

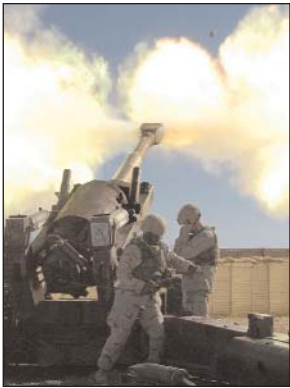
SENTINEL

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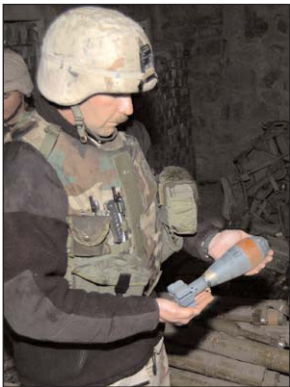
Serving the men and women of Regional Command East, Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan

Feb. 15, 2005

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Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Marines from 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt. leap from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter hovering just above the snowy hills of Korangal during their insertion for Operation Spurs.

America's Battalion takes fight to enemy with 'spurs'

By Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Marines from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment conducted Operation Spurs recently as part of a combined Coalition and government of Afghanistan offensive against terrorist threats in Afghanistan during the winter months.

Leaping from CH-47 Chinook helicopters hovering just above the jagged, snow-covered mountains that ring the Korangal Valley, Marines from both India and Lima Companies inserted into different parts of the valley; they quickly cordoned and searched several houses believed to be hide-outs for mid-level Taliban and terrorist organization Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) leaders and fighters.

"We flew in fast and low and jumped off just outside one of our main target's house," said 2nd Lt. Caleb Weiss, a Lima Company platoon com-

mander. "They couldn't have had more than a few moments to react to having entire platoons dropped on their heads."

The Marines charged into the village and quickly established a presence, preventing the possibility of their targets escaping. The Marines then detained several men suspected of being members or supporters of anti-government forces without having to fire a single shot.

With helicopter pilots performing precarious two-wheel landings over the treacherous mountain terrain and the Marines' and Sailors' willingness to eagerly take the fight to the enemy no matter the "clime or place," America's Battalion sent a clear message that security threats to Afghanistan will not be tolerated or allowed to remain in the Korangal Valley.

The battalion has maintained its high operational tempo despite harsh weather conditions,

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Opinion & Commentary

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February 15, 2005

2-27 Inf. commander recounts R&R

Commentary By Lt. Col. Walter Piatt
2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan - I was extremely fortunate this past month to return to Hawaii for a much needed R&R leave. I am not sure who needed the leave more, my family, myself or the battalion staff. I am certain my family enjoyed my presence as much as the staff enjoyed my absence.

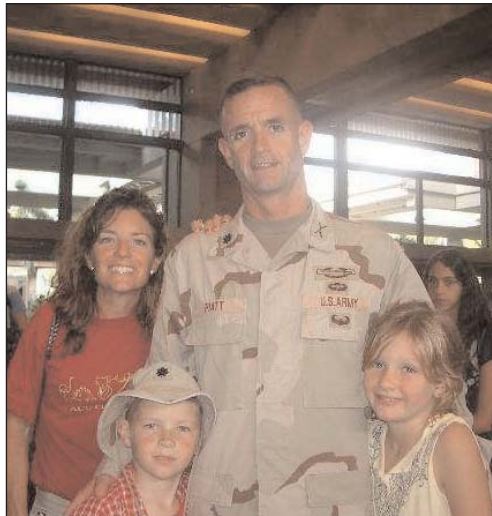
Like all the Wolfhounds, I departed Afghanistan with mixed emotions. Almost 10 months had past since I left the tropic paradise we call home. The trip back was long and draining, however seeing my family was worth all the minor inconveniences along the way.

When I arrived to the island I was not sure what to expect. I knew that I had changed. I knew that the war had hardened me. I was nervous about fitting in to a life I could barely remember. I soon realized I was not the only one that had changed.

My first night home I held a briefing for all the Wolfhound family members. I embraced many familiar faces and met some wives for the first time. Whether I knew them before the deployment or not, I felt like I had known all of them my entire life. I felt a connection with them that only those intimately touched by war can understand.

The joy of the reunion was soon overshadowed by the reality of what I came to say. I showed them photos of their loved ones and attempted to explain what their Wolfhounds were doing in Afghanistan.

I came to share stories of the war as seen by those fighting it. As the night went on, it didn't take long to see the war from a different point of view: their point



courtesy photo

Lt. Col. Walter Piatt, commander of 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., spends time with his family during his recent trip to Hawaii for R&R leave.

of view.

Our families have changed. They have lived in fear for the past year. They wonder every time the phone rings if that is the call that will change their lives forever. They have attended memorial services and Purple Heart ceremonies. They consoled family members who have lost their fathers and husbands. They greeted our returning wounded at the airport while blindly explaining to their children that daddy is fine.

