

# Shohna

*Special Edition:  
Afghan National Army*

*Shoulder to Shoulder*

# ba Shohna



*Training  
Progress  
Initiative*



# As I Prepare to Depart Afghanistan

Parting Words from the

## Deputy Commander for Afghan National Army Training



Maj. Gen. Gary S. Patton

Former Deputy Commanding General-Army

### PARTING THOUGHTS

As I depart NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan and the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, and the land of Afghanistan itself at the end of my tour of duty, three words come to mind that best describe my past 18 months of helping to grow, train and develop the Afghan National Army: Progress, Promise, and Gratitude.

### PROGRESS

Although there are still many challenges that lie ahead, the ANA has made steady progress over the past 18 months in the following key institutional areas:

### TRAINING CAPACITY

ANA Training Command doubled its training capacity by establishing six functional regional military training centers to complement its training flagship at Kabul Military Training Center. The result is 25,000 ANA soldiers in training today, a key factor in enabling the accelerated growth of the Army.

### GROWTH

The ANA surged at just the right time with growth of 45,000 soldiers (27 percent increase) in Solar Year 1389 (Mar '10 – Mar '11), to its current end strength of 164,000, while retaining 70 percent of its eligible soldiers and meeting 104 percent of its recruiting goals. The result is a growing ANA with strong recruiting/retention programs, assured of meeting its 171,600 growth objective by November 2011 and future growth objective of 195,000 in 2012.

### TRAINING QUALITY

With a strong guiding hand by NTM-A advisors and trainers, ANA Training Command markedly improved its training quality across the institutional training base. It accomplished this by implementing standards-based training at the training centers, increasing its cadre of trainers, and by establishing a formal Train the Instructor certification program in parallel with a first-ever Master Skills Instructor Program. The result is better trained ANA soldiers being taught by an increasingly Afghan-led and more professional training cadre, who are better prepared to assume the training lead in the months ahead.

### PROFESSIONALIZATION

By establishing 12 Branch Schools for specialty training (i.e. engineering, infantry, logistics, artillery, military police, etc.) the ANA greatly stimulated progress in professionalizing its ranks of soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officer corps. The result is hundreds of graduates now populating the ANA with expert knowledge of mortars, machine guns, vehicle maintenance, artillery gunnery, communications, supply procedures, finances, etc.

### LITERACY

The highest payoff improvement in the ANA has been its expanded literacy program. Today, reading, writing and mathematics are mandatory for every soldier in basic training and for every NCO in leader development courses. The result is an Army growing exponentially in its literacy level. For every basic training class of 1,400 new recruits, 1,200 arrive illiterate. And today, based on mandatory literacy training, 80 to 90 percent of these previously illiterate recruits now graduate from their eight-week basic training program able to read and write at the first-grade level. Afghan soldiers are very proud of their education, and this prospect has proven to be a hugely popular recruiting/retention incentive.

On a recent visit to Kabul Military Training Center, a young Afghan soldier showed me how he could now write the name of his village, and more importantly, exclaimed that one day following his army service he would “return to his village to be the educator of his people.” The ANA literacy program is not only educating its young soldiers, but also creating a better-educated generation of future Afghan leaders.

### PROMISE

The ANA still faces a considerable leader deficit of more than 3,000 officers and 8,000 NCOs, but training capacities for officers and NCOs have been greatly expanded, and the new leaders that are being developed show considerable promise.

On a recent visit to the Infantry Branch School I asked a group of young Afghan 2nd Lieutenants what they would do to combat the problem of soldiers being absent without leave in their future units. Their collective response was that they would take good care of their men, keep them informed and train them hard. Their concluding

reply was simply stated: “we accept this challenge and we can fix it through positive leadership.”


From observing and talking to hundreds of impressive young NCOs and officers – like the nine National Military Academy of Afghanistan cadets who just returned from an international military skills competition at West Point; or the first class of 29 female Officer Candidate School graduates; or the recent class of 35 “Black Hat” Master Instructors -- I am continually assured and confident that these men and women are entering their Army with a strong set of core values and leader competencies – and show great promise as future leaders of the ANA and their nation.

### GRATITUDE

Nearly every day I am thanked by an Afghan for my service and sacrifice in their country. They genuinely appreciate what we are doing to improve their army. “Shohna ba Shohna” is more than a catchy command slogan, it describes our solidarity and common approach to growing a

stronger, more capable, more professional ANA. As a member of a strong international coalition we will continue to work “Shohna ba Shohna” with our Afghan partners. In the fight ahead, we must remain ever-vigilant of threats in our work environment, but we can never allow enemy infiltrators or impersonators to weaken our coalition solidarity or tarnish the gratitude we have for one another.

