



The Ground Forces Command Team poses for a picture outside of their office. Photo courtesy of Capt. Sam Kimzey 29th ANSF-DEV

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A Day in the Life of a GFC Advisor

By Capt. Sam Kimzey

For the members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command Ground Forces Command Embedded Advisory Team, the day normally begins with an early commute through the hectic streets of Kabul. Arriving at the South Kabul International Airport facility the team goes straight into the Ground Forces Command daily stand up meeting. As the Afghan National Army (ANA) participants arrive, each of the team members grab a small black receiver that resembles a Walkman and put on their earpieces while the interpreter conducts a check of the system. Soon, all of the participants have arrived and the Commander of the ANA Ground Forces Command, Lt. Gen. Murad Ali Murad, enters the room. After a round of handshakes and individual greetings, Murad takes his seat and the first of the ANA briefers stands up to begin the briefing. In the formal Afghan way the briefer begins, "in the name of the almighty Allah and by the permission of the commander, assembled generals, and honored advisors and mentors."

Led by Canadian Brig. Gen. Jean-Marc Lanthier and 29th Infantry Division Col. Lapthe Flora, the embedded advisor team has a unique mission: they are charged with assisting the ANA to stand up an operational level command that will ultimately command all six of the Afghan Army corps, the 111th Capital Division, and other assigned forces. (Continued on Page 2, See GFC)

They are not just advisors – they are working to stand up an entire institution. From building facilities and obtaining equipment to assisting the Afghan National Army in obtaining and training their personnel, the team works daily to build a major command that did not

even exist 18 months ago.

The 29th Infantry Division makes up the bulk of the advisors, consisting of a master sergeant and sergeant major, and officers ranging from captain to colonel. Reflecting the strength of the National Guard, each is an expert in their particular field and brings the best qualities of the “citizen-soldier.” Some serve as full-time National Guardsmen at the National Guard Bureau or within their respective state, while others hold senior positions in the private sector or federal government. Each is able to operate independently and within an often fluid situation. It is this wealth of experience, knowledge, and ability that gives the team their edge.

Complementing the 29th Infantry Division personnel are representatives from the U.S. Army's I Corps, AFPAK Hands, French, German, Turk, and Canadian military members. The team is also directly supported by a robust team of contract mentors consisting of senior retired military officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and a team of local-national interpreters.

Furthermore, the team works closely with sections of IJC, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan, the U.S. Embassy, and other coalition forces and organizations to bring subject matter expertise to the Ground Forces Command. On a daily basis, the advisory team coordinates with any number of partners from NATO countries to assist with the training of the Ground Forces Command.

Most interesting is the bond that develops between the advisors and their Afghan counterpart. Each of the advisors pulls from their experience and interpersonal skills to teach, coach, and mentor an ANA General Officer and their staff. To accomplish this, the advisors spend many hours meeting with their Afghan counterparts, often over a cup of chai tea. Trust is the first thing that must be built before progress can be made. The art of the “soft sale” is often the key to moving objectives forward.

Closing out the day at the Ground Forces Command, the team assembles for a final team huddle. For the next 15 minutes, the various activities of the day and following days are covered. Some team members are traveling to other parts of Afghanistan with their Afghan counterparts, some have meetings at Camp Eggers or Camp Phoenix, and the next exercise is on the horizon. Flora briefs his final guidance of the day, and the team members ready themselves for their commute back to home base and the inevitable evening office work to follow and preparations for tomorrow's engagement.



An Interview with ANSF-Development CUOPS: Sgt. Maj. Steve Cutsail By: Col. Linda Singh

Hometown: Pasedena, Maryland
College: Associate in Applied Science Admin/Mgmt
 Studies from Excelsior College
Civilian Occupation: Active Guard and Reserve
Time in Service: 33 years
Branch: AG with secondary in Logistics

What do you do at IJC?

I am currently working in the Current Operations section of the Combined Joint Operations Center (CJOC) as the ANSF Development Current Operations (CUOPS) sergeant major with focus on the Afghan National Army and am the backup on all personnel tasks. I provide coverage through the evening shift and cover a myriad of all of ANSF issues and taskings. (Continued on Page 5, See Sergeant Major...)

My Mummy is going away.....

By: Maj. Colette Topfer

In recent years, more and more soldier, sailor, and airman mothers are going away in support of military operations throughout the world, leaving their children and families behind. When the details of their departure are understood, their absence is more likely to be accepted and reduces anxiety for the families and more importantly for the children.

Lt. Col. Chris MacGregor, a British Army officer of The King's Royal Hussars, and a member of the Campaign and Transition Assessments Group (CTAG) in Afghanistan, wrote the 2007 book "My Daddy's Going Away" for his children when he was deployed.

