

16th Sust. Bde. holds combat patch ceremony

DCOM

SPO-TIMES

January 2012

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Soldiers celebrate
Christmas around
Afghanistan

The signs of
Progress

ANA signal leaders take step
towards independence with first
network expansion contracting
course



MOVING FORWARD
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in transition to ANA



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DCOM SPO-TIMES

Produced by the NTM-A, DCOM-SPO Public Affairs Office
Camp Eggers, Afghanistan APO, AE 09139
DSN: 318-237-0470

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Deputy Commander.....Col. Darren Werner
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JANUARY'S FEATURED Coalition Partner

Maj. Christian Thurecht

What part of Australia are you from?

I grew up in Brisbane, in the State of Queensland. I currently live at Surfers Paradise in Queensland.

What unit are you from back home and what is your job there?

My current unit is HQ Land Warfare Centre. I'm the S3. On return to Australia, I'm posted to the Army Logistic Training Centre.

How long have you been in the military and why did you decide to join?

I joined on 26 February 1996 as an infantry soldier. I joined for the lifestyle: travel and adventure.

Is this your first deployment? If not, how many deployments have you had and to where?

This is my first deployment to Afghanistan.

What is the most interesting experience you have had in the military so far?

Apart from this deployment – in 2008 I spent 6 months living in Cambodia and studying the Khmer language as part of an advanced linguist course. My job was to travel around the country and talk to people, as well as attending the odd formal lesson. In the US Army, that may not be so strange, but in the Australian Army, such opportunities are rare.

Do you plan to stay in the military or move on to something else?

I will complete 20 years of service in February 2016. After that, I think I will be ready for a change. Travelling is one of my passions – so I would have to try to incorporate that somehow.

What do you do for DCOM-SPO? What challenges do you face?

This I coordinate the operational tasking that the J4 conducts on a day-to-day basis. The greatest challenge facing all of us at NTM-A now is the fact that December 2014 is rapidly approaching and there is still a such a lot of work to do.

What do you like the most about working in a joint environment with so many different nations? Are there any advantages/disadvantages?

Professionally, I think I have benefited immensely from working within DCOM-SPO. I have never worked with US or coalition logistic forces at the strategic level before, and it is both challenging and rewarding to understand the way that diverse organizations plan and operate. On a personal level, I have enjoyed the opportunity to work and socialize with personnel from many different nationalities and backgrounds that I would not normally be exposed to back in Australia.

What would you like other people to know about Australia?

It may be a long way from home, in the middle of the ocean, but I think it is worth the effort to get there at least once. I'll have a cold beer waiting for you.

What are your favorite things to do in Australia? What do you miss the most?

Maybe I actually selected my current posting purely for the location. I live on the beachfront and surf most days before or after work. I miss the ocean, and I'm looking forward to catching a few waves when I get back. Apart from that, I have many hobbies, from scuba diving to photography – but I'm also just as happy to lie on the beach with a good book.

If you were to return to Afghanistan in 10 years, what changes would you like to see?

Personally, I hope the Afghan people find some measure of peace and security – particularly for the sake of the women and children of this nation. Professionally, it would be great to see some of the logistic processes we have helped to create still alive and well, and see the ANSF standing proud in the face of adversity.



*AIRCDRE Alan Wright*

Team,

I was only here in DCOM-SPO for the last six weeks or so of 2012, but it sure was a busy end to the year, and the start of 2013 shows no sign of backing off. All NTM-A DCOMs are now busy building forward momentum for a fully functional transition to the Afghan National Security Forces by December 2014. There is a lot of work going on and will continue for many months, and DCOM-SPO personnel are embedded right in the thick of the action.

Our challenge for 2013 is as important as last year's, and I can only imagine that the work demands and priorities will increase right through the year until we tidy up the loose ends, confirm our records management and audit trails, and finalize each allocated task completely. I ask you to finish off as professionally as you started, and I trust you to step forward with your best possible effort to wrap up the issues.

I thank you all for your efforts to date. I continue to be impressed by your work ethic and commitment. Each day, I see us meeting numerous logistical issues and challenges head on and working

through them to resolution. Often this is not easy – it requires dedication and perseverance to a task, and ensuring the required attention to detail is applied. You continue to provide this input and I see the positive outcomes when I visit regional units, and I hear of your successes from my ANSF colleagues during Key Leader Engagements.

An operational deployment brings with it many significant responsibilities and requires us all to maintain our focus. Put simply, we are here to support ISAF to enable accountable, Afghan led security by December 2014. With this objective in mind, I would also like to stress the importance of looking after yourself and your work mates during your deployment period. Often you will work long hours and have to undertake demanding tasks but I ask you to push through these challenges, take breaks when you have a chance, ask for assistance when you need it, and continue to support each other – working in a team is often the best approach.

