



2nd Marine Division (Forward)

Task Force Leatherneck

Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

January 8, 2012

Weekly News Round-Up

The following content includes the weekly news coverage of 2nd Marine Division (Forward). The division, also known as Task Force Leatherneck, is the ground combat element of Regional Command (Southwest) and is responsible for Helmand and Nimroz provinces, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The content was created by Marine Corps Combat Correspondents and Combat Camera. Feel free to forward our stories to friends, family and those who support our deployed service members.



A day in the life:

Division chaplain tours Task Force Leatherneck, one FOB at a time

By Maj. Bradley Gordon

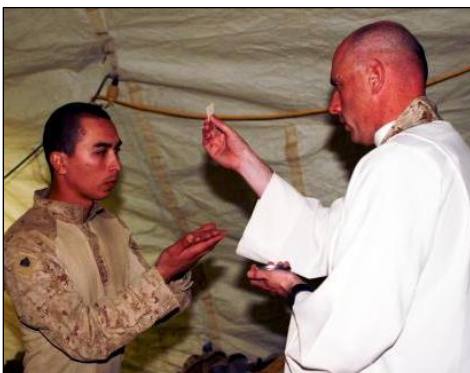
HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan - "This is what it's all about," said Cmdr. Christopher Fronk, chaplain for 2nd Marine Division (Forward). "There's nothing better than getting out to the Marines, to share their time and their devotion."

So starts the day of the Monaca, Pa., native with his trusty sidekick, religious program specialist Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Hawthorne, or "the bodyguard" as he is known to

some. The two head for their first of several destinations within Helmand province aboard their own dedicated Marine Corps, Bell UH-1Y Huey helicopter, nicknamed, appropriately enough, the "Holy Helo."

In a day filled with flying, prepping, conducting Mass and waiting, Fronk and Massachusetts' own Hawthorne make their way to the smallest patrol bases to lift the spiritual, religious, moral and personal well-being of the members of Task Force Leatherneck.

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New series gives voice to Afghan leaders

By Gunnery Sgt. Pauline Franklin

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Helmand province, Afghanistan – A new series called “In their voices” kicks off today to give local Afghan leaders a means to tell the world about their successes and challenges in Helmand.



(Click on image to view video interview)

The series is a compilation of video interviews with key leaders in several areas of Helmand, to include Sangin and Marjah, and provides personal accounts of the areas prior to coalition forces arriving, as well as current conditions.

The Afghan people have long been embroiled in the battleground that is their home. Their history is filled with invasions from foreign nations, internal strife, and Taliban insurgents bent on domination of the population. However, the people of Helmand are working to build a brighter future, one of security and peace.

“We want to build Afghanistan into a stable, democratic and prosperous country, a country that is the peaceful home of all Afghans, and that enjoys friendly, mutually rewarding relations with all its near and extended neighbors and beyond,” said President Hamid Karzai, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, during the December International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn, Germany.

The “In their voices” series allows the public to hear directly from Afghan community leaders, security officials and local government officials.

[\(Read Story\)](#)

ANA, Marine partnership establishes combat medics course

By Cpl. Alfred Lopez

CAMP GARMSIR, Helmand province, Afghanistan – As a squad of Afghan National Army soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, patrols a dusty road, chaos ensues.

A Marine advisor calls out that a simulated improvised explosive device exploded and points to two Afghan soldiers who fall to the ground as mock casualties.

Several ANA soldiers immediately set up security as another soldier rushes to aid the casualties. Within 10 minutes, the trainee has performed a combat lifesaver triage, and the casualty is being evacuated to the nearest clinic in an Afghan ambulance.

The carefully controlled chaos was part of the final exercise for the inaugural 1/215 combat medic course here Dec. 31.



“The course will be able to help us train soldiers to become medics and support our medical section,” said Maj. Abdul Baqi, the surgeon in charge of medical operations with 1/215.

The new course was born out of the resourcefulness of Marines and Navy corpsmen; previously, all ANA medic courses were conducted at the Joint Security Academy Southwest in Camp Leatherneck. [\(Read Story\)](#)

From insurgent hotbed to commercial hub

Afghans, Marines clear Safar Bazaar of remnants of illegal activity during Operation Sandman

By Cpl. Reece Lodder

SAFAR BAZAAR, Helmand province, Afghanistan — Safar Bazaar was once a hotbed for insurgents, its shops teeming with illegal drugs and streets laden with improvised explosive devices.

In the last two years, four Marine infantry battalions and their Afghan National Security Force counterparts have labored to make it safe. Today, the buzzing bazaar is the commercial hub of southern Garmsir district.

Thousands of Afghans from around the district travel to the bazaar each week to purchase goods. On ‘Bazaar Day’ every Tuesday, a sea of approximately 2,500 eager shoppers swallows up the streets.

From the shade of his shop, a butcher stood behind an array of meat hanging from metal hooks. Two men baked bread and cooked kabobs for hungry visitors while their neighboring vendor attempted to draw interest to his dusty collection of shoes. Down the road, the methodical reverberation of a hammer hitting metal revealed a man crafting a trailer frame outside his shop.

The bazaar has been transformed, despite small strains of illegal activity that remain among its legitimate vendors. Afghan National Army soldiers and Marines with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, partnered to clear these remnants of insurgent activity during Operation Sandman Dec. 28.

On the two major roads parallel to the bazaar, infantrymen with Kilo Company, 3/3, joined members of the Afghan National Police to search people and vehicles entering the commerce center.

As vendors opened their shops, ANA soldiers led Marines with India and Weapons Companies, 3/3, on a thorough search of the small businesses. They moved door-to-door, searching for illegal drugs and weapons and using IED detection dogs to uncover explosives and other IED components.

“The clear was methodical ... a disruption,” said Capt. Bobby Lee, the commanding officer of India Co., 3/3, and native of Corpus Christi, Texas.

[\(Read Story\)](#)



ANCOP graduates first aid course

By Cpl. James Clark

SANGIN DISTRICT, Helmand province, Afghanistan -- An Afghan National Civil Order Police Officer graduates a combat lifesaver course Dec. 30. Marines and sailors with Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, trained their Afghan counterparts during a three-day course covering the basics of first aid.

[\(View All Photos\)](#)