### IN CONCLUSION

From my time in NTM-A, I will always treasure the partnerships made and friendships founded, both among my Afghan partners and coalition comrades. And now I say farewell -- with a total of 45 months in combat and 32 years in the Army, heading home to the open arms of my wife and children, and filled with great satisfaction by the progress, promise, and gratitude of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan people. Thank you and Tashakur. 

An Afghan National Army recruit disassembles an M-240B machine gun under the supervision of an ANA instructor during weapons familiarity training in Regional Basic Warrior Training at Regional Military Training Center, Kandahar province. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class David Kolmel, RSC-South Public Affairs)



# The Afghan National Army

## Journey To Self-Reliance



An Afghan National Army recruit waits to conduct squad drills during Basic Warrior Training in Kabul Military Training Center. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Ernesto Hernandez Fonte, NTM-A Public Affairs)



Gen. Abdul Rahim Wardak,  
Afghan Minister of Defense

Defending and securing Afghanistan has always been the patriotic duty of all Afghans, and it will remain the same for the future. After three decades of war and destruction with disastrous and catastrophic consequences, we needed help from the international community to assist us in restoring peace and stability. It is the sincerest hope and earnest ambition of all Afghans to, once again, fulfill their historic responsibility.

Fundamentally, the objective of the Afghan National Army is the preservation of our national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the liberty to uphold its cultures, religious values and traditions. The ANA is currently focused on expanding the influence of GIROA by winning the war on terror, supporting the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Program, and assisting with counter-narcotics efforts. The provision of a safe and secure environment enables the nation to thrive politically, economically and socially where lasting peace and prosperity can be insured for our future generations. These interests are affected by the internal and external security environments, requiring reassessment and adjustment as the security situation changes.

To accomplish this objective, the ANA, in conjunction with the invaluable assistance of NTM-A, have set a clear course through stormy seas of building a professional and capable Army.

Outlined below is the ANA's vision and principal goals for 2011:

OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE AND PROFESSIONALISM WILL CONTINUE WITH VIGOR;

WE WILL IMPROVE OUR PERFORMANCE THROUGH TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND BY REINFORCING OUR CODE OF CONDUCT;

TOGETHER WE WILL CONTINUE MAKING POSITIVE IMPROVEMENTS TOWARDS SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN OUR COMBAT SUPPORT AND SERVICE SUPPORT;

THE ANA WILL STRIVE TO LEAD MORE OPERATIONS AND INCREASE ITS PROPORTIONALITY COMPARED TO ISAF FORCES, INCLUDING SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES;

WE WILL COLLECTIVELY TAKE FURTHER POSITIVE STRIDES IN EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING OUR STORY TOWARDS WINNING THE WAR OF PERCEPTION;

BASED ON MUTUALLY AGREED PLANNING, THE ANSF WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PHYSICAL SECURITY IN SPECIFIED DISTRICTS AND PROVINCES, AS PHASE 1 OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS GAINS MOMENTUM.

The ANA has made phenomenal progress and unprecedented achievements since the establishment of NTM-A in November 2009. There is no doubt we are at a vital moment in our joint endeavor as we enter this year's fighting season

and commence the Transition process.

All our force generation efforts enable transition. It is our sincere ambition to achieve transition as soon as possible. It is an integral part of our jointly agreed Afghan-led, Afghan ownership policy. But, transition cannot become detached from the reality on the ground.

Today, the ANA stands proudly at more than 164,000 soldiers and is loved and respected by the people of Afghanistan – one in which our friends and allies can invest with trust and confidence.

The ANA is continuing its efforts on growth, quality, professionalism, leadership, operational capacity, stewardship, literacy and reducing attrition. In fact, the ANA will meet its 171,600 October 2011 objective no later than the end of June 2011! Achieving this goal will enable the ANA to slow down its growth and truly focus on the quality of our force.

As we look toward the future, we strongly believe that the only sustainable way to ensure enduring peace and security in Afghanistan is to enable the Afghans themselves. Adopting and implementing this concept will be most cost-effective, less politically-complex, and will save lives for our friends and allies.

To accelerate the ANA's growth, we focused on building a light infantry-centric force with known capability gaps. We need to develop these capabilities to build a balanced force and realize the objectives we all share. We should balance the force while developing the ANA to its final end strength, to make the ANA self-reliant and able to defeat all internal and external threats as stated in the Joint Declaration of the US-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership signed in 2005. NTM-A has assisted us with fielding dedicated support positions and we eagerly wait for even more. The long lead-time for infra-

structure, equipment acquisition, training, and leadership development needs to be taken into account, with decisions implemented as early as possible. Most of these capabilities are going to immensely enhance the effectiveness of the ANA in the present conflict and expedite an irreversible Transition.

