



NATO TRAINING MISSION - AFGHANISTAN

SHOHNA BA SHOHNA



NTM-A

NATO Training Mission
AFGHANISTAN



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Guardians of Afghanistan

By Lt. Gen. Daniel P. Bolger
Commander, NTM-A/CSTC-A

Why do young men—and women, too—join the Afghan National Security Forces? At recruiting stations in all 34 provinces, the leaders ask that question of every single person who comes in to sign up. The answers are recorded and filed. Those responses tell us something very important about these young Afghans.

The number one reason is a great one: to defend the country. Secondary incentives include providing for the family, learning to read, picking up technical skills, and seeing other parts of the country. More than a few admit a strong interest in trying something difficult and testing their courage under fire. But the overwhelming majority of replies consistently reflect that basic idea of protecting fellow Afghans.

It is not easy to be an Afghan Soldier, Airman, or Patrolman. Most of the force serves far from home. With the exception of the Afghan Uniformed Police, who usually work in their local districts, all the other services assign recruits on a national basis. Folks from mountainous Nuristan could end up in the dusty sand flats around Spin Boldak. Those from the dry western plains near Herat might be posted in the green, terraced hillsides near Jalalabad. Afghan units include a mix of ethnic groups and regional accents. For young people who have rarely left their family village, it is a strange world, a long way from where they grew up. Yet the shared hardships of training, discipline, and combat operations build units into families, too. Afghans learn about their own strengths and limits by learning to fight alongside others. The whole has proven to be far greater

and more resilient than any of the individuals who form the team.

The effective expansion of the Afghan National Security Forces since 2009 has confounded the Taliban and their affiliates. The numerical growth has been impressive, with some 120,000 more in the ranks of Army, Air Force, and Police over the last few years. The enemy thought they could handle the numbers. What they could not stomach has been the Afghan will to fight. Afghan platoons close with their opponents and finish the job. That demonstrates training and battle skill. But it also reflects a deep reservoir of will. Over the long haul, that commitment will make the difference.

This strong Afghan will to fight comes from each family. Young Afghans go forth to protect their own. They depart for service with the blessings of parents, the respect of younger brothers and sisters, and the assent of tribal elders. Every Afghan citizen who wears the uniform is a volunteer.

And yet when they get “there,” a long way from their ancestral qalat, the training pays off. They do their duty. They look out for the Afghans in uniform to their right and left. They shield the local civilians, and take the fight to the foe. On the coldest winter night in the Hindu Kush, or the hottest summer afternoon in the Registan Desert, the Afghan forces are on patrol, on watch, and on guard. These actions come at a bitter cost. In recent years, our Afghan partners have endured more killed and wounded than all of our Coalition countries put together. Yet, knowing these risks, young Afghans continue to join and fight. They are truly the guardians of Afghanistan.

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Photo - Front Cover: Afghan air force Capt. Shahnawaz Nabi Zada, C-27A loadmaster assigned to the Kabul Air Wing, looks out over the Kabul, Afghanistan, International Airport runway, during an early-morning pre-flight check ahead of a one-hour proficiency training mission July 19, 2012 (Photo by Capt. Agneta Murnan)

Photo - Top: Two C-27A aircraft are parked on a ramp at the Kabul, Afghanistan, International Airport, in the early morning, July 19, 2012. The first independent, all-Afghan aircrew flew a one-hour proficiency training mission the same morning. (Photo by Capt. Agneta Murnan)

Photo - Afghan air force Capt. Shahnawaz Nabi Zada, C-27A loadmaster assigned to the Kabul Air Wing, conducts a pre-flight check ahead of a one-hour proficiency training mission July 19, 2012 (Photo by Capt. Agneta Murnan)



Volunteers take donations to Kabul's only Children's Hospital

Story by SrA Samantha Krolikowski, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan NTM-A Public Affairs

Forty-four people volunteered to take donations to the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital – Kabul's only Children's Hospital, Aug. 9.

More than \$1,200 worth of cleaning supplies, hundreds of school supply kits, clothes and toys were donated to the hospital.

"The money came from Camp Eggers personnel donations – but the clothing, toys and school supplies came from our friends and family back home and from Soldiers and contractors here on Camp Eggers," said Volunteer Community Relations Program Director, Sgt. Jaclyn R Hill.

