

CATEGORY Q: John T. Anderson Military Broadcast Journalist of the Year RUN/PRODUCT SHEET

1) Product Name: Afghan Translator Breaks Gender Barrier
Product Type: (i.e. TV Spot, print story, type of graphic, radio spot etc) Television Feature Report
Run Time: 4:45
Intro/Anchor Lead: SSG Walter Talens
First Play Date: 11/17/11
Location Played: DVIDS
Total Run Time of Submissions – 4:45

2) Product Name: Balikatan 2011 – C-IED Course
Product Type: (i.e. TV Spot, print story, etc) Television News Report
Run Time: 2:17
Intro/Anchor Lead: SSG Walter Talens
First Play Date: 4/21/2011
Location Played: DVIDS
Total Run Time of Submissions – 2:17

3) Product Name: Finance Specialist Helping Troops
Product Type: (i.e. TV Spot, print story, etc) Television News Report
Run Time: 1:41
Intro/Anchor Lead: SSG Talens
First Play Date: 10/18/2011
Location Played: DVIDS
Total Run Time of Submissions – 1:41

Title: Afghan Translator breaks gender barrier

Reporting: US Army Staff Sgt. Walter Talens

Date: 13Nov2011

Suggested Lead:

Steeped in tradition, tribal bonds, and Pashtunwali code, Afghanistan can be a tough place for women. Denial of education, child marriages, honor killings are some of the obstacles the modern Afghan woman lives through on a daily basis. Now imagine a woman who works for Coalition Forces trying to improve the lives of her fellow Afghan women, by living life undeterred by fear. In essence, an example of a new, independent, and modern Afghan woman. Army Staff Sergeant Walter Talens spent some time at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar and met a young woman bucking tradition to make lives better for women in Kandahar.

As the 10 year anniversary of September 11 and the war on terror in Afghanistan has come and gone, almost every aspect of this war has been covered in print, photos, video, and even blogged about. The past ten years we have seen heroes, villains, martyrs, and victims on all sides. Often ignored are the Afghans who are living their lives trying to make a better Afghanistan.

SOUND POP – Clip of Barbara and Maryam Talking

Maryam is a young Afghan woman working as a Gender Advisor and Translator for the U-S State Department and Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team or K-P-R-T. Starting her career at the age of 15 with the Canadian Forces, she has become one of the most sought after translator due to her regional upbringing, understanding of Afghan culture, and familiarity with Afghan gender issues.

SOUND POP – Myriam walking into Sarposa Prison

SoundBite 1: - LTC Barbara Crawford – KPRT Advisor to Department of Women Affairs

When I first met her, I didn't know what to think. She was a young lady; she was 18... so to have such a big title and an important job at that age, I was a little unsure. But after working with Myram for a couple of weeks, I realized that she's a true professional.

SOUND POP of Myriam at Sarposa Prison

Concerned with the Taliban's oppressive stance towards women and education, Maryam's father moved the family to Pakistan for their protection and education when she was a year old.

SOUND POP of Myriam talking about Inmate's case.

SoundBite2: Myriam – Afghan Gender Advisor and Translator

My father is the only man in our extended family who supports girl education a lot. My cousins are uneducated.

After President Hamid Karzai became president, Maryam's father moved the family back to Afghanistan. Hoping for new opportunities in post-Taliban Afghanistan, the family settled in Kandahar City. These new opportunities included new obstacles based on old traditions.

SOUND POP – SARPOSA PRISON 0740W

Kandahar City is the birthplace of the Taliban and the most conservative city in Afghanistan. Women's rights are not as much ignored as they are non-existent. Aside from obvious lack of basic necessities and educational opportunities, women have deeper problems within the Afghan society.

SOUNDBITE3: Leslie Wright

"They suffer from dangers not simply outside of their households, but often times from within their households. From a general standpoint often times, they go home to physical violence."

SOUNDPOP – SARPOSA PRISON 00771K

SOUNDBITE 4: Maryam

"Her husband is living in Pakistan. He is addicted to the drugs and heroin and she doesn't want to stay with him, so she came to her parent's home. Her parents tried to persuade her to go to her husband's home, she was rejecting. She didn't go, that's why her parents reported her to the police, and say we don't keep her at home and she's not going to her husband's home."

These are just some of the issues that the Afghan Department of Women Affairs, also known as DoWA is trying to address. Maryam is the bridge between DoWA and the K-P-R-T.

SOUNDBITE 5: LTC Barbara Crawford.

