



# COALITION COMBAT AND ADVISORY FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

## AFGHANISTAN ORDER OF BATTLE

BY WESLEY MORGAN    MAY 2014

This document describes the composition and placement of U.S. and other Western combat and advisory forces in Afghanistan down to battalion level. It includes the following categories of units: maneuver and advisory (i.e. infantry, armor, and cavalry) units; artillery units; aviation units, both rotary and fixed-wing; military police units; most types of engineer and explosive ordnance disposal units; and “white” special operations forces. It does not include “black” special operations units or other units such as logistical, transportation, medical, and intelligence units or Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

### **International Security Assistance Force / United States Forces—Afghanistan (Gen. Joseph Dunford, USMC)—ISAF Headquarters, Kabul**

Kabul Support Unit / 1 Coldstream Guards (Lt. Col. Toby Till, UK)—Kabul; security force supporting ISAF Headquarters and British facilities<sup>1</sup>

TF 1-Fury / 1-508 Parachute Infantry (USA)—U/I location

### **Special Operations Joint Task Force—Afghanistan / NATO Special Operations Component Command—Afghanistan (Maj. Gen. Scott Miller, USA)—Camp Integrity, Kabul<sup>2</sup>**

Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force—Afghanistan (USA)—Bagram Airfield; village stability operations, advisors to Afghan Defense Ministry special operations forces, and other missions<sup>3</sup>

Special Operations Task Force—North-East (USA)—Bagram Airfield; operating in eastern Afghanistan

Special Operations Task Force—South (USA)—Kandahar Airfield; operating in Kandahar Province

Special Operations Task Force—South-East (USN)—U/I location; operating in Uruzgan and Zabul Provinces

Special Operations Task Force—West (USMC)—Camp Lawton, Herat; operating in western Afghanistan and Helmand Province

ISAF Special Operations Forces (UK/Australia)—Kabul; advisors to Afghan Interior Ministry special operations forces<sup>4</sup>

Regional Special Operations Task Groups—located around Afghanistan<sup>5</sup>

Combined Joint Special Operations Aviation Component—Afghanistan (USAF/USA)—Bagram Airfield; aviation support to SOJTF-A special operations forces<sup>6</sup>

### **9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force—Afghanistan (Maj. Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach, USAF)—Kabul International Airport; oversees U.S. Air Force units in Afghanistan<sup>7</sup>**

455th Air Expeditionary Wing (USAF)—Bagram Airfield; air support in eastern and northern Afghanistan

451st Air Expeditionary Group (USAF)—Kandahar Airfield; surveillance support in southern and western Afghanistan<sup>8</sup>

II (Army Cooperation) Squadron Royal Air Force (UK)—Kandahar Airfield; close air support<sup>9</sup>

39 Squadron Royal Air Force (UK)—Kandahar Airfield; surveillance support<sup>10</sup>

455th Expeditionary Operations Group (USAF)—Bagram Airfield; air support in eastern and northern Afghanistan

4th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron (USAF)—Bagram Airfield; surveillance support<sup>11</sup>

62nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron (USAF)—Bagram, Kandahar, and Jalalabad Airfields; surveillance support<sup>12</sup>

75th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron (USAF)—Bagram Airfield; close air support<sup>13</sup>

83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron (USAF)—Bagram Airfield; medical evacuation support<sup>14</sup>

457th Fighter Squadron (USAF)—Bagram Airfield; close air support<sup>15</sup>

774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron (USAF)—Bagram Airfield; transport support<sup>16</sup>

**Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 (Brig. Gen. Mark Inch, USA)—Camp Phoenix, Kabul; responsible for rule-of-law and detention operations**

U/I Military Police Brigade (USA)—Camp Sabalu-Harrison; detention operations<sup>17</sup>

U/I Military Police Battalion (USA)—Parwan Detention Facility<sup>18</sup>

**NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan / Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (Lt. Gen. Ken Tovo, USA)—Camp Eggers, Kabul; responsible for training Afghan security forces<sup>19</sup>**

TF 2-Fury / 2-508 Parachute Infantry (USA)—Camp Eggers, Kabul; NTM-A security force countrywide<sup>20</sup>

**ISAF Joint Command / XVIII Airborne Corps (Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson, USA)—Kabul International Airport; countrywide operational headquarters<sup>21</sup>**

TF Paladin / 242nd EOD Battalion (USA)—Bagram Airfield; counter-IED operations in eastern and southern Afghanistan<sup>22</sup>

TF 2-44 Air Defense Artillery (USA)—Bagram Airfield; counter-rocket and -mortar mission at bases countrywide<sup>23</sup>

Joint Task Force Sapper / 130th Engineer Brigade (Col. Diana Holland, USA)—Bagram Airfield; overseeing construction and deconstruction operations countrywide<sup>24</sup>

TF Bayonet / 65th Engineer Battalion (Lt. Col. David Acker, USA)—Kandahar Airfield and Camp Leatherneck; engineer operations in southern and western Afghanistan<sup>25</sup>

TF Rugged / 365th Engineer Battalion (Lt. Col. David Wong, USA)—Bagram Airfield; engineer operations in eastern and northern Afghanistan<sup>26</sup>

TF Ultimus / Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25 (USN)—Camp Phoenix, Kabul; advising ANA engineer units<sup>27</sup>

TF Black Diamond / 489th Engineer Battalion (USA)—Kandahar Airfield; retrograde operations in southern Afghanistan<sup>28</sup>

133rd Engineer Battalion (Lt. Col. Dean Preston, USA)—Bagram Airfield; withdrawal and deconstruction operations<sup>29</sup>

TF ODIN (Enhanced) (Col. Neil Hersey, USA)—Bagram Airfield; surveillance support in eastern and southern Afghanistan<sup>30</sup>

**Regional Command Capital (Brig. Gen. Ali Riza Kugu, Turkey)—Camp Warehouse, Kabul; operating in Kabul Province<sup>31</sup>**

Battalion Motorized Task Force (Turkey)—Camp Dogan, Kabul

**Regional Command East / 10th Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. Steve Townsend, USA)—Bagram Airfield; supporting ANA 201st and 203rd Corps in fourteen eastern provinces<sup>32</sup>**

TF Red Devils / 1-504 Parachute Infantry (USA)—Bagram Airfield; theater reserve force for eastern and northern Afghanistan

TF Spartan / 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Col. Sam Whitehurst, USA)—FOB Lightning, Gardez; supporting ANA 203rd Corps in southern RC-East<sup>33</sup>

TF Wolfpack / 4-25 Field Artillery (USA)—Camp Clark, Khost; operating in Khost Province

TF Chosin / 1-32 Infantry (Lt. Col. Theo Moore, USA)—FOB Airborne, Maydan Shahr; operating in Wardak Province

TF Titan / 3-71 Cavalry (Lt. Col. Angel Mesa, USA)—FOB Rushmore, Sharana; operating in Paktika Province

TF Catamount / 2-87 Infantry (Lt. Col. Brian Beckno, USA)—FOB Shank; operating in Logar Province

TF Strike / 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Col. Peter Benchoff, USA)—FOB Gamberi; supporting ANA 201st Corps in northern RC-East<sup>34</sup>

TF Widowmaker / 1-75 Cavalry (Lt. Col. John Kilbride, USA)—FOB Wright, Asadabad; operating in Kunar Province

TF Top Guns / 1-320 Field Artillery (Lt. Col. Mark Sherkey, USA)—Bagram Airfield; operating in Kapisa and Parwan Provinces

TF 2-502 Infantry (Lt. Col. John Lubas, USA)—FOB Mehtar Lam; operating in Laghman Province

TF First Strike / 1-502 Infantry (Lt. Col. Arie Richards, USA)—Jalalabad Airfield; operating in Nangarhar Province

TF Thunder / 159th Combat Aviation Brigade (Col. Jimmy Blackmon, USA)—Bagram Airfield; aviation support in eastern and northern Afghanistan<sup>35</sup>

TF Attack / 3-101 Attack Aviation (USA)—Jalalabad Airfield; aviation support in northern RC-East

TF Wings / 4-101 Assault Aviation (USA)—FOB Shank; aviation support in southern RC-East

TF Lift / 7-101 General Support Aviation (USA)—Bagram Airfield; aviation support throughout RC-East

TF Attack / 1-227 Attack Aviation (Lt. Col. Cain Baker, USA)—Camp Marmal, Mazar-e-Sharif; aviation support in RC-North<sup>36</sup>