The hospital is equipped with a total of 350 beds, with a NICU, Infectious Disease section and Emergency Room. Many of the children, who are patients at the hospital, had their mothers next to their side.

"That said, the one thing that was so comforting was to see all the mothers there right beside their children, helping the doctors and nurses care for them," said Hill. "I feel better knowing that the hospital and their staff are doing the best they can with what they have and that is definitely a cause worth supporting."

"The cleaning supplies will help with the overall sanitation of the hospital and hopefully the toys will help raise the spirits of the children a little," said NTM-A CJ6 Chief, Capt. Troy Shettlesworth. "The knit hats for the infants and blankets will help during the upcoming winter months."

According to Hill, this was the first trip to the Children's Hospital, but it's an important cause and the VCR Program will continue to support this hospital.

"Honestly, just the act of visiting the hospital, showing our support and spending time with the children and mothers is a big help in itself," said Hill.

"I would encourage service members to be as involved in as many opportunities to be ambassadors for their countries as their work schedules permit," said Shettlesworth. "People tend to forget that the Afghan people are also victims of the insurgency. We are here to assist the Afghans defeat the insurgents and do what we can to help the community and the Afghan government overcome the hardships that decades of war and the previous oppressive regime saddled them with is another way to do that."



(Top) Volunteers from the NATO Training Mission- Afghanistan unload donations for the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital,

(Bottom) A patient at the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital receives a toy from the volunteers from the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan who took donations to the hospital.



ANASOC chooses the first SMW CSM

Story and photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Lockwood
NTM-A Public Affairs

The Afghan National Army Special Operations Command vetted candidates in a formal selection board to become the first Command Sgt. Maj. of its Special Mission Wing, in Kabul.

Prior to the board each candidate had to submit their own nomination package to become the Senior Enlisted Leader of what will become a battalion-sized part of ANASOC. On the day of the board, four candidates from the ANA personally (by requirement) sat before a standardized selection process of seven members of the ANASOC top leadership and were asked 12 questions ranging from tactics and computer skills to prior experiences as members of the tANA.

This board is significant because it is the first entirely Afghan-led process of its kind for the ANA. The ANA, specifically ANASOC, directed, organized and executed the board.

"The formal process lasted approximately two hours and was the culmination of months of preparation," said a member of NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan who observed the process. "It looked like something we'd do in the U.S. It was something we'd have to go through, or, I would. I was pretty impressed."

Recently a similar board was held to select the next Afghan Sgt. Maj. of the Army. The two were similar, but

differed in an important way. While the board for the SMA was chaired entirely by Afghans, it was conducted with official advisors present to oversee how it progressed. For the SMW CSM selection there were no Coalition advisers present (though some Coalition forces were in the conference room), however, some of the lessons learned were shared.

"Gen Karimi's paradigm shift laid the foundation for how all future SELs should be picked by using a merit-based system to select the SMA," said NTM-A adviser Billy Blackmon. "The SMW solidified the value and importance of the process by following suit to select the SMW SEL."

In addition to the board, ANASOC CSM Faiz Wafa said he spoke with all the candidates personally, to make sure each had the right stuff to lead the SMW soldiers and Non Commissioned Officers, to monitor them and advocate on their behalf, and advise the Wing's commander as well, as the Command Sgt. Maj. He, too, was impressed with the candidates' potential to assume the role.

Whoever got selected, Wafa said, "I'm sure he will handle this job."

The four candidates are currently battalion-level CSMs whose particular experience and skills are required in the highly prestigious SMW CSM position. The selection results are forthcoming.



The selection board interviews a candidate to become the first Command Sgt. Maj. of ANASOC's Special Mission Wing, July 21, in Kabul. (U.S. Army photo by Cpt. Joshua Heimroth/Released)



Afghan instructors teach English to Afghan National Army

Story by SrA Samantha Krolikowski
NTM-A Public Affairs

Kabul Military Training Center held a graduation ceremony for the last class mentored by Americans before the English Training Center transitioned from NTM-A to the Afghan National Army and Afghan Foreign Language Institute, Aug. 1.

"First of all I am very thankful for my American instructors," said Bilal Stanikzai, an English teacher at KMTC. "They helped and supported us a lot and trained us and also trained the students. Today was the transition day, the course was submitted from the Americans to the Afghan teachers. I'm real happy now that Afghanistan and Afghan people can teach by themselves and serve by themselves without any help or any support."

