



United States Army Criminal Investigation Command

Media contact: CID Public Affairs Office
571-305-4041

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Special Agent Embraces Unconventional Assignment

By Colby Hauser
CID Public Affairs

Kandahar, Afghanistan, August 12, 2011— CID Special Agents eat, sleep and breathe their mission. Whether it's at home in the United States or forward deployed throughout the world, their mission remains the same; to diligently seek the truth, deterred by neither fear nor prejudice.

However, some missions evolve as conditions on the ground change and there is nothing anyone can do to prepare. Such was the case for Special Agent Jody Bennett, a CID agent with the 10th MP Bn (CID) (ABN), Fort Bragg, NC, currently assigned to the Provincial Headquarters in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

"When I arrived it was a new program," Bennett said. "My directions were simple enough, 'when you get down to PHQ, make it work. So the question for me was how can I make them stronger?"

The program, Rule of Law Field Force – Afghanistan is part of Joint Inter-agency Task Force 435, which assists the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army tackle local-national counter narcotic and counter terrorism investigations.

"For the most part Afghan's are pretty good, they process crime scenes like we do, they're pretty thorough, only the forensic piece was missing," he said. "So we brought in the capabilities of the Joint Expeditionary Forensic Facility labs to help."

Kandahar City, located in the Southern part of Afghanistan, is roughly an hour from the sprawling Kandahar Airfield by ground convoy and is considered by most as one of the most kinetic areas of operation within the country, as Bennett would soon find out.

Upon the agent's arrival at PHQ in October of 2010, there was a Vehicular Improvised Explosives Device attack on the main compound. Four months later, a ground attack against the headquarters was staged. Normally, special agents arrive after the shooting

-more-

2-2-2

stops and the crime scene has been secured. Bennett however, found himself in the midst of a full blown combat engagement.

“We were sitting in the colonel’s office when we heard the first RPGs come over the fence,” he said. “We immediately checked in at the operations center to let them know we were okay, then grabbed our weapons and started firing back.”

What followed was a five-hour firefight until the ANP and NATO forces eventually drove back the Taliban insurgents.
“It was just crazy,” he added.

While assigned, Bennett has developed an extremely close working relationship with the chiefs of the Kandahar counter terrorism, counter narcotic and criminal investigation division. So, it was all the more difficult as tragedy would strike PHQ on April 15, 2011, with the assassination of the Provincial Chief of Police.

“Traditionally Friday is their day off, so a lot of folks were gone for the day,” he said. “We were working in the deputy’s office reviewing some case files and then stepped outside for a bit.”

An hour later, a suicide bomber walked into the very office Bennett had been in and detonated an explosive vest killing the PCOP and destroying a large portion of the building.

“That one hit a little close to home,” he said. “Luckily with everyone off for the day, it wasn’t as bad as it could have been.”

What followed was chaos.

The PCOP was also a senior elder with one of the local tribes.

“Following the attack, the Alikozai tribe began looking at all the other tribes in the area,” Bennett said. “The Afghan CID chiefs started getting death threats, and the ANP could have folded, but they didn’t.”

Normally, the Afghan National Police have 72 hours to investigate a crime and present the evidence to the Meja, or the Afghan court. Bennett and the fledgling Afghan Criminal Investigation Division immediately began their investigation and within the next few days were able to put all of the pieces together.

“All of the PCOP’s protective detail was accounted for except one guy,” he said. “The problem was that the ANP had vouched for all of the PCOP’s protective detail.”

Behind the scenes, the sounds of an impending tribal war could be heard as members of the rival tribes blamed each other for the attack.

-more-

3-3-3

“After processing the scene and with the help of the JEFF lab in Kandahar, we were able to link the missing bodyguard to the bomber.”

This was the first time in Kandahar that law enforcement officials were able to positively identify the remains of a suicide bomber.

CID and Bennett continue to have a significant impact on criminal investigations in Kandahar. To date, he has worked on more than 240 cases, and has been on scene at six suicide bombings, post-blast, providing assistance with evidence collection and crime scene photography.

“Their version of CSI does a really good job,” he said. “They take photographs, place markers, collect evidence, and with each scene they get better.”

Currently, TF-435 and CID is working with its Afghan partners on the process to draft up an Afghanistan version of an arrest warrant, which is executed by the ANP’s provincial reaction force.

Bennett explained that due to the nature of operations, along with the time it takes to get an arrest warrant often puts law enforcement behind the eight ball. Now, with the assistance of the JEFF labs, and an aggressive prosecuting attorney, the local national investigation team in Kandahar is capable of getting the required documents to become more proactive in tackling those criminal elements operating throughout the area.

“It’s definitely a step in the right direction,” he said.

For more information on Army CID visit www.cid.army.mil

-30-

-more-

4-4-4



Special Agent Jody Bennett, a CID agent assigned to the 10th Military Police Battalion (ABN) (CID), currently assigned to the Rule of Law Field Force – Afghanistan, investigates a suicide bomber attack on the Provincial Headquarters in Kandahar, Afghanistan with Ministry of Interior officials. (U.S. Army Photo courtesy of CID PAO)

-more-

5-5-5



A U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command photograph of a Ministry of the Interior building that was damaged during an insurgent attack in the Kandahar area of Afghanistan. CID special agents and their partner organizations are heavily engaged in the investigation of terrorist attacks throughout the Afghanistan area of operations. (U.S. Army Photo courtesy of CID PAO)

-more-

6-6-6



Fifteen million dollars worth of heroin are recovered during a joint Army CID and Afghan counter narcotic investigation in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Narcotics' trafficking is one of several activities that helps fund the Taliban insurgency. (U.S. Army Photo courtesy of CID PAO)