



NEWS RELEASE

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ANA hone route clearance tactics with TF Dolch

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Task Force Sword Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, much of the recent focus has shifted toward rehabilitating Afghanistan into a viable and independent state. One crucial aspect of this mission is building an Afghan National Army that is able to assume responsibility for the country's security.

With this goal in mind, Sappers from Task Force Dolch, Task Force Sword, have committed many hours of their time partnering with multiple ANA engineer units. From the beginning of the partnership, TF Dolch primarily advised and trained Afghan security forces in the areas of logistics, first aid, weapons maintenance, training and operations, and route clearance procedures. Over time, as their partnered units gained proficiency, they executed numerous missions with their U.S. counterparts and independently.

Task Force Dolch began training their first ANA route clearance company in February at the consolidated fielding center outside of Kabul, under the guidance of U.S. Army Capt. Jacob Hohman, a Pittsburgh native and officer in charge, and U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Cesar Olasso, the non-commissioned officer in charge from Bozeman, Mont., both members of TF Dolch, TF Sword.

"Task Force Dolch has a unique role in RC East in that we cover a large area resulting in experienced route clearance operations; we're able to train RCCs with an up to date practical approach. We developed a training plan that gives them a basic concept of route clearance like leaders training to the more technical aspects of route clearance using equipment and driving route clearance vehicles," said Hohman.

Hohman's team has since helped train multiple ANA unit across RC East in explosive hazardous reduction measures, heavy construction equipment operation, route clearance patrol procedures, and the development of leadership skills. In a little over five months, Hohman and his team prepared instruction guidelines and located appropriate training areas and interpreters.

Hohman's team also instructed the 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps, Afghan National Army on how to find and neutralize improvised explosive devices, provide security, manage logistics supply chains, and render first aid.

Before this training, the soldiers of 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps ANA Route Clearance Company found only a handful of IEDs, whereas they've now found more than 30.

ANA officer 1st Lt. Noor, a platoon leader with 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps in Parwan Province, Afghanistan, said that before the training his soldiers were not properly prepared to conduct route clearance missions. However, the training conducted by Hohman's team has provided them with important tactics techniques and procedures which facilitated their effectiveness.

"We have found more than 30 IEDs on our own, some of which I discovered myself thanks to the training," said one ANA soldier. It was a big help to have Task Force Dolch work with us, and we extend our gratitude to them."

ANA officer Capt. Mohamed of Kabul, Afghanistan, is proud to sustain their route clearance operations while training other Afghan soldiers in route clearance basics. Mohamed said that in time he foresees himself developing his own route clearance training curriculum for Afghan infantry units; however, for now he will remain focused on his soldiers.

Mentoring the Afghan National Army is becoming a step-by-step process that surpasses merely showing Afghans the correct processes, it encompasses mutual learning, developing mentors, and knowledge of tactical procedures. Task Force Dolch's mentorship contribution to the route clearance companies of RC East will help the ANA operate independently and take over the reins against the insurgency for years to come.



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KABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Members of Task Force Dolch, Task Force Sword, and British and Australian coalition forces instruct Afghan National Army soldiers on how to control the recoil of an M-240 Bravo in order to effectively hit their targets. Basic machine gun marksmanship enables a soldier to estimate range to the target, set the sights, and apply the

fundamentals of marksmanship while engaging targets. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Cesar Olaso, Task Force Dolch, Task Force Sword)

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