

Operation BAAZ TSUKA

Task Force 31 Returns to the Panjwayi

By Kenneth Finlayson

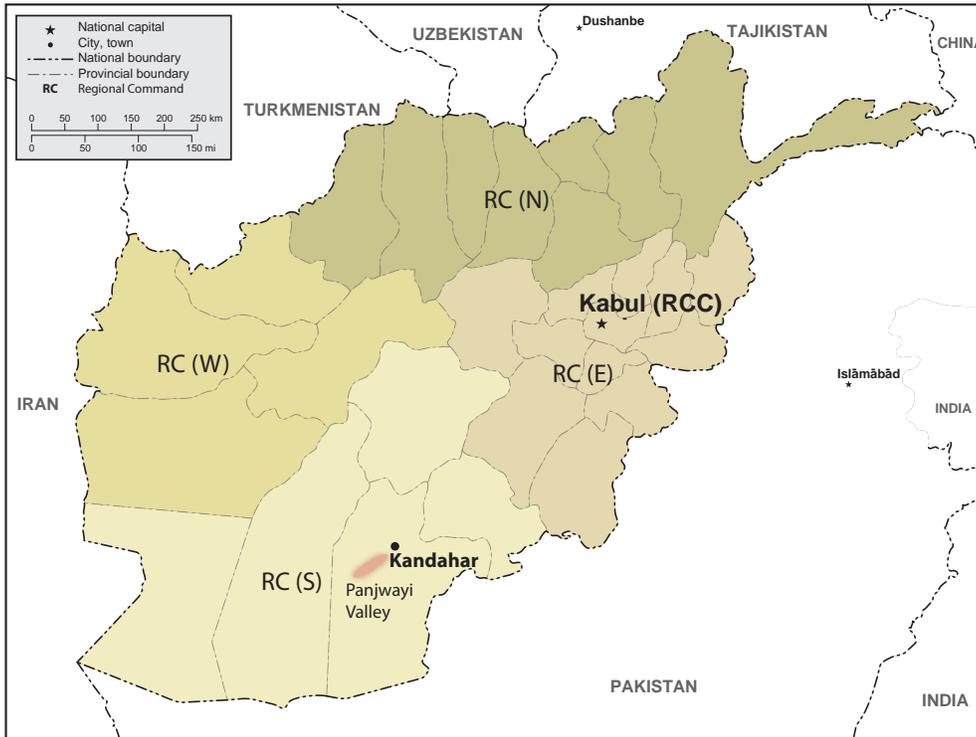
**In keeping with USSOCOM Policy, Special Operations soldiers Major and below and the named operational objectives in this article have been given pseudonyms, designated with an asterick*.*

The “Gateway to Kandahar” the Panjwayi Valley is one of the most fertile and productive regions in Afghanistan. Beginning 35 kilometers southwest of the ancient provincial capital city of Kandahar, the Panjwayi extends roughly 50 kilometers south and west almost to the border of Helmand Province. Watered by the Arghandab River, the well-populated valley produces grapes, corn and other crops. It was also a traditional Taliban stronghold. The 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (SFG) returned to the heartland of the Taliban for a third time in December 2006 as part of Operation BAAZ TSUKA.

Task Force 31 (TF-31), the “Desert Eagles,” as part of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A), had spent months in the Panjwayi Valley. They had driven the Taliban out of the area during Operation MEDUSA in September 2006.¹ But NATO/ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) had failed to maintain a viable presence in the area afterward. The political constraints on combat operations imposed on the different NATO nations by their governments precluded ISAF from developing a coordinated strategy to retain control of the Panjwayi Valley. The Taliban returned in strength just weeks after the end of MEDUSA. By the end of November, the Taliban strength in the valley was estimated to be nearly 800 fighters.² In December 2006, ISAF launched Operation BAAZ TSUKA (Pashtun for “Eagle Summit”) with the goal of once again driving out the Taliban and delivering essential development assistance to the local populace.³ In the intervening three months between MEDUSA and BAAZ TSUKA, the operating situation of TF-31 had undergone some significant changes.

The purpose of this article is to document the campaign and to highlight the counterinsurgency (COIN) model employed by TF-31 during the operation. Operation BAAZ TSUKA is an example of a successful COIN operation conducted as part of a multi-national operation and is relevant as a blueprint for future operations. This article will examine the situation in the Panjwayi Valley, the missions of ISAF and TF-31, and the scheme of maneuver and execution of Operation BAAZ TSUKA by the “Desert Eagles.”

The Panjwayi Valley, one of the most fertile and productive agricultural areas in Afghanistan, was dry and brown in December 2006.



Map of ISAF Regional Commands.



Dutch Major General Ton van Loon commanded RC-South during Operation BAAZ TSUKA. He became a staunch proponent of the counterinsurgency campaign designed by TF-31.

COL Christopher K. Haas, the 3rd SFG commander was in charge of the CJSOTF. A multi-national command, CJSOTF-A is comprised of special operations forces from twelve countries, including Canada, Great Britain, and the United Arab Emirates. It was responsible for coordinating SOF operations throughout Afghanistan. ISAF is composed of the headquarters, an Air Task Force, five Regional Commands, (RCs), 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and Forward Support Bases throughout Afghanistan with 40 countries contributing forces.⁴ The mission of ISAF was to bring security, stability, and foster development

in Afghanistan.⁵ The five geographically oriented Regional Commands (RCs) coordinated all civil-military activities conducted by the military elements or PRTs in their respective areas of responsibility.⁶ TF-31 worked for RC-South, whose area of responsibility encompassed Oruzgan, Zabol, Kandahar, Helmand, and Nimruz provinces. After MEDUSA, Canadian Brigadier General David A. Fraser was replaced by Dutch Major General Ton van Loon on 1 November 2006. A peacekeeping veteran, Major General van Loon commanded a Dutch task force in Bosnia in the 1990's. These peacekeeping experiences initially made van Loon hesitant to get involved in major combat operations.