Progress of the ANA has been exceptional over the last two years, which could not have been possible without the support of NTM-A. It is always difficult to raise an Army while simultaneously fighting a war. It is even more difficult and complex in a country that has just gone through a proxy civil war.

However, the ANA continues to be a success story. It has become a potent symbol of reform and a physical manifestation of the new Afghanistan, illustrating our continuing transformation into a nation, which can once again take responsibility for its own destiny. It is an army which is democratically accountable, nationally oriented, ethnically balanced and increasingly disciplined and effective.

We are deeply appreciative of the international community's assistance on our journey toward self-reliance and professionalism. Again, we reemphasize our commitment and firm determination to exceed recruiting goals, and improve attrition. We will also spare no effort to improve morale and leadership, ensure accountability and transparency, and fight corruption.

The costs have been high, but the stakes are even higher. We are now at a critical juncture in our campaign, and to paraphrase a great statesman: "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith." We in the ANA look forward to continuing our journey to self-reliance 'Shohna ba Shohna' with our NTM-A and ISAF partners!

All Afghan National Army recruits attend literacy classes as a part of Basic Warrior Training. These recruits practice writing skills at Camp Dubbs in Kabul. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael James, NTM-A/DCOM-A Public Affairs)



# Laying the Policy:

## Framework for Enduring Change


Courtesy of  
Afghan National Army Development

Often in NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, we speak about developing courses of action that will have enduring effects on the Afghan National Army's ability to support, sustain and operate on its own in the future. The institutional challenge is complex in that prior to building a framework we must first orient ourselves to the problem which underpins all efforts to invoke change; we must come to terms with who are the authors of policy. NTM-A and the office of the Assistant Commanding General for Army Development has intimate experience with attempting to coach the development of policy with the genesis of the Organization and Functions Manual which clearly articulates the organizational definitions and relationships within the Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army.

Simply put, had this foundation document been drafted and delivered to the ANA by the Advisor community it would have been soundly rejected. Rather it was understood that for a framework policy to have an enduring effect it needed to be "owned" by the ANA. This simple acknowledgment is the key to the development of all future policy initiatives that support the ANA and, in the larger sense, Afghanistan. Pride of ownership and a willingness to implement the tenets of any policy are directly related to fostering an understanding that policy frameworks must be developed "by Afghans for Afghans."

Successful initiatives in NTM-A that have the

promise of being enduring have a common trait; they were instituted in partnership with their ANA partners. The gravitas required within the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff to sponsor an issue requires sufficient patronage and this is only achieved through inclusion of the ANA at the front end of the process in the development of the policy or structure. Buy-in is achieved through ownership because the process is no longer Advisor-driven; rather it is advisor-supported which is the key to success. A comprehensive understanding of the decision making process within the Ministry of Defense and identification of the power base is equally as critical to assisting the ANA in building policy. Failure to understand how decisions are made and the speed at which decisions are made is the single greatest point of failure of new Advisors. The ANA does not and will not expedite the decision making process in the manner in which we are comfortable. The historical linkages within the ANA and the cultural imperatives will always influence the decision making process and we must acknowledge the roles these factors play if we are going to successfully assist in ANA policy development.

Enduring policy change for the ANA is not mythological. The ANA and Afghans want change but they want it by their hand so that they will have a sense of ownership in shaping their future. 

# Developing Leaders

## Non-Commissioned Officers Lead the Way

The Afghan National Army is undergoing a period of rapid expansion. The continued development of senior non-commissioned officers is a key factor in this plan because they form the backbone of the ANA.

The leadership and management provided by the NCO corps is critical in order to bridge the gap between young, eager troops and seasoned veterans who will command troops in the field. The ANA develops these leaders through a variety of courses of instruction including the Sergeants Major Academy, Team Leader Course and Military Skills Instructors Course. The ANA assumed the lead for training the NCO Corps in January 2011.


The Regional Military Training Center in Shorabak, Helmand province, will enable the 215th Corps to train soldiers and develop NCOs within the Southwest region.

At the Kabul Military Training Center the first Afghan-led Sergeants Major Course completed training. The course developed veteran soldiers into sergeants major, the top-level enlisted position in the ANA.