I hope by now that you have had a chance to review the DCOM-SPO Campaign Plan, which is intended to set the future direction of our work and to give us all tangible goals to strive for. As always, should you believe that there are areas in which we could improve our approach, then I invite you to step forward and discuss with either myself, your superiors or your colleagues in whichever format you feel most comfortable. Like our mission with the ANSF, being deployed is at times similar to a training environment and we

can all learn from our actions as we respond to daily tasks. Your input is important to me and I value your opinion.

Now already two months into my deployment, the weeks are going by quickly. With signed MoUs for MoD and MoI fuel management, we now see training facilities being handed over and the ANSF stepping up. We are moving fielded equipment out to ANSF units at a frenzied pace, and locally we have the Capital team busily sorting out containers, stripping out surplus equipment, and consolidating depot space – all hectic stuff but exciting to watch and great to see those daily tangible gains bringing the ANSF closer to fully operational status.

Finally, I would like to highlight to you the pictures that are being posted on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/16th-Sustainment-Brigade/> and I encourage you to be a contributor. The use of Facebook has proven a very positive way of keeping in touch with our family and friends, and has allowed them to share in our adventures – although I understand that the introduction of the Broken Boomerang award may prove somewhat confusing at first! No doubt any further introduction of Australian traditional activities into the diverse DCOM-SPO world will be met with caution, but I look forward to broadening your mind to life Down Under and invite all Coalition personnel to join in by contributing to the national melting pot.

Best wishes and keep up the great work!

Air Commodore Wright,
DCOM-SPO



DCOM-SPO Team,

It only seems like we just got here and it is almost 3 months into our combat tour! What a ride! It has been fast and furious and as we all can attest to we have drunk from the proverbial fire-hose and built the aircraft while in flight. I am amazed at how many of you are and have been fighting above your weight class in this most challenging environment and yet done so with a poise and maturity way beyond the level of Command we assumed. In my BFC's throughout all of Afghanistan I am truly proud to profess that I am a member of NTM-A and the DCOM-SPO. More importantly, it is a source of great pride when

those in the different RC's, Kandaks, ANP and ANA Corps Headquarters, Afghan ministerial settings and others associate the NTM-A patch and DCOM-SPO with excellence and logistics/sustainment expertise.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that the genesis of this great reputation we enjoy is those at the tip of the spear, the Regional Support Commands (RSC's). From LTAT's to CAAT's and from advisors to mentors, you all are the face of NTMA to the different Afghan Army and Police Corps. You often operate in the most remote and austere locations where security risks increase exponentially. Nothing can reward your service so we will settle for a sincere and heart-felt Thank you for all you do daily.

The DCOM-SPO headquarters NCO leadership goes above and beyond their duties and scope by way of mentoring and advising Sergeants Major in the Afghan Army and Police with a general goal of aiding them in gaining empowerment. An example of this is SGM Donna King who has taken to task to mentor and advise the very first female Afghan SGM's Academy graduate. This professional arrangement has developed into a relationship that will have

great impact on the ANA and will no doubt aid the ANSF in their future endeavors past the withdrawal of all troops from Afghanistan. We also are reaching out to the Sergeant Major of The Afghan Army, the LOG Command and ASC SGM's.

Lastly, I want to thank all who both organized and participated in our 16th Sustainment Brigade patching ceremony. This was an extremely professional and popular event that allowed for our customs to be shared with those who will take our Army into the future. Many sister services and coalition partners volunteered to take part of this event that was brought to bear during World War I on Oct 19, 1918 where The 81st Infantry Division "Wildcat" is generally agreed to have been the first U.S. Army unit authorized an SSI. Troops who had served under hostile fire moved their unit patches from their left to their right shoulder to serve as a permanent memento of an experience beyond the imagination of most. An experience that would unite Soldiers for many more wars to come in a Brother and Sisterhood unlike any other. Tashakur for this memorable event and let us continue to serve Shohna Ba Shohna.

Calling all Photographers!

Are you taking lots of pictures of your deployment adventures? Have lots of photos from your home country or other exotic locations while on R&R?

Get your photos published in the DCOM SPO-TIMES and possibly other news agencies and media outlets. Contact the DCOM-SPO Public Affairs Office for more information at 318-449-0470 or send to lynne.m.lantin@afghan.swa.army.mil

Training

ANA, ANP join forces to learn critical skill

*By 1st Lt. Gretchen McIntyre
RSC-North/NTM-A Public Affairs*

CAMP MIKE SPANN, Afghanistan - After four long, grueling months, 33 Afghan National Army Soldiers and Afghan National Civil Order Police graduated from basic mechanic training together at the 4th Regional Logistics Support Command here Dec. 1. Over the past several weeks, the soldiers and policemen spent countless hours in hands-on training with hopes of becoming trained mechan-

ics. Throughout the course, the students learned maintenance management and safety, how to troubleshoot and repair a variety of engine and vehicle parts, ways to correct malfunctioning systems and how to service a transmission assembly. "Having the mechanics course on Camp Shaheen served the purpose of the ANA and the ANCOP working side by side in the development of a new skill," said Lt. Col. Daniel Erker, senior advisor to the 6th Brigade ANCOP Special Support Battalion. "These newly trained mechanics can

now share their knowledge with their respective units." Camp Shaheen is an ANA compound located in Mazar-e Sharif. This trial mechanic training program not only produced skilled, prepared mechanics, but it also provided a solution for an age-old problem. Up until now, ANCOP had no means of training a mechanic, nor did they have a single mechanic. The ANA, however, not only had trained mechanics, but they also had a maintenance training program as well as an on-the-job training program already



An Afghan National Army soldier proudly shows off his mechanic school certificate following a graduation ceremony from basic mechanic training at the 4th Regional Logistics Support Command Dec. 1. The class was the first to combine ANA and Afghan National Civil Order Police to work side-by-side to learn basic mechanics skills. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Gretchen McIntyre, DCOM-SPO, RSC-North Public Affairs)

Afghan National Army soldiers and Afghan National Civil Order Police-men pose for a photo and show off their certificates of completion following a graduation ceremony from basic mechanic training at the 4th Regional Logistics Support Command Dec. 1 (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Gretchen McIntyre, DCOM-SPO, RSC-North Public Affairs)



established. Bringing the two forces, the ANCOP and the ANA, together in one location was the perfect way to establish joint training.

“The 6th Brigade ANCOP Special Support Battalion now has four trained mechanics and is one step closer to independently maintaining themselves,” said Erker.

Not only did the trial program help the ANCOP policemen get valuable training, but the program brought two different groups together for a common purpose.

“This joint training disproves the urban myth that police and Soldiers can’t work together,” said Maj. Matthew Berridge, senior maintenance advisor with Regional Support Command-North. Everything about the program involved cooperation between the ANA

and ANCOP: they used the same facility, had the same teachers and received the same certified training in one location. The only way instructors could tell the ANSF apart was via their uniforms.

“They laughed and joked together on breaks, sat together in class and worked together on the vehicles,” added Berridge.

Military Professional Resources Incorporated contractors served as the primary instructors for the class along with ANA soldier assistants. Not only did this help to strengthen the cooperative effort of the groups, but it helped create a team-oriented ANSF that will help in sustaining

Afghanistan long into the future, said Erker.

The only obstacle the training advisors had to overcome involved transporting the policemen to and from the training due to restrictions coming on and off Camp Shaheen. With such a small obstacle in the way of successful training, the joint training will continue to offer future programs for the ANSF. According to Berridge, future joint training will include another maintenance class in the new year as well as an upcoming wrecker training course.



A DCOM-SPC



DCOM-SPC J5



Regional Support Command



Regional Support Command-North



DCOM-SPC Senior Leaders

CHRISTMAS



Command-Southwest



Regional Support Command-Capital



DCO M.SPO Leadership

Tradition

16th Sust. Bde. Soldiers honored with combat patch ceremony

*By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin
DCOM-SPO Public Affairs*

CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan – Soldiers from the 16th Sustainment Brigade, out of Bamberg, Germany, shared in a time-honored Army tradition with a combat patch ceremony, on Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 21.

Part of the 16th Sust. Bde. headquarters deployed in November to augment NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan's Deputy Command-Support Operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Col. Darren Werner and Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the commander and command sergeant major of the 16th Sust. Bde. presented the Soldiers with the NTM-A patch on their right shoulder sleeve along with a certificate of authorization signifying more than 30 days deployed to a combat zone.

Those 16th Sust. Bde. Soldiers who are deployed work alongside U.S. Air Force, Marines and Navy personnel and several Coalition partner nations. Twenty five of those DCOM-SPO Coalition members participated in the ceremony

and received a patch from the 16th Sust. Bde. command team. Fifteen Soldiers also received their first combat patch at the ceremony.

"It was a privilege to be a part of the ceremony," said 1st Lt. Kelsy Ferris, a plans officer with DCOM-SPO from Severna Park, Md. and member of the 16th Sust. Bde.