“She’s our number one interface with the NGO’s for the gender team. She also is the top of the list; she coordinates and communicates with the director of women affairs, Rakiya Askahi, the DoWA. She has a direct, close relationship with her. So anything we need in that department, we can always depend on her to do.”

SOUNDPOP – Myriam at prison talking to Warden.

Unfortunately, working with the coalition and helping develop women’s rights in Kandahar comes with a price.

SOUNDBITE 6: Leslie Wright

“Maryam to agree as a woman, to work for the coalition, is the biggest... possibly biggest security risk that any of them could take.”

SOUNDPOP at Sarposa Prison with Warden.

SOUNDBITE 7: Leslie Wright –

“We have a number of folks, women in Sariposa Prison who are there, just simply to protect them from their abusers. So Maryam in this case, she goes above and beyond. This is just a different layer of courage. She has been confronted with education, health, and rule of law issues, those were basic. Compared to that which she has been confronted with, working with coalition. Working with the coalition a woman, and Afghan Kandaharian woman was unheard of.

SOUND POP

SOUND BITE 8: Myriam

“In 2011, March. My family was here and my brother was kidnapped. I have a 12 year old brother, because I was working in the field with the American and Canadian. Everybody has heard of me that Myram Saghar was working for KPRT. Like I was Famous outside. Everybody knows that I was Gender advisor at KPRT. My small brother, as a male, he was my male escorter. He was coming with me every time I was coming to KPRT, attending meetings or giving reports. So he was coming with me after like a few months, my brother was kidnapped by the Taliban. He was badly beaten and dragged. After that I reported here... so my parents decided... that’s why my parents left Kandahar and moved...”

SOUND POP

If having her brother kidnapped and family move to a different city wasn't enough, Maryam began to receive unscheduled visits from unknown men asking to meet her or asking about her work schedule. Behavior and activity like that is never a good sign for women in Afghanistan, and Maryam knows this first hand.

SOUNDBITE 9: Myriam

“Like a month ago, my school best friend by the name of Fabri Asada. I'm sure you know better about her because she was working with GiRWA, and she killed by unknown people. So she was my best friend, Fabri Asada. So it doesn't mean the incident was only happening before. No, we still have the same problem with women. The women working with International Forces and women working with GiRWA they are always a target.”

Despite these threats, Maryam's courage can be traced back to someone very important to her.

SOUNDBITE 10: Myriam

“... my father is very supporting of women education and women working. He was like very mad and encouraging me. Don't stop your work and go continue your work. Who are these people? I'm not afraid of them! These are the people that want to take the rights of women. He never said to me stop working. We have these parents when such issues start happening, they start telling the daughters, sisters, or mothers, please stop going... we have security problems. Fortunately my father didn't... I didn't hear that.

Maryam continued working for the Coalition Forces. Taking responsibility for her safety and appreciating the value of her work, a decision by people in the US State Department and Kandahar P-R-T was made to allow Maryam to live in Camp Nathan Smith inside Kandahar City.

SOUNDBITE 11: Maryam

“As soon as I came to Camp Nathan Smith, I'm feeling way better and comfortable. I have no mental depression and not worry about anything. I say “I'm safe!” When I was out I had this depression and tension a lot. Mentally I was not doing well because I was afraid and they say this is Afghan society anything can happen so...”

SOUND POP – Talking to Warden

Anything did happen! After her years of service, Maryam received a Scholarship and Canadian Sponsorship to attend a University in Canada. Making her the first Afghan woman to emigrate from Afghanistan unaccompanied by family or a male escort since the arrival of coalition forces.

SOUNDBITE 12: LTC Crawford

“We’re trying to show the people of Afghanistan that, you know, the young ladies can come out, they can work, they can be respected. They can be trusted, to come in, do a job and go home, and they don’t have to worry about what kind of trouble they can get in, or them doing something wrong, she’s doing what we hope the future holds for all Afghan women.”

SOUNDBITE 13: Maryam

“If we become afraid, who will be working for this country? We are the new Generation of our country and we should keep our hard working and should not listen, to others what they are saying. We should do what we think is correct and I think education is the backbone of the country. Education is the only way that we can promote and develop our society... our ignorant society. One day they will understand the importance of education as well.

Despite all the hardship Maryam has been through and all the obstacles that she’ll face in the future, one can’t deny the talent of this young lady to overcome the challenges she’s faced, virtually since birth. With the new opportunities given to her, Afghanistan would be wise to use Maryam as a guide for stability, growth, and courage.