"First, it's my willingness, and I'm eager to be an English instructor and teach everywhere," said Shapoor Paiman, an English instructor. "It's my profession, and I like this job, to do more and more for my people."

The KMTC English Department started in 2003 and since then, more than 580 Afghan National Army service members from all over Afghanistan have graduated from the eight-month course. In order to pass the class, students have to reach a score of at least 55 or higher.

"A score of 55," said Suzette K. Nelson, site lead for the English Language program at KMTC, "which is a very difficult thing, considering that how many words there are and ideas that you can express with the English language, the English vocabulary, a lot of them come with no English, and in eight months they need to be able to score 50% or higher of what a native speaker would speak."

During this cycle, there have been contract instructors who have also helped the ANA officers teach the course. In order for the Afghan instructors to teach the course they have to have knowledge in the English language and need to prove that they can speak English.

"There are five contract instructors," said Nelson. "There were several ANA officers who also taught here during the course of the last cycle, and we've also had three American mentors from the Defense Language Institute here working with us."

"They have to have a basic-a better than basic English vocabulary," said Nelson. "They have to pass a language proficiency test and they have to prove that they can speak English in order to teach it."

According to Nelson, a lot of the ANA soldiers who finish the English program at KMTC, travel to the San Antonio Defense Language Institute for training in basic teaching skills and some of them even went to advanced teacher training. When they come back to teach, their main job is to help the Afghan teachers become better teachers because they are teaching the curriculum.

"They have to be disciplined," said Nelson. "They have to work hard, and they've got to focus. They're pretty much assigned here; this is their job for the eight months."

English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and one of the international languages for diplomacy and business. It's also the official language of international aviation and is one of the common languages between people of differing native tongues, according to Barbara Goodno, chief of the Literacy and Language Division.

"English is an international language and now if you see technology, science, and everything else, it is in English," said Stanikzai.

"It's a part of our life, so it's necessary and mandatory to learn English, to tackle our daily problems," said Paiman.

The students have been very successful in completing and scoring well above average in the course. With dedicated teachers and students, the Afghans hope to continue teaching English.

"Our job here as mentors, was to help them stand up and the students have been phenomenal, the administration has been phenomenal and they are ready to carry the program on by themselves," said Nelson. "This is very successful. It has been, for me personally as a site lead, has been a phenomenally rewarding experience to watch these men come in with the level of enthusiasm they've had for learning English."



The 17th class to graduate from Kabul Military Training Center English Language Training Center listens to a speaker during their graduation ceremony. Soldiers come from all over Afghanistan for a chance to learn English at the eight-month course.



Graduating students pose for a group picture after their ceremony. They are the 17th class to graduate from Kabul Military Training Center English Language Training Center. Soldiers come from all over Afghanistan for a chance to learn English at the eight-month course.

First all-Afghan C-27A aircrew goes solo

Story and photos by Capt. Agneta Murnan
438th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

The first all-Afghan C-27A crew, composed of an aircraft commander (pilot), co-pilot and loadmaster, took flight for a proficiency training mission lasting approximately one hour from the Kabul, Afghanistan, International Airport, and back, July 19, 2012.

"The mentors were flying with us before - they taught us so many things," said Afghan air force Col. Aimal Pacha, aircraft commander and also C-27 squadron commander, assigned to the AAF Kabul Air Wing. "Now we are independent, and can fly by ourselves."

To reach this point, explained Lt. Col. David Waller, the 538th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron's director of operations, each crew member had to accomplish all of the qualification training and a final flight evaluation. For pilots, this qualification training consisted of hundreds of classroom academic lessons, C-27 flight simulator events and numerous aircraft training flights.

Training for loadmasters covered weight and balance dynamics within aircraft limitations, loading operations, passenger handling and forklift certification. In the case of the C-27As, advisers give loadmasters the nickname of 'load-gineers' because they also accomplish a number of ground and flight systems checks and procedures that are normally accomplished by those called 'aircraft engineers'.

"We studied a long time and we did lots of training to get to this step -- to finally execute a flight without any help from the mentors," told Afghan AF Capt. Shahnawaz Nabi Zada, C-27A loadmaster assigned to the Kabul Air Wing and part of the three-person crew. "And the flight was accomplished successfully, so essentially it is an honor to the Afghans and to all the Afghan air force personnel."