Through all of this, they suppressed their own fear. The innocence they possessed prior to our departure is gone. They view the world differently now—they too are hardened by combat and understand the cost of keeping our country free.

I presented Amber Diaz one of the new Wolfhound coins. I asked her to someday

present the coin to her son Aaron on behalf of those who served with her late husband Corporal Isaac Diaz. While I was handing her the coin I struggled to get the words out without breaking down. It was hard, then Amber hugged me and thanked me for the way the battalion has honored her husband.

In that moment I thought of her young family. I couldn't help thinking how they should be planning for the joyous reunion with Isaac, and planning to raise their son. As she stood there hugging me, showing her strength, it was in this moment that I realized how much our families have changed. This war will never be far from our minds.

The pain of this moment seemed to affect me more than the spouses in the room. They have lived this pain since we deployed. The absence the deployment created is acceptable to them now—at least when compared to the emptiness of what could be, and unfortunately is, for many whose loved ones are not coming home.

While my visit home was a time to relax with my family, there was a latent intent on my part to inform the wives and help them understand their husband's service. In the end it was me who gained understanding. After all my years of service I thought I understood sacrifice. I thought I understood the importance of the military spouses. I realize now how little I knew. These women have taught me the true meaning of service to our nation. America will always owe them for their patriotic selfless service.

The war has definitely taken a toll on those we love. Generations of Americans not yet born will someday thank them.

It is with great humility that I thank them now.

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Fox Battery shows force in Khost

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - To get the big guns, all you have to do is dial 198-PAIN.

Well, not literally. That's the motto of Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, whose M198 155 mm howitzers stand ready at the edge of base here to rain steel down on enemy targets at a moment's notice.

On Jan. 29, the battery demonstrated its ability to reach out and touch someone during a show of force exercise. For several hours, the battery's "big guns" let loose with a barrage of bone-jarring blasts that sent rounds screaming down-range and impacting on the side of a mountain several miles away.

Spc. Ontario Smith, a cannon crew member with Fox Battery, actually pulls the lanyard and fires the rounds. Despite the tooth-rattling blasts he said he loves his job.

"We get to just sit back and blow [stuff] up," Smith said, adding that he loves the feeling of being able to help fellow Soldiers and Marines who get into trouble while out on patrols.

The Washington, D.C., native said the battery played a major role in reducing the number of rocket attacks on the base over the past few months, but thinks they should shoot every once and a



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Spc. Ontario Smith, a cannon crew member for Btry. F, 7th Field Artillery Rgt., pulls the lanyard on an M198 155mm howitzer and sends a round down-range during a show of force exercise Jan. 29 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

while "just to let them know we're still here."

As for the 198-PAIN motto, Sgt. Ricardo Tucker, a gun chief with Fox battery, said it's like a call sign comrades down-range can use to call on the big guns.

"We're just like the police," the Chicago native said. "You get into trouble, and we'll help you out."

In addition to the show of force the exercise had many purposes, according to Capt. Brendan Raymond, command-

er of Fox Battery. It was used to synchronize all the fire support assets in the area, as a show of force to demonstrate the battery's capabilities, and the battery to maintain their critical war fighting skills to deliver fires.

For the Soldiers on the gun line, Raymond said, it was a chance to practice the crew drills and each person's individual job to ensure rounds are fired safely.

Since the rounds were impacting on a mountain outside the base, Raymond said the Coalition took many steps to let local residents know exactly what's going on so they don't get hurt.

"The big thing that we have to do is deconflict this with the local populace and make sure everything is safe and there's not collateral damage," he said.

The day before the exercise, the battery delivered humanitarian aid to locals near the impact zone to let them know the Coalition is here to help and not just to shake the foundations of their homes.

However, the main point of the exercise remained the show of force. Raymond believes there are anti-governmental factions in the Khost Bowl, and by having this show of force, the Coalition is able to deny those factions sanctuary or safe-haven.

"It shows them that if they do want to attack an Afghan or Coalition force, the big guns are there to provide that fire support and disrupt and destroy them," Raymond said.

Smith echoed those thoughts, saying would-be terrorists are starting to realize the error in their ways.

"Oh, they're getting the picture," he said. "I don't think they want to come out and play around."

Tucker also said the battery definitely showed force during the exercise.

"The sound travels a lot, and if they see the explosion, they can tell these big guns are nothing to be playing with," he said.

Can you hear them now? Good.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

A cloud of smoke several miles away marks the impact of a round from an M198 155 mm howitzer from Btry. F, 7th Field Artillery Rgt. during a show of force exercise Jan. 29.

