



The PHOENIX PATRIOT

"...From the Ashes..."

First Edition

Official Publication of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V

Sept. 11, 2006



CJTF Phoenix V - Determined to Succeed

Story and Photo by Maj. Arnold Strong

KABUL - Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix is in its fifth year of serving as the primary trainers and mentors of the Afghan National Army. In five years, the force has built an impressive record thanks to the contributions of thousands of men and women from a dozen nations and the will power of the national leadership of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Since the fall of

the Taliban regime, the Afghan National Army has emerged as the first fully deployed institution of the country.

For the first time, Phoenix is a fully joint and combined team with members from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps; men and women from both Active and Reserve components. Under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Douglas A. Pritt and the headquarters of the 41st Brigade Combat Team of the

Oregon National Guard, the team includes members from 42 states, the Dist. of Columbia, and the Territories of Guam and Puerto Rico fulfilling combat, logistical and administrative roles in addition to the task force main effort, the Embedded Training Teams or ETTs. The team is spread across the nation of Afghanistan, often in remote and austere locations in rural areas where the trainers eat, sleep, train, and fight alongside their Afghan counterparts.

While developing the ANA is its primary mission, the task force is equally involved in facilitating development and mentoring stable local governance in the institutions that it touches daily. Whether building schools, helping to open community centers, or distributing much needed medical care, the warriors of the task force continue to set the standard in helping to renew a stable Afghanistan; a Phoenix, rising from the ashes.

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THIS
ISSUE**



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growing
stronger
day by day*



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On Target w/ the CSM

Jungleers,

Greetings on this solemn and important day. Can you remember where you were just five short years ago on that fateful morning? I remember it like it was yesterday. I was just arriving to work at my teaching position at Stayton High School.

There was an announcement on the intercom after the first strike and I went down to the library to be with my colleagues as we watched the drama unfold. After the tower fell and the reports started coming in about it being a terrorist attack, I told my principal, that I didn't understand what was going on, but that I thought as a First Sergeant my place ought to be at the Corvallis Armory.

I reported to the armory to be with my soldiers. I was amazed at the response of our soldiers; they showed up without being asked just in case they were needed. None of us knew what to expect that day. Speculation was that the West Coast could be next, but the uncertainty was numbing.

Who could have predicted how the last five years would turn out? Almost every unit within the Army National Guard has deployed or will deploy. Some of our soldiers are on their third deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Noble Eagle.

On this very sad and historic day, I hope you all take time to reflect upon the sacrifices of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, and to those back home who grieve for them. We are blessed to have so many freedoms, and in that light I hope this day will help bring back into sharp focus why we are all warriors and what that means.

My deepest respects to all of you and I couldn't be more proud of each and every one within this fine Task Force.

Brunk Conley
Command Sergeant Major
CJTF Phoenix V



General Guidance

Warriors,

As we observe the fifth anniversary of the tragedy of September 11, 2001 we have a unique opportunity to see the impact of a totalitarian government on a society. Everyday I spend in Afghanistan makes me appreciate how fortunate we are to live in such a great country. The freedom we enjoy and the way of life I have often taken for granted mean more to me now because of my service here. Seeing first-hand the wide spread poverty and the impact of terror on the Afghan people will have a lasting impression on me and my appreciation for you and your service to our Armed Forces.

I recognize the courage and commitment you have demonstrated everyday since 9-11. You have endured hardship and separation from family and friends. You fight an enemy that willingly kills innocent civilians to intimidate others. Your commitment to the Citizens of Afghanistan is remarkable. You serve shoulder to shoulder in combat with the ANA and also demonstrate compassion and concern for people who need our assistance. The work you have done through the Humanitarian Assistance Program has set a new standard for excellence that will be hard to match.

Ours is an important mission and our success will shape the future of Afghanistan for generations to come. Few people have the opportunity to play such a critical role in building an Army and Nation. You, the Warriors of CJTF Phoenix V, are at the forefront of this great effort. Each of you plays a critical role and this mission cannot succeed without your untiring effort. You are providing a valuable service to the Citizens of the United States, Afghanistan and the World and I hope you are proud of your service. I am proud to serve with you.

Douglas A.Pritt
BG, Commanding
CJTF Phoenix V

Greetings Warriors, Families and Friends of CJTF Phoenix V,

Welcome to the premiere issue of The Phoenix Patriot. We are delighted to bring this new publication to you every two weeks over the course of our year long deployment to Afghanistan.

In this issue, you will read about the work that you and your peers are executing in mentoring the Afghan National Army and building the communities of this country.

From patrolling in Kabul, to opening relief centers in Herat to opening schools in Mezar e' Sharif, these stories are yours and we look forward to continuing to focus on the work that you are doing every day. The task force commander's intent for this publication is that it be by, for, and about the warriors in the field. So, send your stories and content our way.

As this first edition is being published on the fifth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, we hope that you will take the time to reflect on where you were

then and why we are here. Check out the back page for the stories of some of your peers. You are making a difference every day. Help us to tell your story to a much broader audience by submitting a story and photos to us.

Thanks for reading,

Arnold V. Strong
Major, U.S. Army
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SECFOR Making Afghanistan Safe for All

Story and Photo by 1st Lieut. Cathrin Fraker

KABUL, Afghanistan – “It is supposed to get up to 87 or 90 [degrees], so make sure you are drinking water.” Staff Sgt. Travis Armstrong of Coos Bay, Ore., warned his Soldiers.

Today, like many other days at Camp Phoenix, Soldiers from Alpha Company 1-186th Infantry are preparing to conduct a dismounted patrol outside the perimeter of the Forward Operating Base (FOB) and into the streets of Kabul.

“The purpose of dismounted patrols is to clear the sectors around Camp Phoenix, and to build community relations with the village elders,” Capt. Gary Repp, Alpha Co. Commander, said.

The safety of the military personnel, civilian contractors, and local national workers on Camp Phoenix relies on the work of these Soldiers.

The first stop Armstrong makes is to visit a local land owner. Evidence of Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) was found on his property previously. Armstrong checked on the status of the UXO and reassures the landowner that ISAF has not forgotten about them and will soon dispose of the hazard.

The mission of securing the residents of Camp Phoenix is not something the Soldiers of the Security Force Battalion (SECFOR) take lightly. The Soldiers are diligent in their patrols and finding a UXO is not an uncommon occurrence.

“They are finding them all the time. Our guys are pretty motivated about that,” Repp said.

As the patrol moves down the roads and paths, they are greeted by smiling children. Several of the Soldiers give the children candy and pens, shake hands and give high fives.

“It is one of the things that makes our Soldiers the happiest because they get to get out of the wire and they get to see the kids.” Repp said of the relationship between the local children and his Soldiers.

It is all part of building relationships within the community that lend themselves to the Soldiers awareness of all that happens around Camp Phoenix.

Staff Sgt. Armstrong stops and visits with many business owners. He asks questions about who is new to the area and asks if there is anything that we can do to help. Armstrong purchases a soft drink from the store vendor, thanks him for his time and the patrol continues on with their mission.

These stops happen continuously on our route. Smiling children asking for chocolate and village elders visiting with the patrol leader draw the afternoon to its finish. Soon the patrol is once again stepping inside the walls of Camp Phoenix; another successful mission accomplished making Afghanistan a more secure place for its citizens and those assigned to assist them.



Afghan National Army Drill Sergeants Take the Lead

Story by 2nd Lieut. Amanda Straub

KABUL, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army (ANA) welcomed 12 new drill sergeants into its ranks on Aug. 10. The new drill sergeants, instrumental to the continuing success and growth of the ANA, were recognized in a special “Hatting” ceremony at Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC). Graduates cer



Photo by 1st Sgt. Donald Weber
An ANA Staff Sgt. symbolically receives his Drill Sergeant hat from an American Drill Sergeant and trainer as CJTF Phoenix V Commander, Brig. Gen. Doug Pritt looks on.

emoniously retired their camouflage caps and donned new black caps signifying their status as ANA drill sergeants.

Brig. Gen. Douglas Pritt, American commander of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V, addressed the new drill sergeants reminding them that they are the standard keepers of the army.

See **Drill Sergeants** on page 7

Story by CJTF Phoenix Public Affairs Staff

Unprecedented

KABUL, Afghanistan - The Afghan National Army (ANA) displayed its might Aug. 12 in front of hundreds of spectators and dignitaries during the first ever ANA Combined Arms Exercise (CAX) at the ranges of Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC). The CAX featured field artillery, mechanized infantry, armor, mortar, medical evacuation, attack and support helicopter demonstrations with live ammunition and simulated enemy retaliation.