This is the first deployment for Ferris. "It is an honor to receive the patch as a representation of my service to our country. I am proud of that. Not everyone can say that they have been deployed to Afghanistan and with the drawdown of forces,



Personnel from Deputy Command Support Operations, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, stand at attention during a combat patch ceremony Dec. 21 on Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines as well as 25 Coalition personnel were presented with the NTM-A combat patch by Col. Darren Werner and Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the commander and command sergeant major of the 16th Sust. Bde. (Photo by Can. Cpl. Jean-Philippe Marquis, DCOM-SPO)

Canadian Maj. Gregory Perry, a future operations planner with DCOM-SPO, receives the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan combat patch from Col. Darren Werner and Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the commander and command sergeant major of the 16th Sustainment Brigade out of Bamberg, Germany. (Photo by Can. Cpl. Jean-Philippe Marquis, DCOM-SPO)

I'm glad I got this opportunity."

Canadian Maj. Gregory Perry, a future operations planner with DCOM-SPO and a native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, said he was happy to participate in the

You make up one percent of Americans who serve their nation in uniform.

– CSM Ismael Rodriguez

ceremony.

"I was honored to be invited to take part in the ceremony," said Perry. "We don't have anything like that in the Canadian Army. The American (military) awards program is very well developed. I think it's a good incentive for Soldiers and inspires them."

"As a coalition member this will generate very fond memories of serving with an American unit," added Perry.

According to Army regulation, to qualify for the combat patch, Soldiers must be assigned to a unit



serving in a declared hostile environment for more than 30 days.

"What the regulation cannot possibly capture, is that you make up one percent of Americans who serve their nation in uniform," said Rodriguez, who was also guest speaker at the ceremony. "You are the one percent who recognizes fully the perils of your profession you have chosen yet continuously volunteer time and time again to answer your nations calling. At many times came great personal loss and sacrifice. You are the one percent of selfless Americans who endures and perdures the rigors of war, returns home and ask nothing in return."

The combat patch has a long history dating back to WWI when 81st Infantry Division Soldiers wore a felt patch with the symbol of a wildcat on their left shoulder as they

sailed for France after training at Fort Jackson, S.C. When other divisions challenged the right of 81st Soldiers to wear the patch, General John J. Pershing ruled that the 81st could keep this distinctive insignia and challenged other divisions to adopt shoulder patches of their own. This patch was officially adopted by the U.S. Army on October 19, 1918.

The 16th Sust. Bde. Soldiers are also now authorized to wear the U.S. Forces Afghanistan and 16th Sust. Bde. combat patches and both the Afghanistan Campaign Ribbon and NATO Campaign Ribbon.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the command sergeant major of Deputy Command Support Operations, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan gives an opening speech during a combat patch ceremony Dec. 21 on Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and 25 Coalition personnel of DCOM-SPO were presented with the NTM-A combat patch for serving more than 30 days in a combat zone. (Photo by Can. Cpl. Jean-Philippe Marquis, DCOM-SPO)



UZBEKISTAN

KYRGYZSTAN

AFGHAN

TAJIKISTAN



Afghan National Police Lt. Col. Haji Abdul Mohammed, left, the commander of the Lashkar Gah Training Center, and U.S. Marine Corps Col. Scott Arnold, right, the commander of Regional Support Command-Southwest, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, cut the ribbon to open a new training and planning lounge at Lashkar Gah Training Center in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 10. (U.S. Army photo by Bill Putnam, RSC-Southwest Public Affairs)

Afghan Border Police recruits stand in formation at the Lashkar Gah Training Center in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 10. The ABP officers guarded the borders of Afghanistan after training. (U.S. Army photo by Bill Putnam, RSC-Southwest Public Affairs)



A group of Afghan National Army soldiers hold their graduation certificates following completion of a weapons maintenance course on Camp Zafar, Herat, Afghanistan, Dec. 17. The soldiers learned second level weapons maintenance, repair and storage and handling procedures. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)

UZBEKISTAN

PARTNERS

TURKMENISTAN

Afghan National Army honor guard soldiers stand by for the arrival of distinguished visitors at Camp Zafar, Herat, Afghanistan Jan. 2. (Photo by Can. Cpl. Jean-Philippe Marquis, DCOM-SP0)



A group of female Afghan National Army basic trainees attend class at Regional Military Training Center-West, Herat, Afghanistan Dec. 11. This is the first time females have attended Basic Warrior Training at RMT-C-W. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SP0 Public Affairs)

A group of distinguished visitors arrive for a meeting on Camp Zafar, Herat, Afghanistan Jan. 2. (Photo by Can. Cpl. Jean-Philippe Marquis, DCOM-SP0)



the signs of Progress



ANA signal leaders take step towards independence with first network expansion contracting course

By Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin
DCOM-SPO/NTM-A Public Affairs

CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan – Personnel from NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan's Deputy Command-Support Operations, held a four-day network expansion contract training class for members of the Afghan National Army at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 8-11. The class is the first in a series to transition operations to Afghan control by the end of 2014.

