



# Ghazni opens new NAVC

By Staff Sgt. Kelly McCargo

GAZNI, Afghanistan — U.S. and Afghan National Army officials formally opened the ninth Afghan National Army Volunteer Center in Ghazni during an NAVC ribbon-cutting ceremony May 6.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Craig Weston, Chief of the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan, and ANA Maj. Gen. Jhawari, MoD, assistant minister of acquisition, technology and logisticseach cut a portion of the ribbon leading to the NAVC entrance where Ghazni citizens' can now enlist into the ANA.

At the doorway to the NAVC, Col. Shamahmod Katakhal, Afghan Ministry of Defense, public affairs officer, spoke of "*The ANA song*," which emphasizes the ANA's ethnic diversity as one of the greatest assets of Afghanistan.

Prior to the NAVC ceremony, Weston and Jhawari "took *Chai*," Afghan tea served during an informal meeting, at the provincial governor's office with Ghazni Lt. Governor, Ramazon Haidary; and Afghan Militia Force Lt. Gen. Ali Akbar Qusimi, 14th Division, commander.

Over *Chai*, the group discussed current Ghazni social subjects like equipment and health care issues identified at the regional hospital, and educational

and material shortcomings at the Ghazni boys' and girls' schools, which were opened early in the year.

After *Chai*, the group formerly addressed about 200 Ghazni elders about the benefits of opening an NAVC in their community.

"An important part of rebuilding Afghanistan is the security and stability that gives the Afghan people and the international community the freedom to rebuild," Weston said. "Essential to creating this security is your Afghan National Army, an army made up of the peoples of Afghanistan to serve all of Afghanistan."

"This National Army Volunteer Center will reach out to the young men of Ghazni, to help them join a

new army made up of all the major ethnic groups of Afghanistan — Pashto, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen and more," he said.

Ghazni government officials and MoD representatives used the opportunity to stress the importance of the ANA and the Japanese-led disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program.

Through the DDR program, AMF units will demobilize and turn weapons over to the Afghan government.

The former AMF troops can then qualify to receive formal training, financed by the international community, in a vocational field.

"As the constitutional Loya Jirga was very important for



Minister Jhawari cuts a portion of the ribbon leading to the Ghazni NAVC during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Afghanistan, so is the ANA,” Haidary said. “I want you to help us in recruiting and (completing) the DDR process. It is very important there are ANA recruits from Ghazni in the next Kandak.

“Ghazni’s old NAVC did a good job in getting recruits; now, (with the new NAVC) it will do better,” he said. “Send your sons and brothers to the ANA. The central government is responsible for protecting you and establishing security.

“We have the ANA in Herat and Fariyab; while the ANA is low in numbers, the ANA is high in quality,” he said.

“Support the central government, support (Afghanistan’s) national unity, support the ANA, and support DDR,” said Jahwari. “The DDR process is itself a holy war. In the past, you used your gun to destroy Afghanistan, now turn your gun in and start rebuilding Afghanistan—your country, your home.”

Afterward, more than 200 Ghazni citizens joined the elders at the NAVC with smiles on their faces.

The ANA soldiers providing security said they were also excited.

“This is a great event for Afghanistan,” said ANA Lt. Arif, MoD personal security team commander. “This helps establish security through the region by providing a backfill of ANA soldiers, so we can maintain (the strength of) our ANA by having more recruits.”

An NAVC regional director said his job is inherent to the formation of ANA and that he will be successful.

“We have an important job at the NAVC facility to recruit volunteers,” said ANA Col. Atique Ullah, Ghazni NAVC, regional director. “We must do our best duty to send recruits to fill every Kandak.

“I think we will be very successful because the status and reputation of the ANA are very good,” he said. “The ANA has great privileges and facilities for our soldiers.”

The ANA’s greatest recruiting tool is the fact it can fulfill guarantees that the AMF can not, Ullah said.

For instance, ANA soldiers receive entitlements to medical and dental care, monthly pay, standard uniforms-including combat boots-and three meals a day.

Furthermore, the ANA’s boarding entitles each soldier to a

bed with linen, access to sanitary latrines and showers, Ullah said, all of which the AMF can not guarantee.

“I like being in the ANA,” Arif said. “The (ANA) soldiers are satisfied and the ANA is very effective for the country.

The ANA is here to serve the people, and we must work to protect everyone’s right as much as possible.”

In just two years, eight NAVCs stretched throughout Afghanistan were able to produce an ANA army of 10,000 Afghans.

By 2010, Afghan officials plan to field a 70,000-man army throughout Afghanistan, protecting its borders from terrorist insurgents and drug traffickers.

Ghazni, the ninth NAVC, joins its provincial neighbors in the national goal for an Afghan protected Afghanistan.



Prior to the NAVC ceremony several speakers including Ghazni Lt. Governor, Ramazon Haidary (above) addressed about 200 Ghazni elders about the benefits of opening an NAVC in their community.