Ghazni PRT delivers aid to snow-covered villages



Pfc. Brandon Maddigan

Maj. Ken Sargent and his interpreter, "Juan," speak with village elder Mohammed Ghafar in Akelwal, Afghanistan, Feb. 2. Members of the Ghazni PRT were in the village to conduct village assessments and to distribute critical winter supplies.

By Capt. Juanita Chang
CTF Thunder Public Affairs Officer

GHAZNI PROVINCE, Afghanistan - While conducting assessments of village needs, members of the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team delivered critical humanitarian supplies Feb. 2 to villages suffering from heavy snowfall in the province.

The members of the Ghazni PRT conducted a mounted patrol to assess several villages and to distribute critical humanitarian aid along the way. With over two feet of snow making it nearly impossible to access these villages whose residents are more likely to travel with mules than the necessary four-wheel drive, the local residents enthusiastically welcomed the assistance.

The first village the Ghazni PRT visited was Zarin, where they met village representative Abdul Bhari. This 100 percent Pashtun village consists of about 250 families and is without both a clinic and a school, and it only has one work-

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in an effort to disrupt the activity of anti-government forces here during a time when Taliban and Al Qaeda elements operating in Afghanistan have, in the past, taken time to reorganize and recuperate.

Insurgents preparing for renewed attacks on Afghan and Coalition targets in the spring, using heavy snowfall and plummeting temperatures to mask their activity, will continue to be sought out by Marine-driven initiatives throughout the harsh Afghan winter said Lt. Col. Norm Cooling, commander of 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines.

"Regardless of how difficult the terrain and weather might be, we have the training, equipment and commitment to take the fight to those continuing to sponsor and conduct terrorist activities in the Kunar Province and that is precisely what we are doing. We are not going to sit around and worry about them exploiting the local populace and attacking us. We are going to keep them worried about us bringing the attack to

them," said Cooling.

If insurgents hiding there were distressed to see the arrival of the Marines, many residents of Korangal happily welcomed the Marines and Navy Corpsmen of the battalion.

With the assistance of Afghan doctors, Soldiers from the Asadabad Provincial Reconstruction Team, and

female military police officers from the 58th MP Company, 25th Infantry Division, they distributed winter coats, medication and offered medical help to nearly 500 sick villagers and their children throughout the Korangal area.

"It's great to be able to help the people by giving them medicine and supplies they need," said Army Spc. Dayna Urbank,

military police officer from Uniontown, Ohio. "We're not here just to search houses and detain people. If we show them respect and help them, they'll see that their government can offer them a much better way of life than any of the terrorist groups can."

Several Lima Company Marines also met with the Korangal village elders, who expressed thanks for the medical supplies and coats. One of the elders, who fought the Russians with the mujahedeens, said that the new peace in Afghanistan was a welcome change and he looked forward to a time when it wouldn't be necessary for Marines and the Afghan National Army to look for terrorists in his village.

"We are happy to have the security here and to receive the medical attention you provide us," said one of the elders who hosted the Marines for a meal in his home. Coalition forces hope to further solidify support among the village elders of the Kunar province by continuing to improve conditions there and eliminate the threats they face from insurgents.



Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Lance Cpl. Dan Robert, squad automatic weapon gunner with Co. L, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt., charges through the snow of the Hindu Kush mountains to his squad's next objective during cordon and search operations as part of Operation Spurs.

J-Bad team assesses village, delivers aid

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

SHERZAD, Afghanistan - Sometimes it only takes a few minutes to make a difference.

Members of the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team visited this village in southern Nangahar Province Feb. 6 to assess its needs and deliver humanitarian aid.

After driving for more than two hours, the team spent only about 45 minutes in the village.

But that time was well spent. While here, the team met with the new police chief, got some information from him so they could assess the village and delivered humanitarian aid in the form of two tool kits and a batch of medical supplies.

Despite the brief stay, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Charles Reedy, a civil affairs specialist with the Jalalabad team, said even short visits have benefits because they let the Afghan people see the team's faces.

Sgt. Robert Snowden, also a civil affairs specialist with the team, agreed that 45 minutes is plenty of time to conduct a successful mission.

"I think just the fact that we go up there makes a good impression," he said. "You go to places in the middle of the winter that a lot of times people don't go to, and just the fact you stop in makes a good impression."

Going into the mission, there were reports that the area was still "hot." Another unit was attacked nearby about a



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Staff Sgt. Charles Reedy (second from right) and Sgt. Robert Snowden (far right), both civils affairs specialists with the Jalalabad PRT, talk to Abdul Ghafoor, the police chief for Sherzad, Afghanistan (left), during a visit to the village Feb. 6.

month ago and those responsible were still believed to be in the area. However, Reedy, a native of Havre De Grace, Md., said they don't let those types of reports dissuade them from going into the area.

"We're here to help the people," Reedy said. "If we get out there and show our face, it brings more people to realize, 'Hey, these guys are here to help us.'"