Nineteen ANA senior leaders from the Network Operations Center at the MOD were present to learn the process of request-

ing a network connection from start to finish. The ability to share resources and information quickly is a vital component for successful operations throughout the ANA.

"The purpose of the class is to teach them the network expansion process," said Maj. Mitch Belote, the DCOM-SPO Network Support Operations network expansion officer in charge and a native of Sandpoint, Idaho. "How we do the contracts to expand the network, to link all of the smaller locations together; any little site that wants connection, we link them together. That's done through a contract process."

The class covered everything

from conducting a site survey, submitting a work order, selecting a project officer, doing a cost estimate and funding, to selecting a vendor.

"We went through step-by-step our contracting process that we do at NSO," said Belote.

Several steps are involved in the contract process to acquire a new network connection installation at a site, and foresight and proper planning are necessary to be successful.

The requestor must first identify the structure with its need for network and then define what they want, such as how many networks drops they need and computer ports per room, said Belote. All of that

information is submitted to a contractor who will determine the amount of supplies that are needed to complete the request. Things must be done properly from the start to ensure successful completion of the project.

Air Force Master Sgt. William Hebb, the senior enlisted leader of the Network Support Operations for Deputy Command Support Operations and a native of St. Albans, W. Va., instructed the course and said at this stage the Afghans' level of knowledge in this area is in its infancy stages. Since U.S. and coalition forces have been managing the majority of network operations in the country, they haven't had enough experience yet with the process.

"Our intent is that our Afghan counterparts will achieve an understanding of the process and the ability to complete the process from cradle to grave," said Hebb. "We hope to transition this over to them in the next 6-9 months."

"This was the first class for NSO. This is the first time that they've been exposed to the process that we use to build their network," said Belote. "We're trying to train the trainers that are going to go and teach. We're going to bring in some of them after the first of the year, and they're actually going to do on-the-job training sitting

side by side with us, going through the process. Our goal is that by the end of 2013, they will be doing all the operations and maintenance contracts themselves."

Hebb said he is optimistic about the ANA's ability to learn this process very quickly and take over

operations swiftly. "They seemed very excited about the class and were very attentive. They also asked a lot of questions."

Each of the class participants received a certificate of completion.



Members of the Afghan National Army take notes during a network expansion contract training class at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 8. The class was instructed by personnel from NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan's Deputy Command-Support Operations, Network Support Operations section. (Army photo by Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin)

Left: Air Force Master Sgt. William Hebb, the senior enlisted leader of Network Support Operations for Deputy Command-Support Operations instructs a network expansion contract training class for members of the Afghan National Army at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 8.

Right: Members of the Afghan National Army take notes during a network expansion contract training class at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 8.



From around

Air Commodore Alan Wright, (right), the commander of Deputy Command Support Operations, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, learns how to fire a rocket-propelled grenade launcher at a weapons range on Camp Moorehead, Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 19. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Lawrence Paustian, DCOM-SPO)



Air Commodore Alan Wright, (left), the commander of Deputy Command Support Operations, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, presents Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the command sergeant major of DCOM-SPO, with the Broken Boomerang award at the Senior Leaders Dinner Dec. 15 on Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SPO/NTM-A PAO)

Brig. Gen. Mark Palzer, the ISAF Combined-Joint Logistics officer; Lt. Gen. Abdul Hamid Mohebullah, assistant defense minister for AT&L; and Air Commodore Alan Wright, deputy commander for NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan Support Operations, pose for a photo after signing the Administrative Procedures Document for Bulk Fuel Management Transition at ISAF headquarters Jan. 1. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SPO/NTM-A PAO)



the battlefield



Sgt. Yury Alzate, the executive administrative assistant for Deputy Command Support Operation, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan aims for the target with her 9mm Baretta during a Quick Response Drill weapons range at Kabul Military Training Center, Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 6. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SPO/NTM-A PAO)

Spc. Rafael Reyes, (center) a combat logistics advisor with Regional Support Command-West, Deputy Command Support Operations, reenlists during a ceremony at the RSC-West headquarters on Camp Stone, Herat, Afghanistan, Dec. 26. (Courtesy photo)



Spc. Brandi Thomas, (right) a human resource specialist with NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan's Deputy Command Support Operations reenlists during a humble ceremony on Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 23. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SPO/NTM-A PAO)

a rite of Passage

RSC-West welcomes new CSM during change of responsibility ceremony

By Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin
NTM-A/DCOM-SPO Public Affairs

CAMP STONE, Afghanistan-Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Laub took charge of Regional Support Command-West during a change of responsibility ceremony Dec. 9 on Camp Stone, Herat, Afghanistan. Laub, arriving from Fort Hood, Texas, and a native of Los Angeles, replaces Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Huston.