The book is a charming and educational children's picture book, endorsed by Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, designed to provide support to families during the stress of paternal separation. After deploying to Afghanistan in 2011, he noticed more and more "mummies" deploying who were

leaving their young children behind for up to a year at a time. He felt there was need for a new version of his book called "My Mummy's Going Away" to lessen the anxiety that is often felt throughout the family during a parent's absence, especially when mommy is leaving. MacGregor asked the mothers of the 29th Infantry Division Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) - Development group (Col. Marie Mahoney, Maj. Colette Topfer, and Sgt. 1st Class Fanny Marini) to provide their thoughts concerning deploying and being away from their children for almost an entire year.

My Daddy's Going Away...

Christopher MacGregor



The group discussed the differences between mothers being away versus fathers and the hardship endured by the children and the mothers alike. The working session brought a lot of new and clever ideas for the book which is estimated to be completed in the spring of 2012. It will be released in Great Britain and will be available online for purchase around the world to support all the military families going through the same situation. For more information about the book and to order a copy visit his website at www.mydaddysgoingaway.com.



29th ANSF-Development team members and Lt. Col. Chris MacGregor pose with his first book, "My Daddy's Going Away. ..."

Regional Command East Aerial Movement of Storage Containers and Supplies to Barg-e-Matal

By Maj. Gavin Boyd

Officers from Virginia and Maryland who are part of the 29th Infantry Division assigned to Afghanistan's National Military Command Center (NMCC) and National Police Coordination Center (NPCC) advise and assist on national military and police issues as part of a multi-national effort to assist the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) in maintaining a stable environment and combating terrorism. "I enjoy the work I do here. Every day is different. It seems there is a different problem that requires a long-term solution every day. My experience and training as an Army staff officer has given me the tools to develop solutions for those problems and to follow through with their execution", says Maj. David "Gavin" Boyd, a Virginia resident who works at the NMCC as an Air Operations Advisor. At home, Boyd works as an Associate Laboratory Director for the Drug Enforcement Administration.

One recent problem that required a long-term solution involved the Barg-e-Matal Afghan National Security Force Base requiring assistance with routine, timely, and long-term storage of food supplies. Transportation and resupply of Afghan personnel, food, and equipment to Barg-e-Matal is challenging at best. "It becomes even more challenging in the winter", said Maj. Boyd. Barg-e-Matal is in a sparsely populated high mountainous region with elevations ranging from 3,500 to 16,000

feet. The mountains are covered with dense forest. Roads to Barg-e-Matal are often blocked by snow from November through April. The village is in close proximity to Pakistan and has a large insurgent presence. Insurgents use the rough terrain to their advantage to weaken the Afghanistan government in this region through the disruption of supply lines.

"In addition to the difficulty of resupplying Barg-e-Matal, poor storage conditions cause an estimated loss of one-third of food supplies to spoilage and insect infestation", said Maj. Robert Marchanti, a Maryland resident who works at the NPCC as an Operations Readiness Chief. "They store their supplies in the basements of homes in the village." Marchanti said.

At home, Marchanti works as a Plans and Programs Chief for the Maryland National Guard's Office of Construction and Facilities Management.

In December 2011, while working with a group of fellow officers, Marchanti and his colleagues devised a plan to rectify the storage issue at Barg-e-Matal. They would coordinate closely with the NMCC, NPCC, and the International Security Assistance Force International Joint Command (IJC) to move four 20-foot storage containers using



CH47 at Barg-e-Matal

CH47 cargo helicopters from Jalalabad, Afghanistan to Barg-e-Matal.

"It is exciting to get out of the office and do some real-world work next to our Afghan counterparts", said Maj. Ed Hoffler, while standing next to the Mi17 helicopter that he, Marchanti, and Boyd would use to conduct an aerial recon of Barg-e-Matal to identify locations for the storage containers. Hoffler is a Virginia resident who works at the NPCC as a watch-keeper.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Erron, who rounded out the joint team of advisors said, "I won't accept that something cannot be done. That very statement is a challenge to me. When I was told that we would never be able to provide a long-term solution to the Barg-e-Matal resupply problem, I said 'game on!'" (Continued on Page 5, See NPCC....)



Maj. Robert Marchanti and Maj. Ed Hoffler with the Mi17 used for the Aerial recon.

NPCC

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The containers were successfully delivered Jan. 27 with an additional 16 tons of food supplies. "The immediate impact of having these containers at Barg-e-Matal is that the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] have enough food supplies in proper storage to last them through April," said Boyd.

"The long-term impact of this mission is two-fold: first, the ANSF reduces dependence on IJC forces for resupply at Barg-e-Matal, and second, fewer non-routine resupply missions should be required allowing the Afghan Air force to increase their hours [on other priority missions]", said Boyd.

"The Afghans at Barg-e-Matal tell us that we handed them the keys to Afghanistan", said Erron, referring to the placement of the four containers. "This small task really will do a lot for the morale of the ANSF at Barg-e-Matal".