Snowden, a native of Beltsville, Md., said the mission was also designed to follow up on things they talked to the villagers about in the past, "to see how things are going, find out if there's any problems, and see if

there's anything we can do to help," he said.

Snowden said it makes him feel good to know he's going to these villages to help make life better for the villagers.

"Everybody's job is important, but to me personally, I'm out there seeing the people getting the support," he said. "Somebody who is responsible for coordinating and putting the aid in the vehicles, that's just as important, but they don't get the gratification. All they see is the rear end of a truck. I'm kind of lucky to get to see the end result."



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

3/3 Marines honors fallen 1/3 Marines

Marine 1st Sgt. Anthony Sammartino, Headquarters and Service Co., 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt., reads the names of the Marines and Sailor killed in a helicopter crash in late January in Iraq during a memorial service Jan. 31 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. Twenty-seven Marines and from 3/3's sister battalion, 1st Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt., were killed in the crash. Both battalions are based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii - Kaneohe Bay.

Governors focus on economic development

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

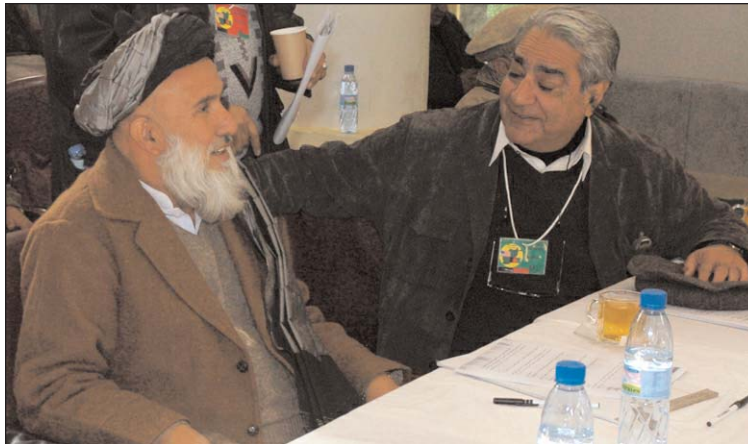
JALALABAD, Afghanistan - The governors of three Afghan provinces and the deputy governor of another province met here for a two-day conference Feb. 1 and 2 to discuss economic development in the eastern region of Afghanistan.

The governors of Nangahar, Kunar and Laghman and the deputy governor of Nuristan attended the conference, the first of its kind in the region. Similar conferences have been held in Kandahar and Ghazni in the past.

Also in attendance was the commander of Combined Joint Task Force 76, the deputy commander of Combined Task Force Thunder and the commanders of the Jalalabad and Asadabad Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

The purpose of the conference was to help create an Afghan-led process of encouraging and enabling growth of the private sector in the region in order to help create jobs, increase the average household wealth and create a tax base.

Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, commander of CJTF 76, said each of the provinces represented at the conference faces many challenges, and most of them are



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Haji Din Muhammad, governor of Nangahar Province (left), and Sayid Fazal Akber, governor of Kunar Province, have a conversation during the governors conference Feb. 1 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

similar to challenges being experienced throughout the country.

"By coming together, the provinces in the east can take advantage of the opportunities and face the challenges together," he said. "It strikes me that because of the similarities of the challenges and the opportunities, this notion that the governors have of having a region approach is exactly right."

Olson, the U.S.'s top operational ground forces commander in Afghanistan, said the region's proximity to Pakistan and the traditional trade routes between Afghanistan and Pakistan provide tremendous

potential for trade.

Olson added the Afghan people, themselves, will play a major role in the future of the country.

"One of the true sources of economic potential is the population, who are honest, skilled, hard-working, diligent and dedicated to making a better Afghanistan," he said.

Olson said the Coalition, along with Afghan security forces, are committed to ensuring a stable and secure environment that supports economic development and reconstruction.

Sayid Fazal Akber, governor

of Kunar Province, said the four provinces have similar problems and difficulties and should work together to solve them.

"The main purpose of this conference was to encourage the private sectors and to increase the cooperation between the four provinces and to provide a good life and prosperity for the people of these four provinces," he said.

Akber said the governors have worked together before to increase security in the region and he hopes they continue to work together to make all aspects of life better in the region.

Lt. Col. Bobby Mundell, deputy commander of Combined Task Force Thunder, said the conditions are set for the advancement of economic prosperity in the region.

"(The Coalition's) hope for your region is very great, and we are confident that together as a team, we can achieve prosperity and advance the cause of freedom within this region," he said.

Mundell added that the Coalition will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the governors as they assume the lead in advancing the cause of freedom in the region.

Similar conferences in the region are tentatively planned throughout the rest of the year.

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ing well. The PRT was able to distribute 30 blankets and 60 pairs of shoes along with beans and rice after documenting the needs of the village.