In Bosnia, the Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian elements were separated into discrete ethnic enclaves that helped the NATO peacekeeping forces keep the warring factions apart. Humanitarian aid (HA) could be provided to all groups in relatively secure environments. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Donald C. Bolduc, the commander of TF-31, worked diligently to convince MG van Loon that solving the problems in southern Afghanistan involved a balance of combat operations and HA. "One of the biggest obstacles was to convince MG van Loon that there could be no



Task Force 31
Unofficial Insignia



ISAF SSI



3rd SFG Flash

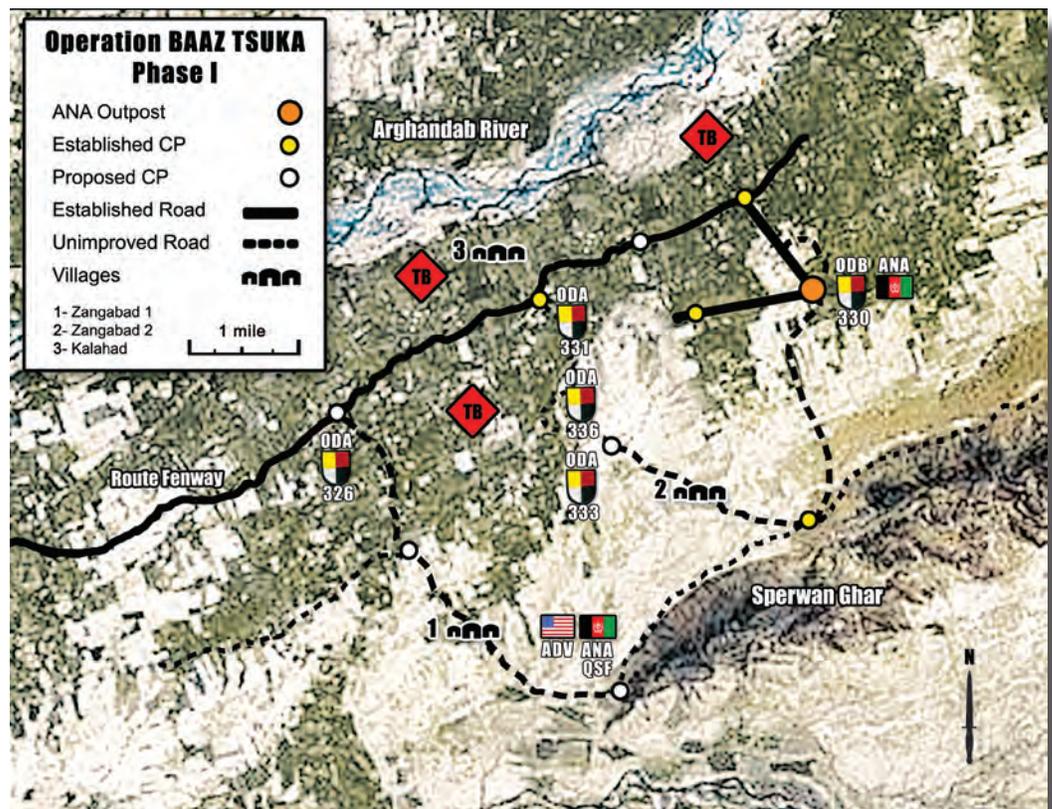
development without security,” said LTC Bolduc. “An active insurgency will not allow support to the locals. We needed to balance kinetic and non-kinetic [combat vs non-combat] operations in an intelligence-driven, full-spectrum campaign. It took about thirty days for him to realize this.”⁷ With van Loon’s support, the staff of TF-31 planned to conquer the valley again.

Operation *BAAZ TSUKA* was a two-phased campaign designed to achieve three important objectives. In Phase I, U.S. and Canadian forces in concert with Afghan National Army (ANA) units would assault from east to west to secure villages in the valley. The Canadians would move down Highway 1 to secure the town of Howz-E-Madad, north of the Arghandab River, and the U.S. forces would take the towns of Zangabad and Talukan on the south side.⁸ In Phase II, the Canadians would clear the villages of Siah Choi, Nalgham, and Sangasar. Then a company of Dutch infantry, assisted by the U.S. forces, would conduct an airmobile insertion to secure the town of Mushan at the western end of the Panjwayi Valley.⁹ In both phases, the ANA companies would constitute the bulk of the forces.

The first mission was to conduct direct combat operations to drive the Taliban out of their strongholds in the Panjwayi Valley. The



Canadian troops of TF-Kandahar receiving an operations briefing during Operation BAAZ TSUKA. TF-Kandahar executed the supporting attack that seized the town of Howz-E-Madad.



Phase I of Operation BAAZ TSUKA.