During his welcome speech, Laub thanked Huston for the foundation he established during his tour. "Your service, efforts and dedication to mission accomplishment will indeed

be extremely valuable, allowing me to pick up where you left off seamlessly. You pre-packed my ruck well. Thanks for your efforts so I can quickly without difficulty, ruck up and continue mission. For that I thank you and wish you and your family all the best in your future endeavors."

"I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to each of you for the selfless service and diligent efforts towards the accomplishment of this incredibly important mission," said Laub, addressing the crowd of U.S., coalition and Afghan forces as well as civilians that comprise RSC-West. "What each of you do day in and day out is of im-

measurable importance. I am truly honored to join your ranks. I look forward to serving side by side with each of you as we continue to serve with distinction and excellence."

RSC-West Commander Col. Keith Detwiler welcomed Laub to the team but also said a profound and heartfelt farewell to Huston, lauding his accomplishments during his tenure at Camp Stone.

"You leave us as a stronger more capable unit," said Detwiler. "Although you are leaving Camp Stone your legacy will remain here in each of the American and coalition Soldiers that you have led, but most importantly



Col. Keith Detwiler, the commander of Regional Support Command-West, passes the guidon to Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Laub during a change of responsibility ceremony on Camp Stone, Herat, Afghanistan Dec. 9. Laub replace Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Huston as the RSC-W command sergeant major. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SPO/NTM-A PAO)

forever in the strong Afghan National Security Force. Thank you for all that you have done.”

Laub enlisted in the U. S. Army on the Oct. 13, 1987. Since then he has served in every leadership position from section chief to battalion sergeant major.

Laub’s awards and decorations include: the Bronze Star medal; Meritorious Service Medal (5th award); Army Commendation Medal (4th Award); Army Achievement Medal (3rd Award); Meritorious Unit Citation; Army Good Conduct Medal (8th award); National Defense Service Medal (2); Korean Defense Service medal; Iraqi Campaign Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; NCO Professional Development Ribbon (4); Army Service Medal; Overseas Service Ribbon (3), and the Drill Sergeants Identification Badge. He is also a Member of the prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

Laub is currently in his fourth year of college in pursuit of his Bachelors of Science degree. Laub is married to the former Samantha R. Hunt of Leesville, La. They have five children and four grandchildren.

Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Laub, a Los Angeles native, addresses the audience during his change of responsibility ceremony on Camp Stone, Herat, Afghanistan Dec. 9. Laub arrived from Fort Hood, Texas to replace Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Huston as the RSC-W command sergeant major. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SPO/NTM-A PAO)



Soldiers from Regional Support Command-West salute in formation during a change of responsibility ceremony on Camp Stone, Herat, Afghanistan Dec. 9. Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Laub, a native of Los Angeles, replaced Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Huston as the RSC-W command sergeant major. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin, DCOM-SPO/NTM-A PAO)



Convoy Security

Afghan Public Protection Force gains momentum in southern Afghanistan

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer
2nd Class Ronald Pitts
RSC-South
Public Affairs

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The Afghan Public Protection Force graduated the first of several convoy training classes from the Regional Training Center in Kandahar Nov. 19.

The 93 students that graduated from the basic convoy training marks the initial main body fielding of the Kandahar “Ranger” Convoy Kandak.

The seven-week course, while not as long as a traditional military or police school, focused on self defense, communications, fire arms training, first aid, improvised explosive device awareness, standing guard and driver awareness for convoy operations.

While standing up a new operational Kandak is a difficult task, Col. Shahab, the APPF Ranger Kandak commander in the Kandahar Region who chooses to use one name only as many Afghans do, is up to the task. While there are significant challenges to the development of facilities, infrastructure, and fielding the required equipment and supplies needed to make this convoy security capability operational, person-

nel remain the most valuable resource. “This graduation was a major step in realizing APPF convoy operations in Southern Afghanistan. With another class underway, APPF will soon have enough manpower to begin its mission to provide convoy security while reducing corruption along supply routes in the Kandahar area,” said Maj. James Wymer, with Afghan National Police Development, Regional Support Command-South.