The next stop was Akelwal village in Andar District, a village of about 300 people, which also does not have a clinic or a school.

The village has one personally-owned generator that provides electricity for the entire village for three hours per day; additionally, they only have one operational well. The PRT was able to distribute 30 blankets, 100 winter coats and beans and rice after documenting the needs of the village.

In Pana, near the Giro District Center, the PRT met with Police Chief Hajji Lahur and donated scarves, coats, hats

and gloves to the district police along with a toolbox. The toolbox contained picks and shovels that will assist them in cleaning their karez, or water irrigation system.

Lahur welcomed the gear enthusiastically and told PRT members there have been no problems with security and that there have been no reports of HIG or Taliban activity in his district.

While in Giro, the PRT's U.S. Department of Agriculture representative, Alex Johnson, met with local farmers. They told him they are in need of wheat seed and fertilizer.

They also said they would like to plant fruit trees. Johnson plans to coordinate with the provincial minister for agriculture to develop a program for the rural areas before planting season begins.

The final stop on this trip was Shahl village, also in Giro District, with a pop-

ulation of about 500.

This village also has no clinic, no working well and no school; however, classes are being taught outside for about 120 students. Residents here have no electricity and walk three kilometers a day to the karez for water. After documenting the village's needs here, the PRT donated 90 pairs of shoes, 50 coats, rice and oil.

There are 19 PRTs, like the one in Ghazni, operating throughout Afghanistan. These teams strive to build effective working relationships with local authorities and the general populace in order to help the Afghan people help themselves.

The PRTs assist by extending the reach of the government of Afghanistan while enhancing the legitimacy of district, provincial, and national governmental institutions.

1/168 Inf. provides security for conference

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

JALALABAD, Afghanistan - Enemies of the Afghan government and the U.S.-led Coalition would probably lick their chops with a conference like the one that took place here Feb. 1 and 2.

Terrorists would probably think the conference held here recently would make a good target, with the governors of three Afghan provinces, the deputy governor of another, and a host of Coalition leaders all gathered together to discuss the future development of the region. Meetings like these are just the thing that terrorists are trying to prevent.

To get to the conference, however, they would have first had to get past the Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment of the Iowa National Guard.

The company, which regularly provides protection for the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team, was out in force to make sure nothing went wrong at the conference.

1st Lt. Colin Nevin, a platoon leader for Co. A, said the mission in Jalalabad is successful and because of that, they often receive visitors and high-ranking officials. The company has had to provide protection for the likes of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan.

"We've been doing it so long, it's pretty reflexive," Nevin said. "It's like second nature."

Sitting behind a machine gun or patrolling for days at a time when nothing happens can become monotonous, though. To battle complacency, Nevin said the unit relies on pre-combat inspections and leadership from the NCOs.

"I'm very lucky to lead very intelligent and experienced



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Spc. Wesley Zollman, an infantryman with Co. A, 1st Bn., 168th Infantry Rgt., Iowa National Guard, mans a .50 cal. machine gun outside the governors conference Feb. 2.

Soldiers," Nevin said. "We have a really good working relationship, and I'm just fortunate to be leading them."

Spc. Wesley Zollman, an infantryman in Co. A, said although their job seems overlooked sometimes, he's proud to do it.

"You get to see the changes that are being made

in part because we're providing protection for everybody else," he said as he sat in the gun turret of a Humvee with a .50 cal. machine gun pointed up a street. Should anything get through the police checkpoint at the end of the street, Zollman was the next line of defense.

The company did not have

to go it alone at the conference. They were augmented by numerous Afghan police and security forces throughout the conference.

Nevin said the company tries to include Afghan forces in their operations whenever possible.

"The end state is where the Afghans can do everything for themselves," he said. "We're trying to train them and empower them so that eventually we'll just be here to supervise."

Nevin said the overall goal for the conference was to provide security so the people inside the conference could do what they came to do without having to worry about what was going on outside.

After two days, the conference concluded without incident. The governors went back to their respective provinces and all the conference attendees went home safely, passing by the vigilant Soldiers of Co. A on their way out.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Sgt. Jacob Pries, a team leader with Co. A, 1st Bn., 168th Infantry Rgt., Iowa National Guard, patrols a garden outside the governors conference Feb. 2 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

Team trains, assists Afghan police

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

JALALABAD, Afghanistan - As Afghanistan moves closer and closer toward assuming full responsibility for their own security and law enforcement, Afghan police are assuming a greater role in this war-torn country.

Around Afghanistan, Coalition soldiers are advising and training Afghan police so when the day comes that the police assume total control of their country's security, they will be successful.

In Jalalabad, a three-man team from the 58th Military Police Company out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, has the daunting task of training 3,382 police officers from 31 districts spread throughout three provinces.

