



The Main Effort

Monthly Newsletter of the 205th RSAC

Issue No. 9 — February 2007



ANA 205th Corps medical care shows improvement

By MAJ Brenda Frye
205th RSAC

Upon my arrival in Afghanistan in August 2006, I was placed in an Afghanistan National Army (ANA) clinic.

Specifically, I worked in the ANA 205th Corps garrison clinic on Camp Shir Zai. My task: to help mentor the clinic's medical staff.

When I discussed this with Col. Michael Petrucci, commander of the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC), I asked him where he wanted the clinic staff to be in comparison to western medicine. Petrucci said, "Brenda, I want you to make their medicine as good as ours is."

He did understand that it would take a long time to get up to our medical standards, so I decided to take this as a challenge.

The challenges started before I ever walked into the clinic, because I had a language barrier, and I needed an interpreter.

Also, it is very uncommon in Afghan culture to have a female in the workplace, much less the military, and lastly, I had cultural challenges to meet — I had to be considerate of their religion and their way of life.

My next challenge was figuring out the skill level of the clinic staff and what my goals were for the clinic while I was here in Afghanistan.

So I sat back and observed for the first few weeks, to see how they diagnose diseases, treat certain diseases

and how they conducted follow-up and preventive medicine.

When I first arrived, the doctor would see patients, ask a couple of questions, write a prescription and dismiss the patient. I was a little in awe of this, because this was my first time practicing medicine in a Third World nation.

I explained to the staff how we do

We all agreed that we wanted to improve the medical system, so we set out on this journey.

We changed the look of the clinic over the course of six months, and we also worked on our skills as providers.

Now in place is a system to log in patients and take vital signs. Medical records were started for all of the patients in the clinic.

The physicians and the physician assistants are working hard to develop their skills taking vital signs, taking a good patient history, examining the patient and developing diagnostic skills to formulate diagnoses. Proper treatment for the patients is the standard to which they strive.

We have no laboratory or X-ray capability in our clinic, which limits us to diagnosis by history and physicals. But we can refer the patient to the Ministry of Defense Hospital in Kandahar for more definitive care.

I can say that my experience has been difficult and trying at times, but when I look at where we were six months ago compared to where we are now, I see a world of improvement.

Additional skill development will take time and a lot of patience.

The goal is to feel comfortable that the ANA doctors and staff can effectively take care of their Soldiers, and I look forward to that day.

So far, I see progress, but Rome wasn't built in a day (or six months).

[Editor's note: Maj. Frye and other Air Force personnel were scheduled to redeploy to the United States in mid-February.]



Maj. Brenda Frye examines the inner ear of an Afghan National Army Soldier in the medical clinic at Camp Shir Zai. Frye, a physician assistant assigned to the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command, worked diligently with ANA medical personnel to help improve their skills.

things in the United States and promised them that we would work together to make a better medical system for the ANA.

Dr. Basir (205th Corps surgeon), Dr. Rahman (physician of ANA 205th garrison clinic) and I sat down to discuss medical problems that I noted.

I told them that my job was to help them and that we had to work together to make this a better system for healthcare.

Elders meet with MOD, MOI officials at Shir Zai

**By CDR Chad Snee
205th RSAC PAO**

About 500 village elders and tribal leaders from across southern Afghanistan met Dec. 14 with officials from the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Interior (MOI) at Camp Shir Zai.

Credit for the superb attendance goes to Regional Command-South, the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC) and other supporting commands that worked tirelessly for weeks to get the word out and extend invitations.

The unprecedented gathering, called a “road show” by the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, which sponsored the event with the MOD and MOI, allowed local Afghans direct access to government officials, who highlighted the development and successes of the Afghan National Army (ANA).

The officials also addressed the importance of the Afghan National Police (ANP) and its relevance to bolstering peace and security throughout Afghanistan.

In keeping with custom and tradition, the gathering began with a



Some 500 village elders and tribal leaders from southern Afghanistan came to Camp Shir Zai Dec. 14 to meet with officials from the Afghan Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. Comments from various elders signaled their support of the Afghan government, but they made clear that more progress is needed.

brief welcome, followed by recitation of verses from the Holy Koran and the playing of the Afghan National Anthem.