Army Sergeant Walter Talens, Camp Nathan Smith, Afghanistan.

Title: Balikatan 2011 – C-IED Course
Reporting: US Army Staff Sgt. Walter Talens
Date: 07April2011

Saving lives through education is the goal of the counter I-E-D class taking place during Balikatan Exercise at Fort Magsaysay, Philippines. U-S Army Master Sergeant Francisco Alcantar of the 130th Engineer Brigade located in Schofield barracks Hawaii discusses his role as an instructor.

SOUNDBITE 1: U-S Army Master Sergeant Francisco Alcantar

"We are in Balikatan Exercise and we are conducting Counter I-E-D training for American and Filipino forces in order to better their skills to counter IED's."

Knowing your enemy is key to victory, this is the goal of the counter I-E-D instructors. As they teach servicemembers to fight with their minds, by being observant and understand their environment.

SOUNDBITE 2: U-S Army Master Sergeant Francisco Alcantar

"What I want them to learn is not only how the devices work. But also understand their environment, who puts IEDs out there, what areas they use, what their intent is. Basically I want them to think like the enemy in order to be able to defeat the I-E-D threat as a whole, not just the device."

The evolving battlefield requires up-to-date training for the modern warrior. The Asia Pacific Counter IED Fusion Center uses current battlefield scenarios to train our troops.

SOUNDBITE 3: U-S Army Master Sergeant Francisco Alcantar

"Some of the difficulties that we have is every time you figure out how to defeat a device, they keep changing the device. So it's basically a Cat and Mouse game. They figure something out, we counter it, then they change it again. So it's not only changing, it's evolving. The threat is not something that stays static. It's always, always something new; we have to stay on top of it. This is what's great about the Asia Pacific Counter I-E-D Fusion Center; they stay up to date on current threats. Then we send out all this information to all our American soldiers, as well as our partners throughout the Philippines and all across the Asia Pacific Center."

Master Sergeant Alcantar also says, Balikatan is a great exercise because it allows U-S and Filipino forces to share knowledge and experiences together.

Reporting from Fort Magsaysay, Philippines, I'm U-S Army Staff Sergeant Walter Talens.

Title: Finance Specialist Helping Troops
Reporting: US Army Staff Sgt. Walter Talens
Date: 14Oct2011

Suggested Lead:

Missing a few zeros in your paycheck is more than annoying; it's a mental distraction for servicemembers. In a combat zone, distraction can cost a life. To fix those pay problems there are Finance Specialists trained to alleviate servicemembers from this burden. Army Staff Sergeant Walter Talens spent some time with the unsung heroes who helps keep the military functioning.

There are a few things that can ruin a soldiers day, discovering you have a problem with your paycheck is one of them. A small one-story building next to a dusty road on Kandahar Airfield is home to a Finance office operated by 33RD Financial Management Company from Fort Drum, New York.

At the disbursement section, which provide cash to servicemembers, civilians, and paying agents is the field version of a bank. Standing behind the counter is a soldier from Brooklyn warmly interacting with customers.

NAT SOUND POP – Soldier interacting with customer

SB #1:

TRT: 00:11:00

CG: Spc. Karen Stephenson – Finance Specialist / 33RD Financial Management Company

"First, I'm a customer service person. I like dealing with customers. I thought that I could contribute appreciably to the needs of servicemembers."

... And sometimes that contribution can be a smile.

NAT SOUND POP – Footage of soldiers on patrol or Helmet Cam video

SB#2:

TRT - 00:10:00

"Sometimes they come up to me, they ask for a service; they might be having a long or hard day. You communicate with them, you interact with them, they smile, they say thank you for smiling."

In an environment where customers in front of you could have been doing patrols the day before or capturing enemy insurgents the day after, having excellent customer service skills can be a relief.

Before joining the US Army, Specialist Stephenson worked for companies like Blue Cross/Blue Shield as an Insurance Representative and Administrative Assistant. Responding to her desire to serve her country used her previous experiences to the benefit of her fellow servicemembers.

SB#3:

TRT - 00:08:00

"I feel a great sense of satisfaction when customers come up to me and I am able to provide that service that they require."

NAT SOUND POP - of SME interacting with customer.

Finance may not be sending bullets downrange every day, but servicemembers like Specialist Stephenson are helping troops where it matters most. These finance specialists help the military function better every time they accomplish their mission, literally one pay check at a time.

Army Sergeant Walter Talens, Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan