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NAVAIR acquired Afghan AN-32 aircraft support combat operations in Kandahar

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Afghan National Army Air Corps AN-26 and AN-32 aircraft flew more than 78 sorties transporting 1,697 passengers and more than 27,000 pounds of cargo in June and July directly supporting Afghan National Army (ANA) Operation DAOR BUKHOU in response to the Kandahar prison escape. These were the first combat support missions for the two NAVAIR acquired AN-32 aircraft. The ANA was able to successfully counter the threat to the Arghandab district North of Kandahar with the rapid deployment of ANA reinforcements.

“This first mission is a tribute to the hard work done by our NAVAIR team in acquiring these versatile aircraft for the Afghans,” said Capt. James Wallace, Program Manager for the Support and Commercial Derivative Aircraft Program Office. “The final two AN-32s will arrive in Kabul, Afghanistan by the end of August.”

“Your team did a good job, according to the reports I received. The Afghans are steadily increasing their sorties per month and gaining their confidence back,” said a source in the Combined Air Power Transition Force. “I don’t know if you are aware, but the recent uprising in Kandahar was countered by troops transported by ANAAC in the aircraft your team provided. One of the good news stories out of the event is that this was one of the first operational combat missions flown. The airlift was carried out almost exclusively by the ANAAC in support of Afghan troops.”

“The ANAAC has improved greatly with the mentorship from International Security Assistance Force and the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan’s trainers. It is impressive to see how quickly they have come in the past months,” said Major General Eikelboom, ISAF Director of the Air Coordination Element. “The ANAAC has been moving almost 5,000 people a month with a small fleet of cargo aircraft and helicopters and with little assistance from ISAF.”

NAVAIR’s Support and Commercial Derivative Aircraft Program Office (PMA-207), responding to a direct request from Afghanistan’s President and Minister of Defense via the Navy’s International Program Office, was directed to buy four Antonov AN-32 aircraft for the Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAAC) through the Foreign Military Sales program.

The AN-32 is an all-weather transport aircraft that is ideally suited to flying missions in Afghanistan’s tough environment. It is widely used by commercial and military operators world-wide.

Photo: “Afghan National Army Air Corps AN-32 on the ramp at Kabul International Airport. U.S. Navy photo.”