Maj. Gen. Rahmatullah Raufi, commander of the ANA 205th “Hero” Corps, told those assembled that his Soldiers are working hard “to bring peace and security to Kandahar province. The 205th ‘Hero’ Corps is

always ready to serve the Afghan people.”

Asadullah Khalid, governor of Kandahar province, also voiced his support of the ANA and exhorted his audience to rally in support of the country.

“Many Kandahar people have joined the ANA,” Khalid stated. “My hope is that the Kandahar people will join together to defeat terrorism in Afghanistan.”

Khalid was followed on the carpeted stage by Maj. Gen. Gankhan, deputy of operations at MOD and a dynamic and forceful speaker.

Gankhan gave a detailed overview of plans for strengthening the ANA.

Discussing recent ANA operations in the restive Panjwayi district, Gankhan praised the Soldiers’ efforts, saying that “your ANA wants to fight the enemy and defeat them.”

The growth of the ANA continues, and plans are in place to stand up four more brigades of 3,000 Soldiers each, Gankhan said.

Gankhan also mentioned reenlistment bonuses and proposed establishing what he called “incentive payments” for ANA Soldiers going on tactical missions outside their bases.

The Afghan government is being requested to compensate the families of ANA Soldiers killed in combat, he said.

He addressed equipment issues and reiterated the commitment to provide body armor and helmets to all Soldiers.

In terms of expanding ANA capabilities, MOD intends to add a special-forces kandak (battalion) to each of the five ANA corps. The Soldiers assigned to these kandaks “must be strong and powerful,” Gankhan asserted.

Gankhan concluded his remarks by saying that the ANA is bringing peace



Focusing Down Range



**By SGM Martin Deck
205th RSAC CSM**

We are at a time in our deployment when it seems easier to strive for mediocre performance. The American Heritage Dictionary definition of the word “mediocre” is as follows: Moderate to inferior in quality; ordinary.

We in the 205th are better than this. We need to refocus our attention to bring ourselves back to being the best at everything we do.

This means we need to look at the little things in our day-to-day operations. We are exceptional at the big

things, and we will continue to be so.

We need to look at developing everything, from our personal relationships among our fellow soldiers, to following simple policies such as wearing the reflector belt during the hours of darkness.

Some of us have only a couple of weeks to go, and missing a small thing could literally mean not going home. We experienced such loss during the last relief-in-place.

Remember, it’s not over until you are on the plane going home. Keep your mind in the game.

(Continued on next page)

Road show at Shir Zai fosters constructive dialogue

(Continued from previous page)

and security to the villages that it visits.

But he stressed that the ANA and the ANP must support one another “to become more powerful and defeat terrorism in Afghanistan.”

Gankhan then turned the podium over to Abdul Walee, the chief of the Kandahar Provincial Council.

Glancing around the large conference room, Walee offered thanks for being able to meet in a comfortable, secure location. “We are very happy that we can talk with our people in a safe place,” he said.

He then expressed his pride for the ANA and ANP and lauded their commitment to serving the needs of the Afghan people.

“Their efforts in Kandahar are making more people safe,” Walee remarked. “People can send their children to school and feel that they are safe.”

Echoing comments from some of the other speakers, Walee called for regular meetings between village representatives and government officials.

He emphasized that such gatherings foster mutual respect and trust, two elements that are essential for constructive dialogue to take place.

Deputy minister of the MOI Abdul Hade Khalad was the last official to address the elders.

Reflecting upon the turmoil that has engulfed Afghanistan for the past 30 years, Khalad reminded his fellow Afghans that “it is much easier to destroy something than it is to build it.”

He discussed the challenges facing the ANP and said that progress is being made.

Khalad also highlighted the problem of the Taliban killing educated people: “The Taliban are not Afghans — they are trying to destroy our country. The Taliban kill the educated people because they are improving the country.”



An elder from a village in southern Afghanistan addresses his comments to MOI Deputy Minister Abdul Hade Khalad, following Khalad’s presentation Dec. 14 at the CSTC-A road show at Camp Shir Zai.

Following the presentations, the floor was opened for questions from the elders. In general, the comments were very positive.

About 10 village leaders rose to speak. Each condemned the terrorism that is disrupting their way of life. They also voiced support for the ANA and ANP but made it very clear that more progress must be made.