ANA officers planned and executed the CAX from start to finish without coalition force involvement. The CAX was the first of its kind in Afghanistan, a culmination event demonstrating the remarkable achievements of the ANA since its conception in 2002.

Lt. Gen Karl Eikenberry, Commander of Combined Forces Command Afghanistan,



Photo By 2nd Lieut. Amanda Straub

addressed a crowd of senior officers from the ANA's 201st Corps and over a dozen members of the Afghan Parliament, government leaders who were seeing their Army for the first time.

"This is remarkable," Eikenberry said, "I have to admit, having been here three years ago, I never would have thought this Army would be this far along by now. We hoped the ANA would be able to do something of this magnitude, but to see this with an Army that is only four years old is extraordinary," he concluded.

After that, the senior U.S. officer shook the hands of every Afghan soldier he met, thanking them, taking pictures with them and personally congratulating them on their work.

The Afghan 3rd Brigade, 201st Corps, organized the event only weeks after returning from months of combat operations in the Kunar Province in Eastern Afghanistan and completing the first ever transition of authority between units of the ANA. This landmark demonstrated the readiness of the ANA, capable to rotate combat units through fighting and training cycles.



Photo By 2nd Lieut. Amanda Straub

The ANA CAX revolved around a simulated battle and showcased many abilities, including some that pleasantly surprised the attending dignitaries. After receiving simulated enemy mortar fire, medics ran a mock medical evacuation onto the observation hill and treated the "casualty" before evacuating him to the helipad. A coordinated medical air evacuation soon followed with two ANA helicopters, one collecting casualties while the other circled the sky watching for enemy. The highlight of the demonstration was the fly-by of a HIND-D attack helicopter, buzzing the observation hill and startling

Combat Power

onlookers. Approximately 20 members of the international press attended the event.

ANA infantry effectively cleared a building, clearing it to make sure it was safe from enemy threat. After heavy artillery and ANA tanks pounded enemy positions with rockets, and mortar teams blasted the area with explosives, mechanized infantry rolled as close as they could to mock enemy positions before dismounting, assaulting, and returning fire. The mock battle created a perfect platform to show how various weapons systems, and Soldiers uniquely trained to operate them, work together in unison to obliterate the enemy.

A feeling of pride permeated the air as the exercise concluded. It was etched on the faces of ANA Soldiers proving themselves to their superiors and countrymen. The visiting dignitaries from parliament were surprised and proud to learn that their own army is capable of such advanced war-fighting. It filled the chests of high ranking generals who watched their Soldiers performance like proud fathers. And it radiated through American and coalition Soldiers and Marines who saw for the first time on such a large scale how the efforts of Embedded Training Teams (ETTs) have paid off over the past five years in Afghanistan.



Photo By 1st Lieut. Cathrin Fraker



Photo By 2nd Lieut. Amanda Straub



Photo By Maj. Arnold Strong

Walisar Secondary School Starts New Chapter

Story and Photos by
SKCS George Volk

“I was here for the laying of the foundation, and I am very happy to be here for the dedication,” Mr. Qanon, Deputy Minister of Education for Balkh Province, announced to a diverse crowd. “It took a lot of hard work to build this school and it will take a lot of hard studying to build a brighter future.”

The school was built by the joint efforts of the Afghan National Army and the U.S. 209th Regional Corps Assistance Group, part of CJTF Phoenix. Through the Commander’s Emergency Re-

sponse Program (CERP), the 209th RCAG was able to fund this critically needed school identified during joint patrols with the Afghan Army.

Addressing the crowd, Maj. Gen. Taj Mohammad, Commander of the 209th Corps said “Our facilities were broken by over 25 years of fighting. The Government of Afghanistan from President Karzai to the district education offices are all working towards a better education system, but we can not do it all by ourselves. It is not a U.S. responsibility to do this, but they continue to help our communities with the ANA.”

“I see a lot of happy faces today,” Haji Rafat, Chemtal District’s Minister of Education said, “several years ago it was not the same. Things are getting better every day and this school is our bridge to the future. We can turn darkness into light with this facility and your education.”

