weapons shooting on both sides of the convoy.

“I looked at the hill and all you could see was muzzle flashes,” Philbrook said. “I decided not to look out the window and look straight ahead, but they tore up the hood too.”



A badly wounded five-ton truck is the only physical reminder of the ambush of October 27th.

At the sound of the first explosion, the lead security vehicle followed procedure and sped out of the kill-zone expecting the other two vehicles in the convoy to follow.

From the turret, Pearson saw a second rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) hit next to the right-front tire.

“I didn’t realize we blew up until the truck went ‘Kerthump!’” Pearson said. “I didn’t know the extent of the damage to the truck. I just knew I was getting tossed around pretty bad.”

Bishop, the driver, said there were five explosions altogether and 22 bullet holes were found in the truck.

“The RPGs hit next to us, under us, behind us,” Bishop said. “Rocks in the pass fell all around. It was like a rainstorm of rocks.”

Pearson tried to return fire from the 240B machine gun but it jammed. He could only fire a few rounds at a time before it seized again.

Bishop attempted to catch the lead vehicle.

“My first reaction as a driver was just to continue driving forward in an attempt to clear the kill zone,” Bishop said.

Another RPG landed under the truck blowing the right-rear tires as well.

“He [Bishop] did an awesome job piloting that truck though with three tires,” Pearson said. “Before I realized we had been hit I leaned down and yelled, ‘Dude! Catch up!’ Then he yelled back, ‘I can’t! We only have three tires!’”

The rear security hummer returned fire as Bishop struggled to maintain control of his limping five-ton.

“I don’t know what I was thinking. Just drive,” Bishop said. “I didn’t really think. You don’t think about everything until afterwards and the adrenaline goes away and you



Spc. David Lee Pearson (left) and Spc. Harold Bishop count the number of bullet holes in their truck. “The truck was leaking oil and radiator fluid everywhere,” Pearson recalls.

get the shakes and have to figure out where to go.”

“It felt like it went on forever, even though it was only a minute or two,” Philbrook said. “I kept thinking, ‘When will it end? Are the gunners ok?’”

Bishop finally forced the five-ton around a corner where they met up with the lead vehicle. The convoy pulled security and called for help. Pearson immediately began checking for injuries. Amazingly, no one was hurt.

“Close-air support arrived after 15 minutes,” Bishop said. “That made us all feel better.”

It took two hours to get a recovery crew down through the winding pass between Khowst and Gardez. The insurgents in the mountains took a few pot shots, but their weapons were out of range.

“Philbrook did a great job checking to see if everyone was alright,” Pearson said.

“I think the flight or fight instinct kicked in,” Bishop said.

“It felt like a movie, or a video game,” Philbrook said. “It would have been different if ... I’m just glad no one was hurt.”

The Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix may not always expect to be caught in an ambush, but they are always prepared for it. On October 27th, three Soldiers learned what it was like to react to and survive an enemy attack. Now, they are back on the road, thankful to serve in Afghanistan another day.

Dancing Barber Provides Cultural Ties For Soldiers

Story By Petty Officer 1st Class
Cheryl Medeiros
Training Assistance Group PAO

KABUL, Afghanistan – Chargul is his name. He wears a worn, white button-down jacket that extends below his knees, like something a doctor would wear. On his head he wears the traditional white round cap often wore by Afghans. He is the barber at Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) and has been cutting hair for 42 years. In his sparse working space, he quickly cuts the Soldiers' hair as he talks. He looks like a simple man, expertly cutting the hair of an Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldier. According to Chargul, when each new training battalion enters KMTC, he can cut from 150 – 200 haircuts a day.

The 62-year old Afghan barber is also an instructor and drummer for the national dance of Afghanistan called Attan. American Soldiers



Photo By 1st Lt. Amanda Strub
Chargul plays the drum for Attan dancers at a KMTC graduation ceremony.

commonly call Attan “The Man Dance” but Afghan women may also perform the dance at weddings or other celebrations when no men are present.

Chargul performs at KMTC and in the community for special occasions.

The Attan is a circular dance performed by two to over a hundred people. The performers follow each other around in a circle spinning and jumping to the beat of the drum. The dance has become very popular throughout Afghanistan and is performed year-round during special

occasions. At KMTC, the dance is performed for every basic training graduation ceremony.

Chargul is proud to say a brigadier general is one of his dancers. At a recent graduation ceremony at KMTC, Chargul and his group, made up of ANA Soldiers, performed the Attan in colorful outfits. The Soldiers surrounded Chargul and twirled around him to the vibrant sounds of the drum. The crowd was happy to see the traditions of Afghanistan incorporated into the graduation of Afghan Soldiers.



Photo By Bashir
Chargul cuts an American Embedded Trainer's hair at Kabul Military Training Center.