Known as the Police Technical Advisory Team, the soldiers go out to the different police stations in the area, on average, six days a week. Normally, they go to these stations to make assessments of what the stations have and what they need.

"During the assessment, it is my job to gather all the facts that are pertinent to the (Afghan National Police) in the area, to include statistical, biographical, and demographical data, to assess structures they have and their conditions, and identify training needs," said Staff Sgt. William Kegley, the Jalalabad advisory team leader.

A native of Pinellas Park, Fla., Kegley and his team has been here for just over three months now. In that time he and his team have completed preliminary assessments in 23 of the 31 districts for which they are responsible.

On Feb. 9, Kegley and fellow team member Spc. Joe Ferlicka traveled to Kama, a village about 25 kilometers east of Jalalabad. It was a typical assessment, with the team asking the police chief questions concerning personnel, training, uniforms, and ammunition and if he knows of any enemy in the area.

Following the team's visit to a village, they submit a report through their chain of command. Equipment and uniform shortages can possibly be purchased using Coalition funds.

Kegley said the job the advisory team is performing is "imperative."

"Without security, NGOs [Non-governmental organizations] in particular, cannot help reconstruct the nation, and Afghan National Police plays a vital role in security," he said.

Ferlicka, a native of Helena, Mont.,



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Spc. Joe Ferlicka, a member of the Jalalabad PRT's Police Technical Advisory Team from the 58th MP Co., counts boxes of ammunition that were found during a police assessment Feb. 9 in Kama, Afghanistan.

agreed that the advisory team's mission is important.

"We're here to show them our tools and the way we do things so they can develop their own ways," he said. "I'm just here to give them those how-to tools, show them what I know, and give them whatever training I can to help them."

During their time here, the advisory team has also done its part to advance the role of women in the Afghan National Police.

There are three female police officers in Nangahar Province, and when Kegley found out none of them were literate he wanted to change that.

Despite some reluctance from the Afghan National Police, they eventually decided to let the advisory team help, and Kegley arranged for an instructor from a local school to teach the women how to read and write.

Kegley said he wanted to do this because literacy is a necessity for law enforcement at every level.

"It entails a great deal of report writing, a great deal of interpersonal communication skills," he said. "If you can't read or write, chances are you probably can't talk to people either. You certainly can't write a report and you can't testify in court if need be."

Kegley said female police officers are currently only used to search women. In

the very near future, however, these females will be bona fide police officers, not just search tools.

"The Afghan National Police are undergoing changes everyday, and they're slowly but surely becoming an organized police force, and being organized means having women police officers," he said

"Whether it be traffic police, criminal investigation or rape and sexual assault counselors, they will perform in all measures of law enforcement," Kegley continued

The Jalalabad team is scheduled to redeploy to Hawaii in about two months, but they hope to accomplish a lot before they leave. Kegley said before leaving, he wants to visit the remainder of the districts in the area and conduct preliminary assessments, begin holding a monthly leadership seminar for police chiefs, and start a field training officer program to train all the districts' education officers.

Ferlicka said he personally has seen considerable improvements in the security situation, and it makes him feel good to know he's helping.

"Every time we go out and we see it, it brings a smile to our face," he said. "You couldn't ask for anything better because our training is getting out there, people understand it, and they're using it."



Photos by Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Above - Lance Cpl. Tyler Corbaley, a rifleman in Co. L, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt., and Army Sgt. Ashley Schroeder-Petersen, a military policewoman with the 58th MP Co., pass bars of antibacterial soap to an Afghan medic during a humanitarian and medical assistance operation in the Korangal Valley.

Right - Petty Officer 3rd Class Robert High gives a winter coat to an Afghan boy during a medical and humanitarian assistance effort in Korangal. After securing the village, Navy Corpsman and Afghan medics provided locals with much-needed medical care and supplies.



Coalition forces, Afghan medics provide aid

By Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

KORANGAL VALLEY, Afghanistan - It was a heart-warming feeling of relief for the hospital corpsman as he looked down at the infant in his arms.

He knew that a diagnosis of pneumonia would normally have been a death sentence for the crying baby, several days' journey along treacherous, snow-covered roads from the nearest medical facilities.

This time, however, with medical supplies and expertise provided by the Afghan Government and Coalition forces, the child would get a second chance at life.

"This is the best part of our job," said Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Stanfield, hospital corpsman with Company L, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. "We're able to get in here and provide medical care

and supplies to probably the neediest people in this part of the world, and treat some common illnesses that can prove life threatening without medicine. We're also able to show them that we came here not just to fight terrorism, but to help their government get better at providing the services they need."

As part of Operation Spurs, Navy Corpsmen and Afghan Medics, along with a couple thousand pounds of humanitarian assistance and medical supplies, made their way via helicopters to three separate remote villages in the Korangal Valley area to provide medical care to nearly 500 Afghans.