Said Mohammad, principle of Walisar secondary school, noted the

school will serve 635 female and 675 male students from surrounding villages and that it could not have come at a better time, (school started the week this paper went to print. - Editor)



Afghan students in Balkh Province eagerly wait the start of a new school year outside the new building constructed for them by American and Afghan Soldiers.

The Brave Women of Herat

Story by Maj. Robyn Truman

HERAT, Afghanistan – Recently the Soldiers at the 207th Regional Corps Advisory Group visited the women’s vocational centers located in Herat at the request of their Afghan National Army (ANA) counterparts. Lieutenant Colonel Ghulam Sahid, ANA Civil Affairs Officer for 207th Corps and Sergeant Major Mohammed, ANA Civil Affairs Non-Commissioned Officer for 207th Corps, share a common goal with the American Soldiers to make life better for the women in the Herat area.

The women’s vocational centers help the women of



An Afghan woman at a Herat women’s vocational center shows an American female Soldier, Maj. Robyn Truman, how she embroiders clothing to sell and support her family.

Herat learn new skills enabling them to earn money to feed their families. The women make clay molded decorative flowers, paintings, embroidered clothing, woven carpets and macramé items. They share a common bond having suffered unimaginable losses due to the wars plaguing their country for the past 25 years. They have lost countless family members and many struggle as widows to create a better future for their children.

The women earn between 50 and 80 Afghanis a day, the U.S. equivalent of \$1.00 to \$1.40 per day. They have not received pay for more than two months but they continue to work eight hours a day relying on the kindness of strangers to help them meet their needs.

On the initial visit to the women’s vocational centers Afghan and American civil affairs teams delivered donation bags from the United States. The bags included clothing and shoes, health and hygiene items, first aid supplies, rice, beans and cooking oil.

The Herat civil affairs teams recently received funding from the Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V (CJTF Phoenix V) Commander’s Emergency Response Program to improve the women’s vocational centers of Herat. The funds will be used to purchase sewing machines, furniture, and a vehicle to transport goods to markets and conduct other tasks vital to continuing business. Maj. Robert Fraser, CJTF Phoenix V Civil Affairs Officer, says that this is the first task force project targeted at improving the lives of adult women in Afghanistan.

ANA Drill Sergeants: Symbols of Strength and Leadership

“You are the first person new soldiers in the army will come into contact with,” Pritt said. “Your Soldiers will write home about you. More than any other person in the army, you will have a lasting impression on their lives.”

American trainer Sgt. 1st Class David McAfee says that it is a great honor to be selected for the difficult ANA drill sergeant school. Trainees are expected to write reports and develop PowerPoint presentations, give public speeches and teach classes to their peers. In a country with a 90 percent illiteracy rate, these hurdles are difficult to overcome. Trainees are also taught to combat common problems in a military environment such as Soldier abuse, ethnic discrimination, religious accommodation and stress management.



Distinguished Honor Graduate 1st Sgt Mohammed Sarvar

1st Sgt. Mohammed Sarvar, distinguished honor graduate for the 9th class of drill sergeants to complete training at KMTC, believes that the drill sergeant

school is making a 100 percent improvement in the quality of training for the ANA.

“The drill sergeant school is a wonderful addition to training that benefits all Soldiers and sergeants,” Sarvar said. “Learning advanced tactics and discipline and being able to teach others is very good for our army.”

The drill sergeant school is four weeks long and teaches select non-commissioned officers (NCOs) 48 different classes designed to enhance their leadership abilities and provide an advanced knowledge base for tactical training and soldier care. Candidates in the drill sergeant school learn standards of



Newly Graduated ANA Drill Sergeants set the standard marching in front of a battalion of new recruits and visiting dignitaries.

military bearing, military customs, physical fitness programs and inspection standards.

The drill sergeant school at KMTC is relatively new and was established in December of 2005. It was started by American drill sergeants deployed to Afghanistan, but as each class of Afghan drill sergeants completes their course, Afghan leaders take an increasing roll in the development of training. Currently, two prior honor graduates of the ANA drill sergeant school work full time to train other drill sergeants.

ANA commanders and sergeants major nominate their best Soldiers for drill sergeant school based on their history of service, their leadership potential, and the ability to read and write. Once the drill sergeants graduate, they may take new jobs training recruits in basic training and advanced individual training, or they may return to a regular unit using their increased knowledge of discipline and standards to ensure that their Soldiers are prepared

to fight. Sarvar is returning to the National Military Academy, an elite school for officer training, as part of the cadre that will develop new officers for the ANA.