With an increased focus on quality, there has also been a sharp increase in the number of Afghan instructors; 2,160 Afghan instructors are now assigned to train fellow Afghan soldiers at KMTC, which houses the Bridmal [NCO]

Academy, as well as the Consolidated Fielding Center, the Regional Military Training Centers, the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, the Counter-Insurgency Training Center, and branch schools.

NCOs are also providing specialty training to increase the professionalization of the force. An example of this can be found at the ANA Legal School, commanded by Col Said Nassir, which is a faculty of Afghan military and civilian lawyers. Its mission is to train ANA legal advisors, Military judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, CID investigators, Legal NCOs, as well as ANA Commanders. The Basic Legal NCO Course was the school's first course for solar year 1390. In the coming months, the Legal School will offer two CID investigators courses, a symposium for military judges, and three Commanders' Legal courses.

NTM-A now has 12 specialist Branch Schools in operation with the last planned school, the Military Police School, starting its first course at the end of May 2011. Mobile Training Teams are also being generated to deliver instruction to the fielded force, they will travel to the regions to provide this specialist training. In summary the ANA is fielding more sophisticated units on a daily basis and taking positive steps to optimize the quality of its force. 

Courtesy of  
Combined Training Advisory Group-Army

An Afghan National Army soldier practices proper sighting techniques on an M-16 rifle during Basic Warrior Training at Kabul Military Training Center. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael James, NTM-A/DCOM-A Public Affairs)






Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class David Kolmel, RSC-South

## ◀ ANA trainees prepare to graduate training

“What we have done here is successfully trained and developed Afghan civilians into ANA soldiers,” said Army 1st Lt. John Hackmann, senior ANA adviser at Camp Parsa. “We are assisting the country of Afghanistan as they strive to achieve their mission of establishing a strong and sustainable ANA that can lead in securing Afghanistan’s future.”

Six-hundred ANA trainees completed the squad live-fire training portion of the eight-week basic warrior training course, proving to their Afghan and Regional Support Command-East instructors the hours of training was well worth the effort.

“The squad attack required trainees to fire from the prone unsupported position at stationary targets before safely mounting to a position 20 meters ahead,” said Hackmann. “Once safely in position, the remaining trainees engaged and cleared the range before reporting in to the range tower.”

After graduating the trainees will be assigned throughout Afghanistan in support of various ANA units. Some trainees that have demonstrated promising futures will attend additional training at other ANA leadership courses. 

By Master Sgt. Quinton Burris  
NTM-A Regional Support Command-East Public Affairs

## Afghans assume control of Kabul perimeter FOB ▶


Strategically positioned in the mountainous countryside near Kabul, Forward Operating Base Deh Sabz is a symbol of Afghan independence and its ability to protect citizens from insurgents.

Deh Sabz is one of four FOBs placed around Kabul built to provide outer security to the city of 5 million people. The 300 meter by 300 meter complex, costing approximately \$4.3 million, can house up to 700 people.

U.S. Air Force Col. Bob Wicks, commander of the Regional Support Command-Capital, which oversaw the FOB’s construction, explained that

of the FOBs strategically placed around Kabul, RSC-C was responsible for four of them. “They will use this for a long time,” he said.

The FOB is now an “Afghan footprint” and clearly illustrates to the enemy that the coalition are not occupiers but are working together with the Afghans for their enduring self-governance as a nation.

“This facility is a symbol” of the friendship between Afghanistan and its coalition partners, said Army Brig. Gen. Tom Cosentino, deputy commander, Regional Support, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan. 

By Jon Connor  
DCOM-Regional Support/NTM-A Public Affairs



Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class John R. Fischer, NTM-A Public Affairs



Photo by Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander, Joint Combat Camera Afghanistan

## ◀ New training camp welcomes 1st set of recruits

Shorabak, a newly finished ANA training facility, welcomed its first batch of fresh recruits, numbering 850 new troops.


Tahir Safi, 19, from Kunar province, joined the ANA in order to gain leadership experience. He said that one of the aspects of the training that he is excited for the most is literacy training.

“The experience has been good,” he said. “I want to learn how to conduct with soldiers. I want to lead some of my men in the future, to be a commander.”

Upon arrival, the recruits were issued photo identification, received background checks and

were input into a biometric system. The system takes samples of fingerprints, retinal scans and photographs as a preventative measure against infiltration.

“We have 850 recruits and it takes 10 minutes for each of them. So we’ll be doing this for the next couple days,” said U.S. Army Warrant Officer Steven Morgan.

During the in-processing, recruits also go through a pre-assessment for literacy training, re issued uniforms and equipment and taught classes on military customs and courtesies. 

By Doug Magill  
NTM-A Regional Support Command-Southwest Public Affairs



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