As a for profit, state owned enterprise, the APPF is a unique organization within the Afghan Ministry of Interior. Although they neither fall under the Afghan Uniformed Police

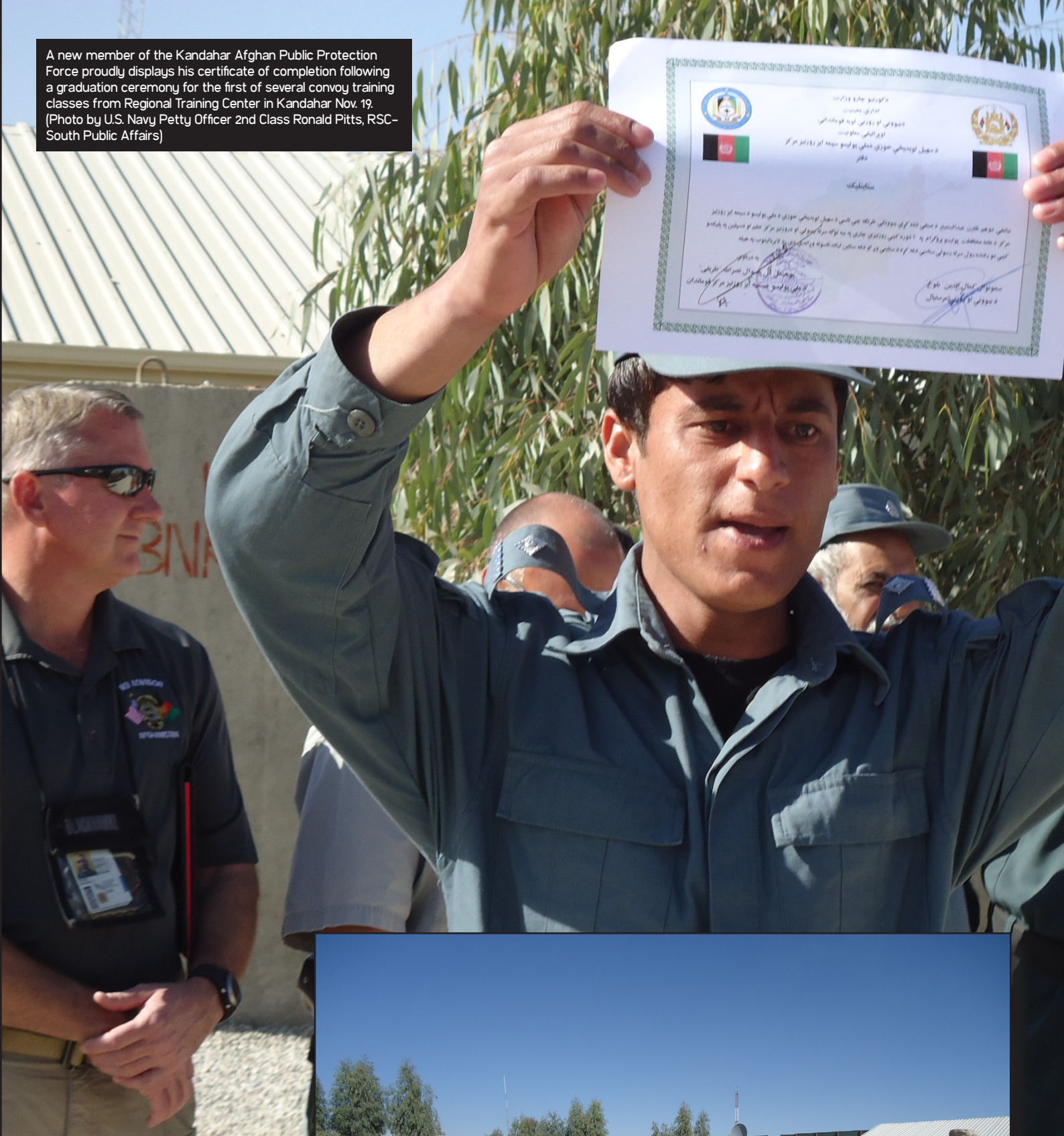
or the Army, APPF’s ability to provide static and convoy security frees the ANP and Afghan National Army to utilize their resources to focus on key mission goals. As APPF gains momentum through personnel training and equipment fielding, they will soon secure convoys that provide key logistics along the main supply routes in the Kandahar area which is a critical factor in the success of the infrastructure and economy of the of this developing Nation.

For more information about NTM-A, visit www.ntm-a.com.



Afghan leadership along with coalition mentors stand side by side as the members of the first graduating class of the “Ranger” Kandak Afghan Public Protection Force prepare to receive their certificates of completion Nov. 19. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald Pitts, RSC-South Public Affairs)

A new member of the Kandahar Afghan Public Protection Force proudly displays his certificate of completion following a graduation ceremony for the first of several convoy training classes from Regional Training Center in Kandahar Nov. 19. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald Pitts, RSC-South Public Affairs)



The newest members of the Afghan Public Protection Force stand at attention at a graduation ceremony for the first of several convoy training classes from Regional Training Center in Kandahar Nov. 19. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald Pitts, RSC-South Public Affairs)



Transition

RMTC-SW completes final step in transition to ANA

By Army Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin
NTM-A/DCOM-SPO Public Affairs
and Bill Putnam
RSC-Southwest Public Affairs

CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan – Soldiers and leadership with the Afghan National Army Regional Military Training Center-Southwest, located on Camp Shorabak in Helmand province, said goodbye to advisers and friends when it officially took full control of its operations during a transition ceremony here Dec. 26.