Addressing Minister Khalad, one elder declared, “You promised that the ANP would be given a good salary. I hope this is the truth.

“I accept the ANA and ANP, but they must do their best to provide for our future and security.”

In response to a question from an elder about the problem of corruption in the ANP, MOI Deputy Minister Khalad asked those assembled to recruit honorable and trusted people from their villages. “We will immediately hire such people and train them,” he asserted.

Another village leader addressed the audience in passionate tones, saying, “I ask each of you to go back to your villages and tell your people to stop fighting with each other and stop supporting the Taliban. Only then will we be able to take care of ourselves.”

Rising from his seat, a different elder exclaimed, “I call on all of you to work with the government and obey the law. Otherwise, our situation will get worse.”

Overall, it was most encouraging to hear these village leaders acknowledge that steady progress is being made in Afghanistan, because their word carries weight with the people back home.

For them, security is of paramount concern. People must feel safe to move about their towns and the surrounding area, they stated.

They know that much remains to be accomplished, but they clearly want their country to succeed, not just for themselves but for future generations.

ANA 205th Corps repair shop making great strides

By CDR Chad Snee
205th RSAC PAO

On any given day, the repair shop run by the 5th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 205th Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) is a bevy of activity.

Mechanics scurry about, performing maintenance and repairs to various light tactical vehicles. With local music blaring from a radio, they work carefully and deliberately.

In a small room off the main repair bay in the cavernous repair building on Camp Shir Zai, a dedicated ANA Soldier repairs rifles and guns that the ANA use on its missions.

Freshly constructed wood tables and benches, destined for use in local schools, stand as testimony to the competence of the carpentry skills of the other ANA Soldiers who work in the shop.

It wasn't always this way.

ANA Lt. Nazamdin, the officer-in-charge (OIC) of weapons and radio repair, explained that the shop has been part of the 205th Corps for about three years.

Nazamdin helps coordinate efforts in the repair shop, in the absence of Capt. Gamalldin, the shop OIC.

"The shop originally was in a tent on the old Shir Zai camp," Nazamdin stated. "We have been in this building for about eight months.

"I am very happy with the vehicle mechanics in the shop. We have 12 mechanics, and they are working very well."

Air Force Staff Sgt. Charles Tanner, 26, who works with the vehicle mechanics, has been most impressed with how quickly their skills have developed.

"When I arrived in August 2006, these guys were barely kicking out oil and filter changes," said Tanner. "So I started giving them more in-depth maintenance training."

Tanner, who deployed to Afghanistan from Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico, stated that the goal of the



An ANA 205th Corps Soldier performs repair work on the front brakes and suspension of a light tactical vehicle. The repair shop, located on Camp Shir Zai, also services ANA weapons and executes various carpentry projects.

ANA 205th Corps repair shop is to "work RM Asia out of business on Shir Zai."

RM Asia, also based on Shir Zai, is the contracted firm that services and repairs vehicles assigned to U.S. forces and the ANA.

When the vehicle repair shop moved to its new location, it was stocked with an impressive array of tools.

The trouble was that the ANA mechanics did not know how to use most of them. Tanner's patience and training rectified that problem.

"For example, I showed some of the guys how to use air-powered tools, and they took to them real easily," he said.

Tanner acknowledged the prowess of the ANA mechanics and said that he now is acting more as a guide, rather than as an instructor.

For weapons repair, Soldier Arif of the ANA 205th Corps is the go-to man. Working out of his small workshop, he

ensures that his fellow Soldiers' rifles and guns continue to put rounds down range accurately and reliably.

"I trained Soldier Arif, and he is doing an awesome job," asserted Lt. Nazamdin.

Both Nazamdin and Tanner also are concentrating their efforts on the various shop supervisors.

Tanner stressed that the supervisors need to keep the big picture in mind. Other key functions include the proper and timely ordering of repair parts, scheduling and tracking repairs, and, of course, training their subordinates.

"It's been very gratifying to see how far all the shop personnel have progressed in the time I've been here," Tanner reflected. "They've gone from crawling to almost a full run.

"In fact, the guys are doing such a great job that I don't have to spend a lot of time in the shop — they are running the show."