"I'm pretty sure some of these villagers have never seen Marines on helicopters, so there was initially some hesitation," said Stanfield. "Once we had our medics talk to the elders, everyone came

around."

Having Afghan medics working with the Marines and Sailors was important on many levels.

"Having just an interpreter when you're attempting to diagnose a condition or illness can be confusing," explained Stanfield. "The Afghan medics working with us all understand how to explain things to us in medical terms. They also help diffuse any discomfort some Afghans may have had about being treated by us."

Making sure that Afghans from the largest cities to the smallest mountain communities know that it's their government acting to better their lives is extremely important for Coalition Forces.

"We work closely with the Afghan National Army in nearly every aspect of what we do here in Afghanistan," said 2nd Lt. Caleb Weiss, Lima Co. platoon commander. "Showing

the Afghan people that they can trust and respect their government is vital to achieving our goals here and to securing Afghanistan's future."

Besides medical supplies, the Marines and Sailors also passed out toothpaste, soap and heavy winter coats.

"If someone isn't sick, then we have coats and other things we can give them," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Rob High, hospital corpsman. "Hopefully the coats, blankets and food we've distributed today will help prevent further illnesses in this area through the winter months."

As Operation Thunder Freedom progresses though the Afghan winter, Marines and Sailors will have many more chances to interact with and supply humanitarian aid to Afghans in the remote mountain villages along the Pakistan border.

3/3 Marines donate truck to Afghan Police

By Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Company I, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment has been working closely with the Afghan National Police here to increase their proficiency and capabilities.

Recently, "America's Battalion" was able to extend an extra hand to the ANP, donating a new pick-up truck to help the Police perform their important missions around the province.

"The Afghan National Police have been outstanding in helping us," said 1st Lt. Justin Bellman, India Co. executive officer. "We're here to help them as they work locally to maintain peace and provide a secure environment for the citizens of Kunar Province."

In their new vehicle the ANP can now respond more quickly to reports of illegal activity, such as timber smuggling, as well as transport the confiscated weapons caches they frequently seize.

"It gives them the ability to be a quick-reaction force," explained Bellman. "Now, they're able to take more responsibility for getting out and accomplishing their mission, and they love the truck."

India Co. Marines have been training the ANP as well as other Afghan forces in setting up "snap" vehicle and entry control points.

The Marines have had great success with their impromptu vehicle searches,



Marines of Co. I, 3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt. pose with the local Afghan National Police in Nangalam, Afghanistan, along with a vehicle the Marines donated to the police.

courtesy photo

and they are working to pass on their techniques to the ANP.

The Marines, with the importance they place on attention to detail when searching vehicles and people, have proved to be excellent teachers as well.

"We'll usually have one Marine, one Afghan Police Officer and one Afghan Soldier all working together to search a vehicle when we're out doing 'on the job training' with them," said Bellman. "It's been great practice for them and they're

starting to take the initiative to go out and do it themselves."

Besides giving the Afghan Police a more visible presence, which has worked to bolster their authority as law-enforcers, the ANP has been extremely successful in seizing weapons.

"They've seized RPGs, improvised explosive devices, even an RPK machine gun," said Bellman. "They've been a great ally in the war on terror out here."



Sharan PRT supplies uniforms to Afghan National Police

Sgt. David Coffey, a member of the Sharan PRT from the 551st Military Police Co., hands a jacket to an Afghan National Policeman during a recent ceremony at the Sharan Governor's compound in Paktika Province.

courtesy photo

Salerno personnel show aloha spirit



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Soldiers and Marines of CTF Thunder participate in the Great Aloha Run Jan. 30 at Forward Operating Base Salerno.

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Marines manning gun trucks, a Cobra helicopter circling overhead and a C-130 landing on an airstrip in the middle of the route just minutes after the start punctuated the version of the Great Aloha Run here Jan. 30.

About 300 Soldiers, Marines and civilians - some deployed here from Hawaii, some not - participated in the run, a Presidents Day tradition in Hawaii.

In addition to the combat zone environment, the crisp morning air and the snow-capped mountains in the background provided stark contrast to the palm trees and beaches that line the route on Oahu.

What wasn't different, however, was the spirit of the event, which raises money for charities. Over the past week, runners and other personnel here contributed \$1,020 that will be donated to an orphanage in nearby Khost.

"A lot of us have a lot to be grateful for, and it's the least we can do to try to share some of that good will with the people of

Afghanistan and the very needy children in that orphanage," said Lt. Col. Bobby Mundell, deputy commander of Combined Task Force Thunder.

Since 1985, the Great Aloha Run has raised more than \$6.2 million for more than 100 charitable organizations, community groups and elderly care in Hawaii.