Maj. Boyd sits in the cock-pit of a Mi17 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

Editor's Note: On February 25, 2012, Major Robert J. Marchanti was killed in action at the Ministry of Interior, Kabul, Afghanistan. Maj. Marchanti received the Bronze Star for meritorious service in large part to his tireless efforts to resolve the situation described in this article. His citation reads in part, "Major Marchanti's most significant accomplishment was to help develop a sustainable resupply of life-saving aid to the Afghan National Security Forces in the remote area of Barg-e-Matal, Nuristan. Sustainable supply efforts to this area were previously described by the leadership of ISAF Joint Command as impossible to resolve." Highlighting the tremendous accomplishments of Maj. Marchanti and the teams at NPCC and NMCC is a fitting tribute to the legacy of his works both as an officer, but more importantly as a caring man searching for ways to help those in need.

Sergeant Major

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Tell us something about your work with the MD Guard.

I have worked since 2006 as a personnel sergeant major for the Maryland Army National Guard. My responsibilities include all personnel actions for officers and enlisted Soldiers. I have served as the Senior Enlisted Personnel Advisor as part of the primary staff. I frequently visit units in order to provide unit level assistance and training. My primary mission is to ensure that

the enlisted promotion system is working as it should be in order to minimize the issues and challenges for Soldiers. Some of my extra duties include working with Maryland funeral honors, family support and the education office. One of the things that I really enjoy is being able to counsel Soldiers on all types of issues they may have. I feel that I have a close connection with the Soldiers that allows them to seek me out for guidance and mentoring which includes enlisted and officers alike.

How has your AGR role helped you in your work here at IJC?

Based on my AGR role, I became very familiar with excel, databases and data extraction. This has helped me find a key niche for myself on the CUOPS team as the ANSF dashboard expert. This also allows me to provide support to the Assessments team during the preparation of the Commanders Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT). I have also found that my AGR role required me to coordinate up and down the chain of command which has been very beneficial in my ability to make contact with other sergeants major in the Regional Commands (RCs) and on North KAIA.

What will you do upon returning back home?

I plan on returning to the position of G1 sergeant major until I retire in July of 2013. The first thing I plan to do is spend some quality time with my family and take my wife Rachel and our children to the beach for a nice week in the sun and sand, not like Kabul. The next item I want to accomplish is to take my Yamaha V-star out on the road with the wind blowing in my hair. After that I plan on traveling with my wife around the U.S. in order for us to see some of the places that we have always wanted to go. We also plan on finding an area to make our retirement home. The biggest thing is that I am really excited about is to get back to my wife, five kids and five grandkids.

What are your favorite hobbies and things to do when you are not working?

My favorite things are camping, riding my motorcycle and vacationing with the wife and kids, they grow up so fast. I love to sing karaoke and watch others sing, and look forward to having a nice cold beer with some Maryland steamed crabs with lots of friends in tow.

An Interview with ANSF-Development FUOPS:

Maj. Tim Gonzalez

By: Maj. Wes Parmer



Hometown: Born in Hoboken, NJ. Currently resides in Owings Mills, Md.

College: Rutgers University, BA in History

Full-time Occupation: Title 32 AGR, Maryland National Guard. Previous assignment prior to mobilization was Brigade S1 for the 58th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Towson, Md.

What is your assignment at International Security Assistance Force Joint Command (IJC)?

I serve as the ANCOP (Afghan National Civil Order Police) Planner for ANSF-Development in the Future Operations Cross-functional Team. I execute a key coordination role between the regional commands (RCs), ANCOP headquarters (HQ) and the National Training Mission- Afghanistan police development program.

My primary mission is to ensure the RCs know what IJC priorities are for the employment of ANCOP and to provide a link to the ANCOP HQs. I help to provide a common operating picture (COP) for ANCOP across the combined joint operations area (CJOA).

So you play in a band here at NKAIA, how did you get started with that?

A friend and fellow Soldier who was part of our unit that we replaced when we deployed to Kabul was part of the band here. He told me about it ahead of time and I was ready to join when we arrived. In fact, I played the first night we arrived here in October. It's been a lot of fun and has provided me a creative outlet that differs quite a bit from the work that we do every day at IJC.

What's your background playing the guitar?

I started playing seriously in 1985 when I was still in college. I've played in several bands over the years, once when I was stationed in Hawaii at Schofield Barracks in the mid-1990's and with a group in Maryland in 2005. I also like to play open-mic nights when I get the chance.

So what's your advice for budding guitar players?

I've always looked toward the British classic rock bands for inspiration. Groups like The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, and The Who had an impact on the type of guitar player I developed to be. It's important for people to be inspired and to listen to a lot of different music. Of course, practice is key, but you have to be honest with yourself and be your own worst critic. You never hear yourself the same as the audience does, so you can't be complacent with practicing and always striving to improve. Equipment is important too, get the best gear you can afford and just practice.

What's in store for your future playing?

I've always played for my own enjoyment first, but it's a great feeling to be able to entertain a crowd. When we re-deploy home I'd like to get a band together again and start doing some weekend gigs. I've also considered some additional lessons in classical style or jazz, you can never stop learning.