Royal Canadian Regimental Crest



Lord Strathcona's Horse Crest



Dutch 12th Infantry Battalion Crest



TF-31 personnel used ATVs to guide the trucks hauling logistical supplies.

second mission was to provide HA and the third was to establish an Afghan security presence in the valley to enhance the local infrastructure and protect the residents from Taliban retaliation. This time the U.S. forces would be the main effort. At the same time, A Company 1/3 SFG was conducting combat patrols and delivering HA in Zabel Province as was B Company 1/3 in Oruzgan Province.¹⁰ In Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*, U.S. Special Forces would be working with Canadian and Dutch forces.

Providing humanitarian aid, reconstruction and development assistance, and establishing a long-term security presence were major goals of Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*.¹¹ TF-31 support personnel delivered more than five tons of food, clothing, and supplies to the villages during the course of the operation.¹² The primary methods used by the ODB to meet the logistical needs of the teams were ATVs (All-Terrain Vehicles) to guide trucks carrying supplies or aerial resupply by CH-47 Chinook. Simultaneously with the delivery of humanitarian materials, the Task Force executed a comprehensive Information Operations (IO) campaign to counter Taliban propaganda.

“My task force IO team had Civil Affairs guys, a Psychological Operations team from 4th Psychological Operations Group [attached from the CJSOTF], my intel and plans officers, representatives from the State Department and USAID [United States Agency for International Development], and representatives from the Afghans, British and Canadians. They met regularly to develop plans and methods to counter the enemy message,” said LTC Bolduc. “The IO campaign was



Canadian Leopard C2 tank and LAV III fighting vehicle in overwatch. The 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment was augmented with the tanks of Lord Strathcona's Horse.

typed into the ground operations. It was a case of using the direct and indirect approaches simultaneously.”¹³ The effects of the IO campaign were far-reaching.

Operational Detachment–Bravo (ODB) 330, (C Company 1/3 SFG), would lead the TF-31 effort as it had done in MEDUSA. Major (MAJ) Jamie Hall* had four Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs), 331, 333, 336, and 384 (from B Co 3/3 SFG), and three Afghan National Army (ANA) companies from the 205th Battalion.¹⁴ Each ANA “company” was a thirty-man unit armed with AK-47 rifles, light machine guns, and RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade) launchers. The ANA travelled in Ford Ranger pick-up trucks.¹⁵ A seven-man Forward Logistics Element (FLE) from 1/3 SFG would handle the support for the operation. ODB 330 would be the main effort. The ODB’s mission was to attack in a westerly direction along the south side of the Arghandab River and clear

A platoon of three Canadian 155mm towed howitzers was attached to ODB 330. From their firebase on Sperwan Ghar, the artillery provided fire support to the SF teams as they advanced down the valley on the south side of the river.





The restrictive terrain forced the SF teams to move dismounted supported by their ATVs. The larger ground mobility vehicles (GMVs) were restricted to the main roads between the villages.

the contested area of Taliban fighters, seize the enemy controlled territory and secure the gains by establishing checkpoints manned by the ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP).¹⁶ ODA 384 with the engineers and reconnaissance platoon would be responsible for keeping the main road, Route FENWAY*, cleared and secure.

The supporting effort was led by Canadian forces of Task Force Kandahar (the 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment) who attached an engineer platoon, a reconnaissance platoon, and three 155mm howitzers to provide support to ODB 330. TF-Kandahar would conduct a supporting attack west along Highway 1 by the

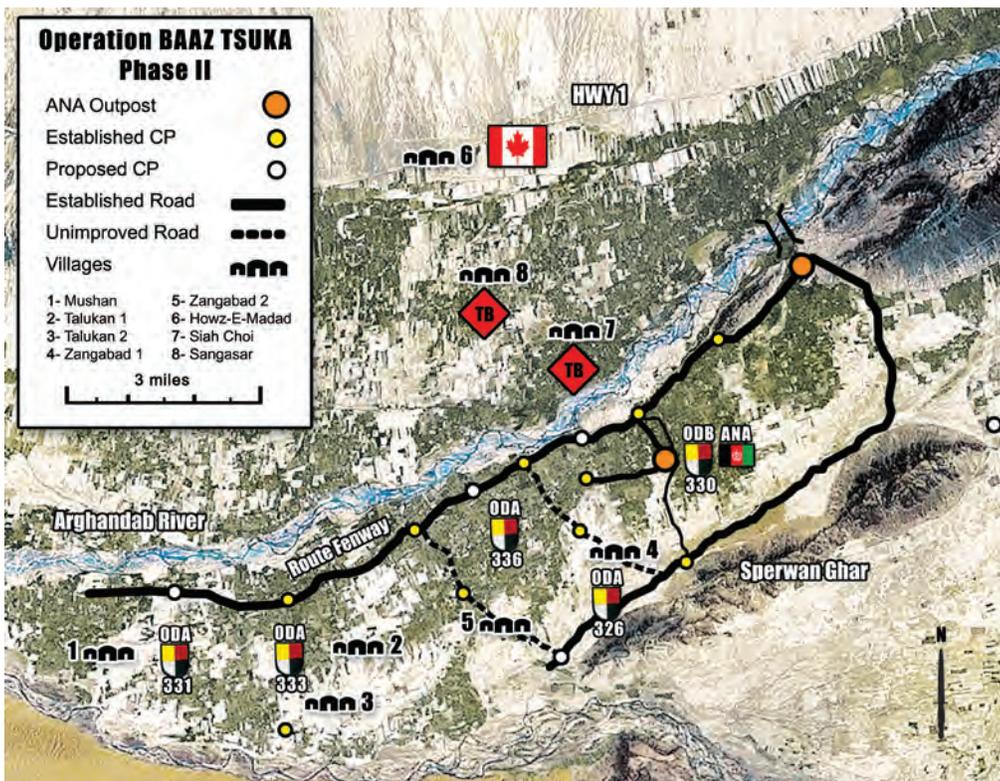
1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment mounted in LAV III light armored vehicles with an attached company of Leopard C2 tanks of Lord Strathcona's Horse. An infantry company team remained in the vicinity of Ma'sum Ghar at the east end of the valley. The Canadian forces were to attack on the north side of the river to secure the town of Howz-E-Madad on Highway 1 and on order, the towns of Sangasar and Siah Choi.¹⁷ The success of the main and supporting attacks would lead into the second phase of BAAZ TSUKA.

