

Afghan Army builds on engineering skills

The Afghan National Army recently graduated 26 engineers from a six-week training course that built upon their engineering skills at Camp Invictia , on the outskirts of Kabul.

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This was the second graduation of ANA engineers from the course and highlights the ongoing partnership between the International Security Assistance Force and the Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan to increase the capabilities of the ANA.

The Multi-National Engineer Group of ISAF's Kabul Multi-National Brigade conducted the training course which consisted of realistic, hands-on training and timely examinations to ensure course objectives were met.

ANA Brig. Gen. Mohammad Amin Wardak, chief of Education for the Ministry of Defense, told the graduates the training was important to the Afghan Army's success. "This training is vital to sustaining the ANA," he said. "Take the skills learned here from our international friends and use them in your daily tasks.

"The MOD is committed to providing the necessary machinery to equip all support units," Wardak said.

Italian and Greek instructors presented most of the course instruction, and the students enjoyed the opportunity to train on equipment from three nations-Italy , Greece and the United States .

Training was conducted in phases, starting with learning the basics of operating heavy engineer machinery like excavators and bulldozers.

The following phase covered force protection, with students applying their new skills and using engineer equipment to erect various force protection defenses at the new ANA compound at the Pol-e-Charkhi range. The intent was to teach the engineers how to operate in a working area and train to defend a forward operating base.

The final training phases focused on horizontal construction and natural disaster and relief operations, using their previous training in a field environment.

"I have a very good feeling about my profession as an engineer. We can destroy the enemy's bunkers and clear paths for friendly forces," said ANA Sgt. Gulrahman, a platoon sergeant from the 3rd Brigade, 201st Corps' 4th Kandak (Battalion). "I will go back to my unit and train my soldiers and fellow noncommissioned officers."

ANA Lt. Col. Aminjan, the kandak commander, echoed the sentiments of his noncommissioned officer. "I feel good about the progress of the ANA and we should be able to support the ANA units any time in combat and during deployments," he said.

"We have been trained by ISAF and Coalition forces to clear and destroy the landmines, to work with heavy machinery like bulldozers and excavators, and we know how to build ranges, dig trenches and prepare defensive positions for tanks and other artillery," said Aminjan. "Now, we have the skills to support our units!"

"The engineering course was difficult, but the involvement of Coalition forces, trainers and trainees produced good results," said Italian Army Lt. Col. Walter Corvaglia, the MNEG commander. Corvaglia said that due to the successful Coalition partnership, the training will be repeated in October for the next class of ANA engineers.

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