Before this independent proficiency sortie, crew members' performance was evaluated individually by coalition advisors.

"This day marks a real turning point for the Afghanistan air force," said Waller. "The AAF now has its first highly trained C-27A aircrew capable of providing humanitarian assistance and security to the great people of this country. It was an honor to fly with Colonel Pacha during the flights leading up to this historic event. He is an incredible leader, pilot and an asset to the country of Afghanistan. I am extremely proud of these great men for the hard work and dedication they displayed to

make this day a reality. This will truly be the highlight of my time spent assisting the people of Afghanistan."

The first C-27A aircraft were introduced to the Afghan air force in late 2009 for the development of Afghan airlift capabilities to move personnel and supplies. The C-27A is a rugged, twin-engine turboprop aircraft with short take-off and landing capabilities on unimproved airfields as short as 3,000 feet.

Since the first aircraft deliveries, the crews have been a mixture of coalition and Afghan members. Afghan aircrew members and their advisers overcame several challenges to get to this moment -- including a fleet stand down lasting the better part of six months.

While fleet maintenance and fleet management were analyzed and the aircraft began being returned to flying status one-by-one, pilots and advisers worked hard on building knowledge for flight, passenger and cargo controls.

"During the standdown, we received a couple of variations of simulators; both of which have accelerated the Afghan air force and its ability to aviate proficiently," said Senior Master Sgt. Jarrod Sebastian, 538th AEAS Superintendent. "Each loadmaster could scrutinize certain scenarios on the ground, and, more importantly, how they are to respond to them," Sebastian said.

This is the first event in a series which will enable the crew to gain experience and instruct other AAF aircrew. "This first flight signifies the result of many individuals' hard work and dedication," said Sebastian. "The AAF members are eager to support their country and are proud to do so."

"Everything we learned was very useful during this solo flight; this is the reason that we executed this flight successfully without any issues," said Nabi Zada. "We will teach our techniques to the others in the future."





(Top Left) Engines are started and Afghan air force Capt. Shahnawaz Nabi Zada, C-27A loadmaster, assigned to the Kabul Air Wing. The crew flew a one-hour proficiency training mission without the onboard presence of coalition mentors

(Top Right) Afghan air force Col. Aimal Pacha, a C-27A aircraft and squadron commander assigned to the Kabul Air Wing, conducts a pre-flight check from the cockpit ahead of a milestone one-hour proficiency training mission. This was the first independent Afghan AF flying mission with the C-27A.

(Middle) Afghan air force Capt. Shahnawaz Nabi Zada, C-27A loadmaster assigned to the Kabul Air Wing, conducts a pre-flight check.

(Bottom) Afghan air force Capt. Shahnawaz Nabi Zada, C-27A loadmaster, Maj. Nik Mohamad, C-27A co-pilot, and Col. Aimal Pacha, C-27A aircraft and squadron commander, each assigned to the AAF Kabul Air Wing, stand for a moment on the Kabul, Afghanistan, International Airport flightline ahead of their first independent flying mission together without the onboard presence of coalition mentors.



Afghan Public Protection Force to become Afghanistan's newest guards

Story and photo by SrA Samantha Krolikowski
NTM-A Public Affairs

The Afghan Public Protection Force's main task is to protect banks and privately owned companies. Although they became operational five months ago, they are branching out to supply security to Afghan and Coalition bases as well.

A key component of this transition is the transfer of security responsibility for development projects and convoys around the country from Private Security Companies to the Afghan Public Protection Force.

As of June 4, the APPF has a force of approximately 16,000 guards. This includes about 6,000 pre-existing APPF guards and 6,000 guards who have transitioned from private security companies. Its target goal is approximately 30,000 guards by March 2013.

The APPF has been training security guards and securing sites in Afghanistan since 2011. The APPF is growing and has an operational capability to meet the country's existing and emerging security needs such as providing security for military compounds, private companies, as well as banks.

During training, the guards go through several classes on self defense, rules for use of force, arrest procedures, body searches, handling batons and handcuffs, learning how to use a radio, firearms instruction, first aid, police tactics, Islamic relations, knowledge on access points, vehicle check points, vehicle searches, firefighting basics, IED and mine awareness, and dealing with discovered explosives.