When the U.S. and Canadian forces secured their objectives, a company of Dutch infantry from the 12th Battalion (Air Assault) Royal Netherlands Army, would air assault into Mushan at the western end of the valley to interdict the Taliban communications and logistics center and establish contact with the city elders to coordinate the distribution of humanitarian assistance.¹⁸ Throughout the operation there would be a screening force to the south of the U.S sector made up of a company of ANA with U.S. advisors. At the western end of the valley, British Special Operations Forces from the adjacent Helmand Province provided another screening force and assisted with displaced civilians.¹⁹ After receiving approval from the CJSOTF and RC-South commanders, LTC Bolduc briefed the concept to the ISAF staff, and with MG van Loon's approval, prepared to launch Operation BAAZ TSUKA on 15 December, 2006.

MAJ Hall initially located the ODB headquarters element with the attached Canadian engineers, artillery, and reconnaissance elements on Sperwan Ghar, the hilltop firebase established after Operation MEDUSA.

From this dominant position he could observe the entire valley and direct close air support (CAS) and the artillery fires. Three ODAs, each with an ANA company, were arrayed abreast with ODA 331 on the right along the south bank of the Arghandab River, ODA 336 in the center, and ODA 333 in the south.²⁰ Route FENWAY* paralleled the south bank of the river and was the principal western axis of advance through the valley. That was the responsibility of ODA 384 and the Route Clearing Team made up of the Canadian recon and engineer platoons and TF-31 support personnel.²¹

The constricted terrain in the valley, small villages with interconnected mud-brick walls, irrigation



Phase II of Operation BAAZ TSUKA.

ditches and few roads, forced the teams to advance dismounted and clear each building individually. Unlike in September 2006 during Operation MEDUSA when the fields and vineyards were green and growing, in December these same fields were fallow and brown, providing better visibility. "The temperatures had gone from the 100's in MEDUSA to the 20's now," said MAJ Hall.²² Also unlike MEDUSA, the Taliban did not confront the advancing U.S. and ANA units.

The heavy losses suffered by the Taliban in MEDUSA caused them to change their tactics.²³ "The Taliban learned not to stand and fight," said Sergeant First Class (SFC) Dan Sterling* of ODA 331. "They had to try to negate the effects of the CAS."²⁴ Both ODA 333 and ODA 336 made contact on the first night as they pushed forward, clearing the hill mass of Zandabar Ghar and the small villages of Zangabad One and Two.²⁵ The Taliban withdrew when the teams approached. They abandoned

"...The process of clearing each building was very deliberate and time consuming."

caches and dug-in defensive positions leaving behind booby traps to slow the Coalition forces.

Captain (CPT) John Burns* was the team leader of ODA 331. "From Day Two forward we had a hard time maintaining momentum dismounted. The process of clearing each building was very deliberate and time consuming. We ended up going back and bringing up the GMVs (Ground Mobility Vehicles) so we could move on Route FENWAY," said Burns. "ODA 333 pushed on dismounted to clear [the villages of] Talukan One and Two."²⁶ On 17 December, ODA 326 replaced ODA 384 and continued the clearing and security mission on Route FENWAY. ODA 326 came from B Company, 1/3rd SFG. ODA 384 returned to 3/3 SFG in northern Afghanistan.²⁷

As each village was cleared, the teams would gather the elders for a *shura* (village council meeting) to explain the plan for providing security and support. This helped to gain the support of the local populace. The SF teams were delivering HA even as they drove the Taliban out of their strongholds. "We were dumping food and clothing off the trucks as we moved through," said CPT Burns. "We were using every means we could to establish rapport with the locals."²⁸ As the teams advanced westward and secured their objectives, the sustainment effort moved into high gear.

The support effort was led by CPT Peter Thomas* the 1/3 SFG Headquarters Company Commander from the TF-31 base at Kandahar. With CPT Josh Hardy* the TF-31 Support Detachment Commander and First Lieutenant (1LT) Cody Mathews* the FLE Officer-in-Charge (OIC), pushed HA and combat sustainment supplies to ODB 330 as well as the TF-31 units in the other



Clearing the villages building by building was a slow demanding operation. As the Taliban retreated, they left behind numerous caches and booby traps.



In each village, the teams conducted a shura with the village elders to explain the plan for providing security and humanitarian aid.



Distributing food, clothing and supplies in the villages was a key component of Operation BAAZ TSUKA. More than five tons of aid was distributed to the villagers in the valley.



CH-47 Chinook "Log Bird" hauling supplies for TF-31 from the Kandahar Airfield. Aerial resupply was a vital element in keeping team momentum during Operation BAAZ TSUKA.