McAfee said that Sarvar was an excellent student and gained more points than any of his peers during the 9th drill sergeant course.

Sarvar had the highest grade point average, the highest marksmanship score, and stood out as a natural leader.

“He was always motivated,” McAfee said. “I didn’t have to tell him how to be a drill sergeant or how to lead. He grasped the concept on his own.”

Sarvar said he was extremely happy when he heard about the ANA two years ago and joined abruptly to serve his country.

“I felt so much pain seeing my country always at war,” Sarvar said. “I am excited to use the things I have learned to teach new students. I want them to use my knowledge to be better soldiers and officers and I want to encourage other NCOs to complete drill sergeant school to help prepare Soldiers for the enemy.”



American Brig. Gen. Douglas A. Pritt congratulates each new Afghan Drill Sergeant.

Featured Patriot

Story and Photo by
1st Lieut. Cathrin Fraker

You may see this Soldier between missions working out in the gym or grabbing a quick meal in the DFAC, but you will almost never see her without her M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) and her smile. Spec. Jennifer Leblond is a source for motivation for the Transportation Platoon, Alpha Company, LTF, and a roll model for the entire task force.

Leblond, originally from Belcher-town, Mass., joined the Army National Guard in 2000 to serve her country. Although she comes from a military heritage she was the first female in her family to join. In 2004 she moved to Saint Helens, Ore., and became a member of the Oregon Army National



Spec. Jennifer Leblond and her SAW are inseparable.
Guard.

Afghanistan is not Leblond's first combat tour. She recently spent a year in Kuwait where she ran the Redeployment Marshalling Yard. Her thirst for adventure far from quenched, she volunteered for this second combat tour in Afghanistan.

"I wanted to see the other countries and to do my part on the War on Terror," Leblond said.

While her fellow Soldiers were all preparing for block leave during mobilization Leblond volunteered to

fill a last-minute need and come to Camp Phoenix as part of the advanced party. She is always volunteering for missions. By the end of July, when much of the Task Force was settling into a comfortable rhythm, Leblond had already been on 36 missions and logged over 1200 miles. She is ready for whatever the mission calls for and never turns down an opportunity to be a gunner.

"I figure I should make the best of being here. I like to do a good job," Leblond said.

With her upbeat attitude and willingness to do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission, Leblond has earned the confidence and respect of her leadership.

"I wish we could duplicate her motivation and instill it in every Soldier," 1st Lieut. Joe Bradford, her platoon leader, said.

Sound Off - Where Were You On Sept. 11th, 2001?



"I was at Fort Benning, GA. We were mobilizing to go to Kosovo. They had a TV on in the background with everything on it. The entire post went insane. Our deployment actually got delayed by six days. There was an eight hour wait to get on post."

Staff Sgt. Miguel Ramirez,
Army Reserve
Food Inspector
719th MED DET
Kansas City, MO



"I was at work, in the middle of a bone surgery on a dog. We heard it on the radio. We thought it was a joke. We couldn't believe it. We just kept listening to the radio, and people came in and told us. It was shocking."

Sgt. Carly A. Roche,
Army Reserve
Vet Tech
719th MEDDET
Pentwater, Michigan



"I was in the 9th grade during science class. We saw it on TV. We thought it was a movie at first. We were like 'Yeah!' Then it was like, 'No that's happening.'"

Pvt. First Class Christopher Bellew,
Oklahoma Army National Guard
D-Co SECFOR
1-180th
Colgate, OK



"I was on vacation at the tower of London. One of the gate guards said, 'Hey, you guys are Americans, you need to come over here.' We couldn't believe it had actually happened. That it was real. We had thought it was all propaganda."

Cpt. Carey Petit,
Active Duty Air Force
Contracting
Robbins AFB, Georgia
Harrisonburg, VA



"I was sleeping in my bed when my wife woke me up and said, 'Your mother is on the phone. She wants to know if you are deploying overseas.' I said, 'Mom, I have no idea what you are talking about.' She said, 'Turn the TV on.'"

Sgt. First Class Jeff Shinn,
Oregon Army National Guard
PMO and Effects Cell,
HHC 41st
Roseburg, OR