



Turned in weapons for new jobs and a New Future

Former warriors starting new lives

By Maj. Greg Park

They once fought the enemies of Afghanistan with weapons. Now they “fight” with different tools to build a new Afghanistan.

Recognizing the need for change in Afghanistan and tired of years of fighting, former Afghan Militia Force (AMF) Maj. Mohomad Anwar turned in his weapons for job training.

“I had a fighting position, now I have a peace position,” said Anwar.

Anwar, from the Tajik tribe and a former mujaheddin fighter against the Soviets, was glad to give up his weapons.

“I was really glad to get rid of the weapons, our country doesn’t need weapons. I did it for the good of our country,” stated Anwar.

Those weapons included rocket launchers, rocket propelled grenades, rifles and machine guns. In exchange for his weapons, he is currently receiving training in highway construction.

Anwar says this is an opportunity to impact his country. The vocational training will lead to job placement at the end of the program. Anwar and others like him will become civil engineers upon completion of the seven- to nine month road construction program, enabling them to use their newly-learned skills to start their own businesses.

Former fighters like Anwar are participating in a program called the Afghan New Beginnings Program (ANBP). ANBP is a donor-funded program of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

It was established in 2003 to assist the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate the AMF into the Afghan society. Japan,

the United Kingdom and Canada are the current donors.

More than 8,500 officers and soldiers have started or about to start their reintegration packages which include business opportunities such as owning a shop or getting a loan to start a small business. Vocational training in construction, tailoring, carpentry, and agriculture with seeds or livestock is available. Other opportunities are joining the Afghan National Police or Afghan National Army.

Col. Abdulghafar

Sewllab also turned in his weapons.

“I found it necessary to turn in my weapons,” said Sewllab.

Sewllab chose road construction over joining the ANA or ANP. He sees the biggest obstacle in Afghanistan as the rebuilding of the infrastructure.

“I think construction is the biggest issue for Afghanistan,” he said.

He is a minority Arab from Paghman with 14 years in the military. He also fought the Soviets and was a member of the mujaheddin fighting force.



Photo by Maj. Greg Park

Former AMF Col. Abdulghafar Sewllab (digging) is getting valuable hands-on construction training from basic engineering all the way to advanced construction under the DDR program. Other DDR participants have gone into the business field or agriculture.

Col. Mohamed Shaport Ghayrut Stankzy is a 24 year military veteran who fled to Pakistan with his family during the Taliban regime. Stankzy, a member of the Pashtoon tribe, was in the 3rd Corps in Gardez before turning in his weapons.

Stankzy who is the father of seven children said the training he is receiving is very good.

“I have a bright future, we can beat terrorism, and they will be defeated. We can beat them by re-building our country,” said Stankzy.