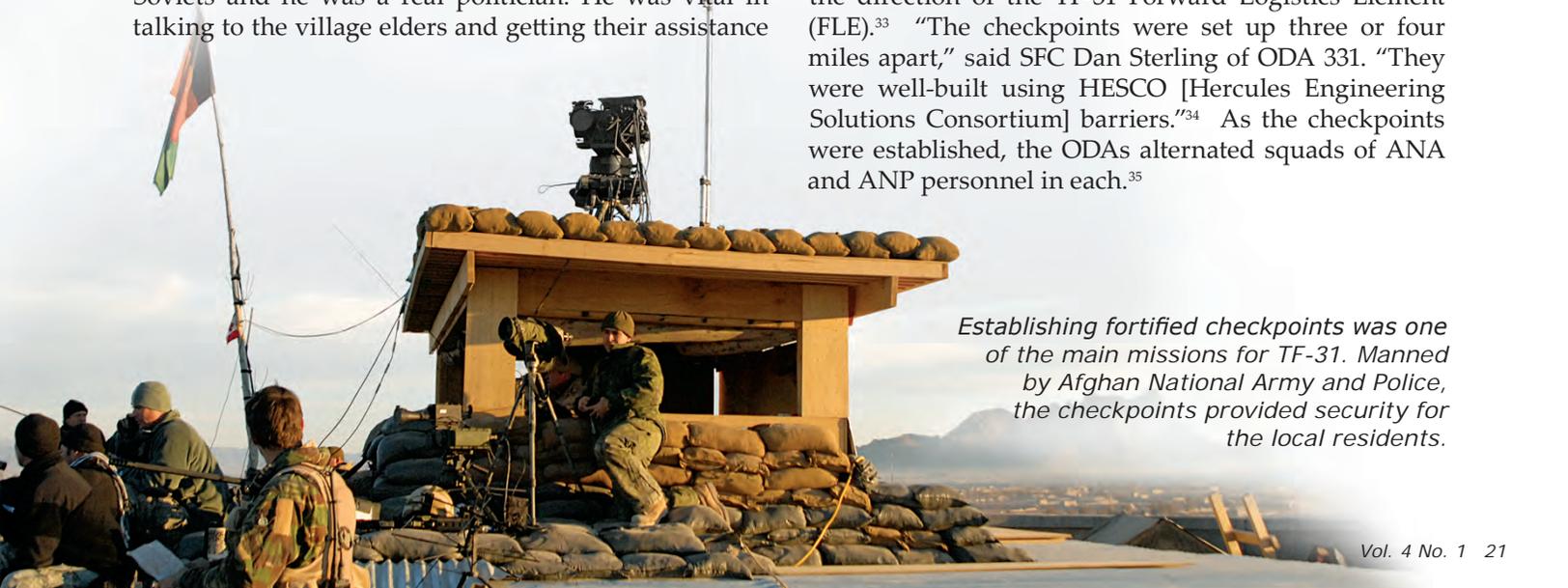
provinces. "These leaders and their men did brigade-level resupply operations," said LTC Bolduc. "They trained the Afghans to pack bundles, deliver supplies, and conduct their own resupply operations as well as push supplies out to the firebases for their own troops and the coalition."²⁹ The Field Liaison Element (FLE) supported ODB 330 with maintenance and medical support as well as delivering supplies to the teams and the villages. Providing HA to the villages supported the IO campaign to counter the Taliban.

Beginning on the third day of operations, the Governor of Kandahar Province started broadcasting radio messages from Kandahar, and the local newspapers ran articles about the development programs in the Panjwayi.³⁰ CPT Burns of ODA 331 noted that having the right individual on the ground was also important. "Our ANA battalion commander, LTC Risuli, was a key guy. He was an old *mujahideen* who had fought the Soviets and he was a real politician. He was vital in talking to the village elders and getting their assistance

in executing the support programs."³¹ The third objective of Operation BAAZ TSUKA, was to provide long-term security for the local populace. This began in stages as the teams pushed the Taliban westward.

The establishment of fortified checkpoints to be manned by the ANA or Afghan National Police (ANP) was an integral part of the operation. The failure to establish checkpoints was a major shortcoming after Operation MEDUSA. "Checkpoints were not set up after MEDUSA," said SFC Peter Carney* of ODA 336. "The coalition dragged their feet on setting up the checkpoints and this allowed the Taliban to come back into the valley."³² As the teams pushed westward down the valley, the Route Clearing Team (ODA 326 with Canadian engineers and recon personnel) followed, establishing checkpoints at key locations along Route FENWAY and in the villages.

The Canadian engineers attached to ODB 330 from TF-Kandahar constructed modular checkpoints under the direction of the TF-31 Forward Logistics Element (FLE).³³ "The checkpoints were set up three or four miles apart," said SFC Dan Sterling of ODA 331. "They were well-built using HESCO [Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium] barriers."³⁴ As the checkpoints were established, the ODAs alternated squads of ANA and ANP personnel in each.³⁵



Establishing fortified checkpoints was one of the main missions for TF-31. Manned by Afghan National Army and Police, the checkpoints provided security for the local residents.



The Dutch airmobile force landed in two Royal Netherlands Army CH-47 Chinook helicopters to secure the village of Mushan on 23 December 2006. The landing zone had been occupied the day prior by U.S. and Canadian forces.