The military traditionally enters thousands of people in the event, with many of the units running the race in formation. The military portion of the run is called the "Sounds of Freedom," alluding to the cadences the units sing along the way.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, CTF Thunder leads other units participating in the Great Aloha Run Jan. 30 at Forward Operating Base Salerno.

Last year, about 6,000 Hawaii-based Soldiers participated in the event before deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq and raised more than \$72,000 for charities.

Marine Staff Sgt. Gatai Patu, a native of Waianae, Hawaii, on Oahu was participating in his second Great Aloha Run. A maintenance chief with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment out of Kaneohe on Oahu, Patu said he is proud to be able to help the people of Afghanistan.

"We're doing a lot of good things out here," he said. "We're helping the local people with food and improving their standard of living."

Although he admitted there are a lot of things he misses about Hawaii, Patu said he was glad he had the opportunity to participate in the run here.

"There are things I miss like the ocean, fishing and barbecuing every weekend, but here in Afghanistan, you feel closer to nature because it's such a beautiful country," he said.

Mundell, agreed that gun trucks and helicopters here were quite different from the atmosphere in Hawaii, but said it exemplifies the environment the personnel find themselves in.

"It's a good representation of the threat that's out there and keeps Soldiers and Marines conscious of the environment they're faced with," he said. "It allows them a bit of an opportunity to kind of withdraw from that environment, but at the same time be reminded of the environment we're in."

Personnel also participated in Great Aloha Runs at Bagram, Kandahar and Shindand airfields

At the conclusion of the Salerno run, each participant received one of more than 2,000 race T-shirts that were donated to the military and shipped to Afghanistan.

Afghans not ready for U.S. troops to leave

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Though U.S. and coalition troops have been in Afghanistan for nearly four years, the Afghan people do not see them as occupiers, according to the coalition's director of operations there.

Instead, "the Afghan people fear the coalition might leave too soon," Army Col. Cardon Crawford, who has spent the past eight months as director of operations at Combined Forces Command Afghanistan, said today during an interview with the Pentagon Channel.

"What you find from the Afghan people," he said, "is that we are there at the invitation of the Afghan government to stay as long as they would like us to stay. And in the Afghans themselves, I think you find overall their position is, 'Please don't leave us.'"

Crawford acknowledged the country remains dangerous and that coalition troops are unwelcome in certain regions. But, he added, most Afghans are appreciative of the progress being made in their country, especially Afghanistan's first democratic election in which more than 8.5 million Afghans, 40 percent of them women, took part.

Coalition forces also helped train and equip a new Afghan National Army that now has more than 18,000 members, and

29,000 more Afghan citizens are employed as police officers, Crawford noted. Eighty-eight schools have been completed, with 160 more under construction, while 12 new health clinics have been opened, with 182 new facilities under way, he added.

And, Crawford said, nearly 5 million Afghan children are now attending schools nationwide, and 4 million children have been vaccinated against measles and polio. Such progress, Crawford said, leads him to believe the greatest danger in Afghanistan is not the Taliban overthrowing the new central government.

"The biggest threat is that U.S. and coalition forces might leave too soon, prematurely thinking that the job is done," he said.

While the rebuilding effort is going well, Crawford said, the greatest mission for coalition troops is providing and maintaining security and stability, though Afghan army and security forces have been working alongside coalition troops and "are in charge of their security."

"They are the ones taking over the border checkpoints and establishing that central government role," he emphasized. "The Afghans are in charge ... and we're there to support them."

With coalition support, the Afghan army hopes to increase its strength to 50,000 soldiers by 2007, Crawford said. The army now has 18,000 soldiers and another

3,900 in training.

Crawford said he sees no problem getting volunteers to reach that number and that the coalition is "on target to meet its goal."

Coalition forces are continuing operations to "capture or kill" insurgent holdouts, Crawford said, and still are tracking the whereabouts of al Qaeda's Osama bin Laden and Taliban leaders. That, Crawford said, makes it difficult to predict how long coalition troops will remain in Afghanistan.

But he offered a clearer outlook for Taliban remnants still operating there. "I think that there is a good chance that sometime in the not-too-distant future the Taliban can be defeated in its entirety."

If so, he said, that would be great recognition for coalition troops in Afghanistan, who often have been overshadowed in the media by events in Iraq. He pointed out that troops are serving in Afghanistan because "they feel it's the right thing to do."

"They are doing the job because they see the progress they are making. ... They are doing the job because of what happened on 9/11," he emphasized. "I can assure you that the soldiers who are out there on the ground, beating the bushes, working those mountains looking for the people that intend to do us harm have not forgotten that, even though time has passed."



courtesy photo

Snow doesn't stop Wolfhounds

Soldiers from 2nd Bn., 27th Infantry Rgt. conduct a patrol from Forward Operating Base Orgun-E to Sharan recently to meet with the Paktika Province Police Chief. Despite the hazardous road conditions, the patrol safely made it to its destination and back.