More than 200 ANA trainees stood in formation with their Danish advisers and distinguished guests during the ceremony. The facility, which opened its doors in January 2010, was the last RMTC to be built and is now the first to transition.

Part of the ANA 215th Maiwand Corps, recruits come from all 34 provinces throughout Afghanistan to attend training at the facility and become ANA Soldiers.

ANA Brig. Gen. Ghulam Farooq Parwani, the deputy commanding general of the Afghan army's 215th Corps, welcomed all attendees and praised the hard work and dedication of the RMTC staff and their advisers during a speech.

"It has been almost two years since the estab-

lishment of the RMTC," said Farooq. "In this short time the personnel of RMTC whose job it is to train and educate soldiers have worked with understanding of their responsibilities and have worked with honor and dignity and compassion. The command of RMTC with complete help of 215th have worked hard and achieved a lot due to the fact that today we are witnessing the transition between advisers and RMTC. Today we congratulate this great achievement to all of you officers, NCOs and Soldiers of RMTC."

Marine Col. Scott Arnold, the Regional Support Command-Southwest commander, said he is amazed by the progress since he took command in June of this year.

"For the past seven months I have personally witnessed RMTC-Shorabak mature and become a shining example of Afghan National Army capability. You have risen to meet every challenge head on, and you have succeeded," said Arnold. "You possess all the necessary leadership, technical, tactical military skills required to accomplish

all your missions, whether it's teaching class in a classroom, or firing on the firing range, issuing supplies, or feeding thousands of soldiers - you can do it all."

Since November 2011 alone, the facility has trained approximately 7,500 ANA recruits in various courses including Regional Basic Warrior Training, Tactical Leaders Course, Infantry NCO Battle Course, Combat Medic Course and an up-armored Humvee Driver's Course.

"In early 2010 this was a barren piece of desert," said Arnold. "On it today sits the best training center in Afghanistan. From here you lay the foundation on which Afghan security is built. An army is only as good as its soldiers, and soldiers are only as good as their training. Every soldier that has graduated and every soldier that will graduate plays a fundamental role in the security of Afghanistan. Be proud of all you've accomplished, all you will accomplish and the key role you play in sustaining the Afghan National Army in the security of your nation."

U.S. Marine Corps Col. Scott Arnold, left, commander of Regional Support Command-Southwest, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, and Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Shah Wali Zazai, commandant of the Regional Military Training Center-Southwest, sign transition documents during a transition ceremony at RMTC-SW in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 26. (U.S. Army photo by Bill Putnam, RSC-Southwest Public Affairs)



Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Shah Wali Zazai, left, commandant of Regional Military Training Center-Southwest, salutes ANA Lt. Col. Ali Kabir Nawed, RMTC-SW chief of staff, before a trooping of the line of ANA and Danish soldiers during a transition ceremony at the facility in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 26. (U.S. Army photo by Bill Putnam, RSC-Southwest Public Affairs)



Danish Army soldiers with the Military Capacity Building Unit take down the NATO flag after a transition ceremony at the Afghan National Army's Regional Military Training Center-Southwest in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 26. (U.S. Army photo by Bill Putnam, RSC-Southwest Public Affairs)



Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Shah Wali Zazai, commandant of Regional Military Training Center-Southwest, troops the line of a formation of ANA soldiers during a transition ceremony at RMTC-SW in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 26. The ANA took over complete control of RMTC-SW during the ceremony. The facility is the first RMTC in Afghanistan to transition to ANA-control for training, operations and maintenance in the country; it was also the last to be opened in January 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Bill Putnam, RSC-Southwest Public Affairs)



To prevent injury...

Get a Grip!

Grab a handle when stepping off a vehicle

» When exiting vehicles, keep **3** of your **4** limbs in contact with the vehicle — two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand

» **Use steps and hand holds**

» Rain, ice, and sand can make steps slippery

» Remember:
Your backpack can throw you off balance

» Check for uneven ground surfaces before stepping off the vehicle

Falls and jumps are the leading cause of serious non-battle injuries (such as fractures or dislocations).

Over 2400 fall and jump-related injuries have been air evacuated from Iraq and Afghanistan.