CPT John Burns said “each checkpoint was set up for six to eight guys. Sometimes as many as twenty would be on the checkpoint and it became a losing battle with numbers as these guys were coming out of the ANA battalion ranks.” Of the two forces manning the checkpoints, “The ANA had good training and we had good rapport with them. The police were not as well trained. The police chief was supportive of the plan, but he needed more resources.”³⁶ Placing the police checkpoints between those manned by the better trained ANA proved to be the best method to aid the police.³⁷ Ultimately 18 checkpoints were established in the U.S. sector of the Panjwayi Valley (TF-Kandahar established 14 checkpoints) during Operation BAAZ TSUKA.³⁸ The last was set up at the town of Mushan. Securing the western end of the Panjwayi Valley was to be a coalition effort.

On 10 January 2007, the Special Forces teams assaulted and secured three villages north of the Arghandab River. The Taliban fled when the “Thorn Trucks” appeared.



These ruined buildings were a weapons cache complex near Zangabar Ghar. The cache was one of many found by the Special Forces teams during Operation BAAZ TSUKA. Taliban forces depended on their caches during combat.

The air assault by the Dutch infantry company took place on 22 December 2006. On the day prior, ODA 331 escorted a company-sized task force of Canadian tanks and light armor from Ma’sum Ghar down Route FENWAY to the designated landing zone on the eastern edge of the town. “The Canadians did not want to move over an uncleared route so we escorted them with the GMVs,” said CPT John Burns, the ODA commander. “The Taliban are deathly afraid of the GMVs; they call them ‘Thorn Trucks.’”³⁹ Despite the incongruity of the lightly armored GMVs leading the Leopard tanks and LAVs, the task force secured the landing zone and prepared to receive the Dutch airmobile force.



The Dutch infantry landed in their two CH-47 Chinook helicopters after a flight down the valley from Sperwan Ghar. The infantry moved into the village, and secured the area. They conducted a *shura* with the assembled village elders and distributed a token sample of humanitarian aid. The next day, they left the area. The SF ODAs established the final checkpoint in Mushan.⁴⁰ “We [ODA 331] spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in the burned out clinic in Mushan,” said CPT Burns.⁴¹ On Christmas Day, the forces of ODB 330 were deployed throughout the valley south of the river. ODA 331 was in Mushan, ODA 326 was to the east in the village of Talukan One and ODA 333 was in Talukan Two with ODA 336 further east in Zangabad where they found a significant Taliban cache. The ODB with the Canadian attachments was on Zandabar Ghar, the hill mass in the center of the sector.⁴² At this time, the ODB had successfully completed Phases I and II and secured their designated objectives and ODA 326 returned to B Company 1/3 SFG. But, the Panjwayi Valley was not yet cleared.

The Canadian TF-Kandahar had occupied their initial objective, the town of Howz-E-Madad astride Highway 1 at the start of Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*. There they established a static defensive position. None of the follow-on objectives, notably the towns of Sangasar, Nalgham, and Siah Choi were taken. TF-Kandahar, with the exception of the small task force that was escorted by ODA 331 to Mushan, had not advanced outside of Howz-E-Madad. Significant pockets of the Taliban were still in the three towns and their presence endangered the security of the operations on the south side of the river. Clearing the Taliban from these villages became an unexpected Phase III for ODB 330.

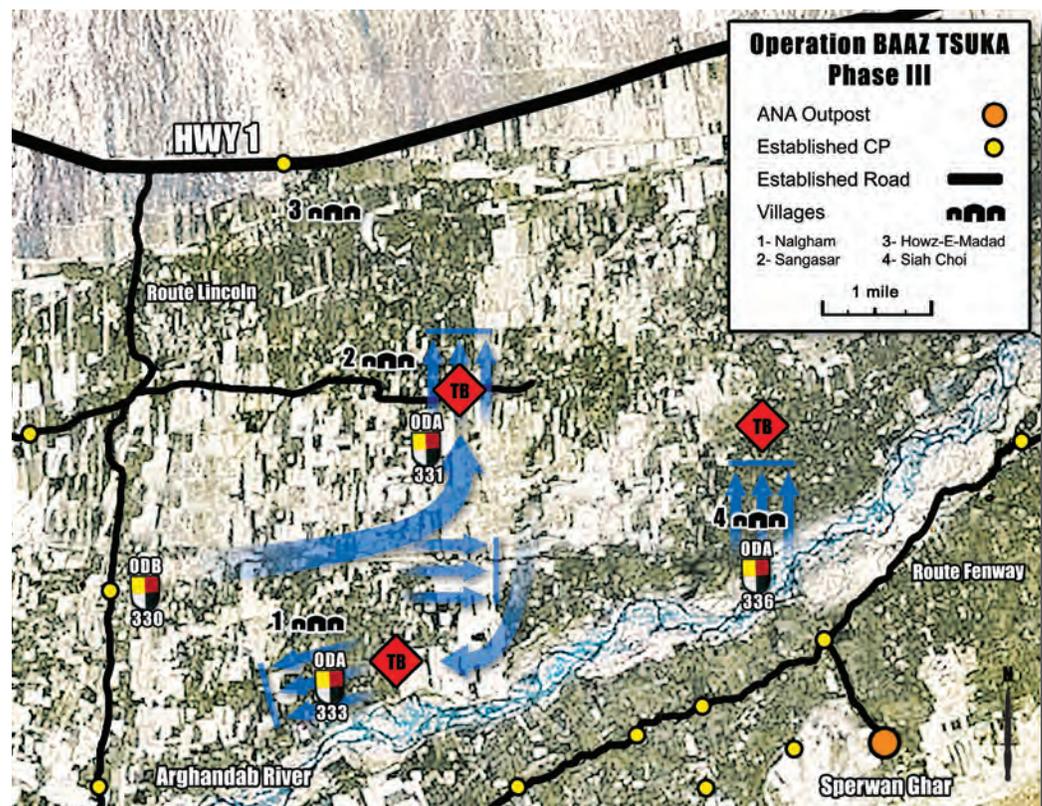
The plan to secure the villages on the north side of the Arghandab River fell to the individual team commanders in ODB 330. The necessary coordination was done by the TF-31 staff.⁴³ The basic concept was for the three ODAs and the ANA to push into the villages from the south. They would be relieved by TF-Kandahar after securing their objectives. TF-Kandahar would provide artillery support for the operation, which commenced on 10 January 2007.⁴⁴