201st Corps Keeps Children Warm In Winter

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

KABUL, Afghanistan – On November 14, Soldiers from Camp Blackhorse took a trip to Camp Darulaman to visit the Alawaideen Orphanage. As the armored Hummers pulled to a stop around the circle drive in the middle of the school yard dozens of young boys and girls rushed up to the troops as they handed out candy and took pictures. Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers handed out blankets and clothes for the children in preparation for the upcoming winter months. While the children were busy in class the ANA Soldiers went around to all of their beds and laid out new, brightly colored



An ANA Soldier gently replaces a child's shabby old blanket with a new one at Alawaideen Orphanage.

blankets to surprise them.

The Alawaideen Orphanage is home to over 400 children ranging in ages from three to 18. They come to the orphanage

from all over Afghanistan, both living and going to school at Alawaideen. The boys range in age from five to 12. Once the boys reach the age of 12 they must leave Alawaideen but



A young child at Alawaideen Orphanage joyfully bundles up in her decorative new blanket.

have the option to move to another orphanage. Once the girls reach 18 years of age they must decide to either marry or leave the orphanage on their own.

The sleeping quarters where the blankets were placed were not that unfamiliar to 201st Corps troops. The children live in large rooms filled with eight to ten bunk beds. With only thin felt-like gray blankets on their beds, the colorful ones being handed out by the ANA were sure to bring smiles to all the kids' faces. Gulalai Hamkar, the director of the orphanage was very pleased with the troop visit.

“Thank you very much for coming and spending time with the children,” Hamikar said, “the blankets and clothes are much appreciated.”

The blankets and clothes were donated by ‘Soldier’s Angels,’ a non-profit organization in the United States.

Featured Patriot - Spc. Angela Cole

Story By Lt. Janette Arencibia

Spc. Angela Cole is an Oregonian born and raised in Portland in the same house where her father, brother and sister still live. Although, she has lived in at least three other states.

As a civilian she was most recently employed at a small deli near her home. She also worked at the Oregon Health and Sciences University Hospital since 1996 as a transportation aide.

Cole has worked in multiple roles successfully; the primary reason for her nomination as a featured patriot. To date her responsibilities have included working for brigade headquarters in an administrative role, assisting in the Effects Cell and training the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP). Her peers say that she's, tough, tenacious and can multi-task.

In addition to her regularly assigned duties in the Effects Cell, Cole developed a very successful Native American Heritage campaign for the task force. Although there were many individuals originally assigned to the task, they were pulled for other work leaving Cole to complete the task.

"Spc. Cole did not miss a step," boasts

Sgt. 1st Class Spencer Martin, her supervisor. "She took control of the situation, developed an audio/video presentation and organized a first class event that would normally require multiple Soldiers serving at significantly higher pay grades to accomplish."

She was able to produce a quality event without disregard for all of her other duties.

Though Cole has made significant contributions to the Effects Cell, her talents are now being utilized in Kandahar to train the ANAP with a mobile training team.

"She brings versatility and creativity to the section," Martin said. "One day she'll be assisting with investigations and the next she's developing an information product, conducting a security mission, or providing logistical assistance."

Cole thinks that Afghanistan is a beautiful country and she especially loves the mountains and the rain as it reminds her of home. She does miss her children which she describes as her heart and soul. She has a son, Jason, who recently turned six and a daughter, Megan who is four.

What she has enjoyed most about this deployment so far is the opportunity to



Photo By 1st Lt. Amanda Straub
Spc. Angela Cole's extraordinary ability to adapt and master diverse skill sets makes her an invaluable part of Task Force Phoenix.

meet people she would not normally have met and is excited to have new friendships she feels will last a lifetime.

Her ultimate goal in this deployment is to make a marked difference. She is satisfied with the experiences she has had here so far and feels justified in her reasons for deploying. She is very proud of her service in the National Guard and considers active duty an attractive option for her future.

Cole wishes that more people could see all of the positive things happening in Afghanistan. Soldiers with her attributes contribute to the Task Forces ability to remain flexible in a fluid environment.

Sound Off - What Do You Want In Your Stocking This Year?



"I wish that my stocking had a visit home to my children in it."

MSG Bass Tomlin
41st BCT
Detroit, Mich.



"I wish that there was a computer in my stocking."

PFC Juan Santiago
C Co. 141 LTF
Orocouis, Puerto Rico



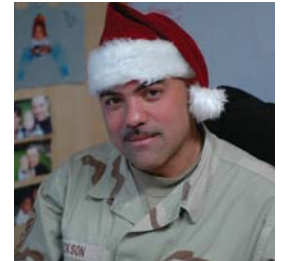
"A white Christmas for all of those that wish it, both here and at home."

SSGT Rod Widows
HHC 41st BDE
Sherwood, Ore.



"I would like my wife and a hot tub in my stocking."

Sergeant Andy Barker
C Co. 141 LTF
Portland, Ore.



"More than anything, I wish that my eleven month old son, Darien, could be in my stocking."

MSG Tony Jackson
41st BCT
Canton, Ohio

The Phoenix Patriot is now available online at the new Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V website:
<http://www.taskforcephoenix.com/>