These classes imbue the skills necessary for the APPF to use in their day-to-day jobs and teach them the right procedures in various of situations. After they complete the training, they are then able to provide security for banks and private companies, further adding to the security of the Afghan people.

"The APPF's task is to protect the banks, private companies and to maintain their security," said Walid "The banks or private companies have lots of guards and they're for the banks and private companies.

When someone wants guards, they suggest this to the defense minister, the defense minister requests from the minister of interior, and then we send the guards to the private companies or banks."

The Afghan Public Protection Force is developing into a professional, capable force that can gain the Afghans' confidence in their government.. It is playing an important role in ensuring that development work and viable investment can continue, paving the way for a more successful future for Afghanistan.

The success of the APPF lies in the hands of those who serve. The most senior enlisted member of the organization takes the job seriously. He is committed to working together with coalition advisers and Afghan organizations for continued progress.

Sgt. Maj. Mohammad Walid "Azizi" is new to the APPF, but he is doing his best to ensure issues within the APPF are recognized and have a solution.

"My main job is whenever any Non- Commissioned Officer r has a problem, he or she shares with me their problem," said Walid "If it doesn't have a solution, I find a solution and I solve the problem, said Walid."

"He serves as a leader for all APPF NCOs and Guards and as an advisor to the Deputy Minister," said MSgt. Samuel Nunez, his coalition adviser.



Sgt. Maj. Mohammad Walid "Azizi" and his advisor Master Sgt. Samuel Nunez talk about what Walid may need for his work in the Afghan Public Protection Force. Walid serves as a leader for all APPF Non- Commissioned Officers and Guards and as an adviser to the Deputy Minister.



Provincial reconstruction team holds Iftar dinner

Story and photo by Lt. Benjamin Addison, U.S. Navy
Regional Command-West Public Affairs

Members of Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah hosted local government officials for an iftar dinner here at Forward Operating Base Farah Thursday.

U.S. Navy Cmdr. Thomas Sheppard, commanding officer of Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah, and Nancy Abella, U.S. State Department representative, welcomed

Dr. Mohammed Akram Khpalwak, provincial governor of Farah, as well as members of the Provincial Council, the Director of Religious Affairs, and the Chief Justice to Forward Operating Base Farah to share an iftar dinner in honour of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. Distinguished guests also included representatives of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance and Provincial Peace Council.

"This is the most important emotional and spiritual time of year for them, and for us to be able to participate in that, and show them that we honour it, I thought was just a great opportunity," said Abella. "I really wanted to express to them that we were honouring their holiday. We didn't have any other agenda except to be with them on their holiday, serve them food on their holiday, and honour this time of year that is so important for them and I think that they felt that. They

prayed when it was prayer time and then they ate with us and I was very touched to participate."

"We wanted to participate to gain a better understanding of Afghan culture," said Sheppard. "This was a great occasion to experience a significant part of their religion and enjoy the company of friends in an environment free of the pressures of work."

Traditional food was prepared by Afghan cooks, according to Abella. The menu included a whole goat along with chicken, rice, naan bread, vegetables, and apples.

U.S. Army Capt Otty Medina of Special Operations Task Force West coordinated the event. "This is an opportunity for us as a coalition to come together and demonstrate to our Afghan partners that we appreciate the service they give to their country and to demonstrate that we want to establish a better cultural understanding, because if we have a more nuanced cultural understanding, we essentially become a more cohesive team," said Medina.

The PRT's mission is to support economic development and effective governance at the district, municipal and provincial level in Farah Province in order to enhance the legitimate exercise of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's authority and its ability to provide basic services to the people of Farah.

"They all seemed really pleased to come," said Abella. "The turnout was excellent. We had members of the provincial council, the governor, his staff, interns from the provincial council who often don't get to participate in events with high ranking officials like this were there, and representatives from reintegration and justice areas. Our most important guest was Mullah Mawlawee Ruhanni Sab, the head of religious affairs. He always has a positive message about cooperation with international partners and I think this is another good example for him, when he's talking with other mullahs, to show that we really do have a respectful relationship with Afghans."



Nancy Abella, U.S. State Department representative and civilian team leader for Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah, welcomes members of the Farah provincial government during an iftar dinner. Iftar dinner is a tradition during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan as the meal that breaks the fast.