“Initially the Canadians did not think we could

clear the villages with just the teams and the ANA,” said CPT John Burns.⁴⁵ SFC Peter Carney was a liaison to the Canadian forces at Howz-E-Madad. “The Canadian troops were pretty aggressive, but their commanders were not. One IED would stop them cold,” said Carney.⁴⁶ Carney worked diligently to get the Canadian forces to follow up the SF assaults.

On 9 January 2007 ODB 330 moved from Zandabar Ghar to a position west of Nalgham on Route LINCOLN*, the north-south route connecting Highway 1 with Route FENWAY. The SF teams moved into the villages on 10 January with ODA 331 assaulting Sangasar, ODA 333 taking Nalgham, and ODA 336 moving on Siah Choi.⁴⁷ By 11 January, all three objectives had been taken and the Taliban were driven from their strongholds and fled the valley. The teams conducted *shuras* with the village elders to establish the HA programs and on the 11th were relieved by Canadian forces in Sangasar and Siah Choi. The Dutch infantry, under the operational control of TF-31 since 7 January, reentered the operation and relieved ODA 333 in Nalgham. The Dutch later turned the town over to TF-Kandahar. Following the successful capture of the villages, the ODB deployed back to Sperwan Ghar.⁴⁸ As they were relieved, the teams also moved back to Sperwan Ghar to refit and rearm prior to continuing the mission of incorporating the ANA into the security operations and the manning of the checkpoints.⁴⁹

With the area north of the river secured, Operation *BAAZ TSUKA* accomplished the mission of driving the



Phase III of Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*.



By 11 January 2007, the teams had cleared the towns north of the river and were relieved by Canadian and Dutch forces. The seizure of the towns completed the mission of driving the Taliban out of the Panjwayi Valley.

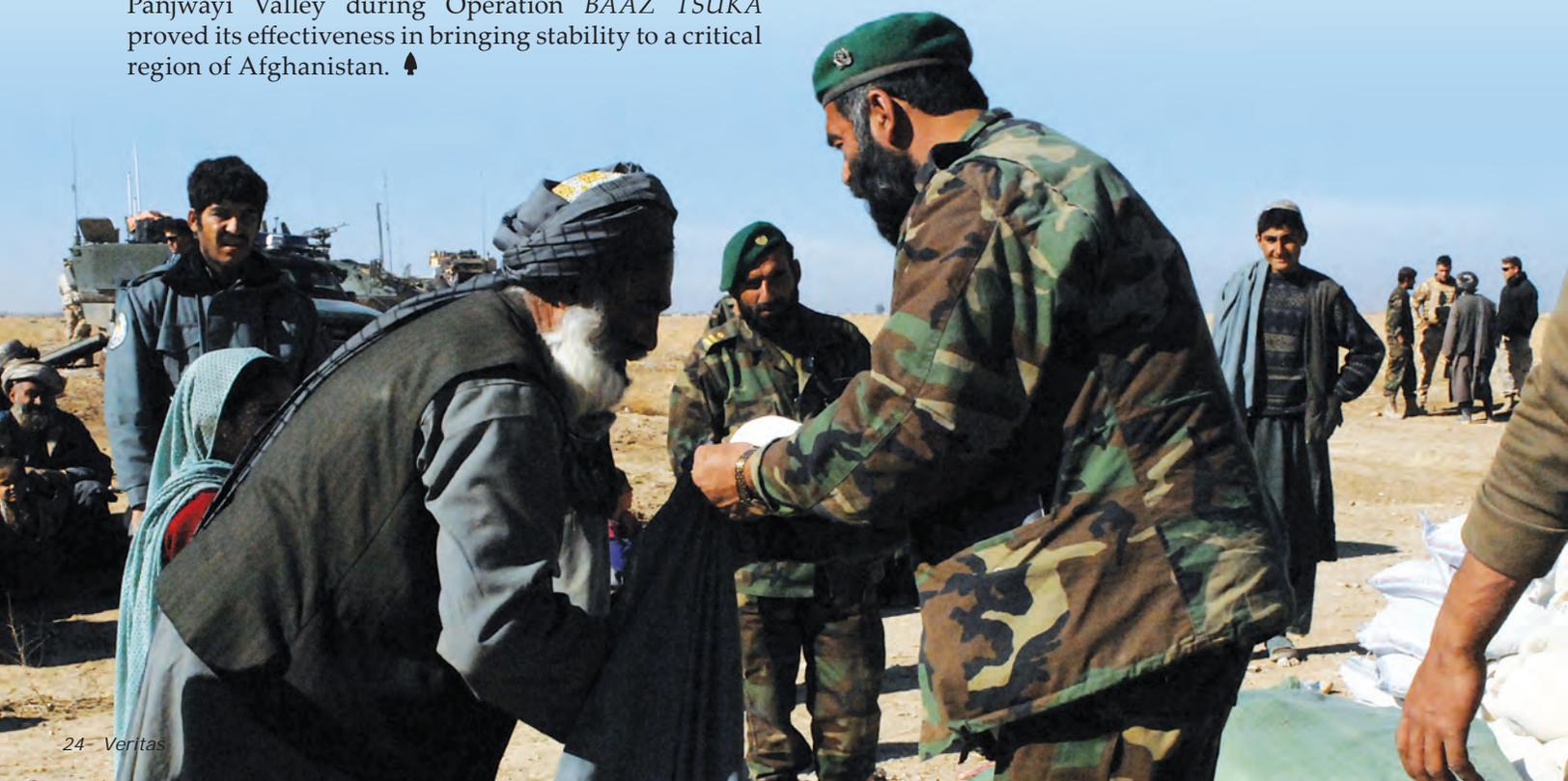
Taliban out of the valley and establishing the network of checkpoints needed to provide for the long-term security of the residents of the valley. In the aftermath of Operation BAAZ TSUKA, thousands of displaced civilians began to move back into the Panjwayi. As the locals returned, there was a positive reaction to the improved security situation as evidenced by the willingness of the residents to report the planting of IEDs and cache locations to the Afghan forces.⁵⁰ The combination of direct combat operations against the Taliban, coupled with the establishment of security measures to protect the local populace and the dedicated program of economic development, was the key to transforming a passive population into one that actively opposed the insurgent forces in the area. The counterinsurgency model pursued by TF-31 in the Panjwayi Valley during Operation BAAZ TSUKA proved its effectiveness in bringing stability to a critical region of Afghanistan. ♣



New clothing for a young Afghani. Providing supplies of food and clothing was instrumental in turning a passive population into one supportive of the Coalition effort.

The author would like to thank Major Alan D. Meyer for his assistance in the collection of information for this article and to the Desert Eagles who generously contributed their time.

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.



Endnotes

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- 2 Lieutenant Colonel Donald C. Bolduc, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 5 February 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; TF-31 Evening Update Brief, 18 December 2006, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 3 International Security Assistance Force news release #2006-365, 15 December 2006, <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/pressreleases/2006/pr061215-365.htm>.
- 4 <http://152.152.94.201/isaf/structure/comstruc/index.html>.
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- 6 **The ISAF Regional Commands are North, South, East, West, and the Capital Command in Kabul.** http://www.nato.int/docu/briefing/nms/html_en/nms02.html; <http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/ncs/ncsindex.htm>; http://152.152.94.201/isaf/structure/regional_command/index.html.
- 7 Lieutenant Colonel Donald C. Bolduc, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 31 January 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 8 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 24, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 9 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 24, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 10 TF-31 Evening Update Brief, 18 December 2006, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 11 International Security Assistance Force news release #2006-382, 20 December 2006, <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/pressreleases/2006/pr061220-382.htm>.
- 12 Lieutenant Colonel Donald C. Bolduc, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe and Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 14 September 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 13 Bolduc interview, 14 September 2007; Bolduc interview, 31 January 2008.
- 14 **C Company 1/3 SFG's ODAs, 332, 334, and 335 were conducting operations in Farah, Herat, and Shindand, respectively.** TF-31 Operational Highlights Report, 18 December 2006, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 15 Major Jamie Hall* C-1/3 SFG, interview by LTC Robert W. Jones, Jr. and Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 20 November 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 16 Bolduc, interview, 14 September 2007. Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 24, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 17 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 25, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 18 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 26, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 19 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 27, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 20 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 28, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 TF-31 Evening Update Brief, 19 December 2006, Briefing Slide, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 22 Major Jamie Hall* C-1/3 SFG, interview by Major Alan D. Meyer, 11 May 2007, Fort Bragg NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 23 **It is estimated the Taliban lost over 500 of the 800 insurgents that fought in Operation MEDUSA.** Finlayson and Meyer, "Operation MEDUSA," *Veritas: The Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol 3, No 4, 2007.
- 24 Sergeant First Class Dan Sterling*, ODA 331, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson and LTC Robert W. Jones, Jr., 30 November 2007, Fort Bragg, digital recording in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 25 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 27, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 26 Captain John Burns*, ODA 331, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 30 January 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 27 Bolduc interview, 5 February 2008; TF-31 Evening Update Brief, 18 December 2006, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 28 Burns* interview.
- 29 LTC Donald C. Bolduc, email to Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 8 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 30 Bolduc interview, 14 September 2007.
- 31 Burns* interview.
- 32 Sergeant First Class Peter Carney*, ODA 336, interview by Major Alan D. Meyer, 3 May 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 33 Operational Summary, "SOTF-31 Vignette and Strategy Brief for Panjwayi/Pashmul," slide 27, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 34 **HESCO barriers are fabricated modular structures that replace sandbagged revetments and provide superior blast protection to buildings or bunkers.** Sterling* interview.
- 35 Burns* interview.
- 36 Burns* interview.
- 37 Burns* interview.
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