TF White Eagle / 10th Armored Cavalry Brigade (Poland)—FOB Ghazni; operating in northern Ghazni Province<sup>37</sup>

Battle Group Alpha (Poland)—FOB Ghazni; operating in northern Ghazni Province

**Regional Command North (Maj. Gen. Bernd Schutt, Germany)—Camp Marmal, Mazar-e-Sharif; supporting ANA 209th Corps in nine northern provinces**

Nordic-Baltic Transition Support Unit—Camp Northern Lights, Mazar-e-Sharif; operating in RC-North<sup>38</sup>

Partnering and Advisory Task Force Mazar-e-Sharif (Germany)—Camp Marmal; operating in Balkh Province

Northern Reaction Unit (Germany)—Camp Marmal; division reserve

Expeditionary Air Wing Mazar-e-Sharif (Germany)—Camp Marmal; fixed- and rotary-wing aviation support for northern Afghanistan<sup>39</sup>

TF Stalwart / 1-41 Infantry (Lt. Col. Kendall Clarke, USA)—Camp Marmal; operating in RC-North<sup>40</sup>

TF 2-121 Infantry (USA)—Camp Marmal; retrograde operations in RC-North<sup>41</sup>

**Regional Command South / 4th Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Paul LaCamera, USA)—Kandahar Airfield; supporting ANA 205th Corps in Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Zabul Provinces<sup>42</sup>**

TF White Devils / 2-504 Parachute Infantry (USA)—Kandahar Airfield; theater reserve force for southern and western Afghanistan

TF Mountain Warrior / 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division (Col. Brian Pearl, USA)—Kandahar Airfield; operating in Kandahar Province<sup>43</sup>

TF Red Warrior / 1-12 Infantry (Lt. Col. Dave Voorhies, USA)—Kandahar Airfield; operating in eastern Kandahar Province

TF Lethal / 2-12 Infantry (Lt. Col. Rich Garey, USA)—FOB Apache, Qalat; operating in Zabul Province<sup>44</sup>

TF Destroyer / 3-61 Cavalry (USA)—FOB Pasab, Zhari; operating in western Kandahar Province

TF Steel / 2-77 Field Artillery (USA)—FOB Walton; operating in Kandahar City

TF 151 / 151st Infantry Battalion (Romania)—FOB Apache, Qalat; operating along Highway 1 in Zabul Province<sup>45</sup>

TF Raptor / 16th Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (Col. Paul Mele, USA)—Kandahar Airfield; aviation support in southern and western Afghanistan<sup>46</sup>

TF Flying Dragons / 1-52 General Support Aviation (USA)—Kandahar Airfield; transport aviation

TF Warhawks / 2-158 Assault Aviation (USA)—Shindand Airfield; aviation support in RC-West

TF Tigershark / 1-229 Attack Aviation (USA)—Kandahar Airfield; attack aviation

1-230 Air Cavalry (USA)U/I location

**Regional Command Southwest / Marine Expeditionary Brigade—Afghanistan (Brig. Gen. Daniel Yoo, USMC)—Camp Leatherneck; supporting ANA 215th Corps in Helmand and Nimruz Provinces<sup>47</sup>**

1/7 Marines (USMC)—Camp Leatherneck; operating in northern Helmand Province<sup>48</sup>

Brigade Advisory Team / 3 Mercian Regiment (UK)—Camp Bastion; Afghan army advisors<sup>49</sup>

Engineer Regimental Group / 32 Engineer Regiment (UK)—Camp Bastion; engineer support<sup>50</sup>

Joint Fires Group / 3 Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (UK)—Camp Bastion; artillery support<sup>51</sup>

Joint ISTAR Group / 9th/12th Royal Lancers (UK)—Camp Bastion; surveillance and reconnaissance

TF Belleau Wood / 1st Marine Regiment (Col. Peter Baumgarten, USMC)—Camp Leatherneck; base security<sup>52</sup>

1/9 Marines (USMC)—Camp Leatherneck; operating in west-central Helmand Province<sup>53</sup>

4 Royal Regiment of Scotland (UK)—Camp Bastion; base security

23rd Light Infantry Battalion (Georgia)—Camp Leatherneck; base security

Special Mountain Battalion (Georgia)—U/I location

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) (Col. Patrick Gramuglia, USMC)—Camp Leatherneck; aviation support in Helmand and Nimruz Provinces<sup>54</sup>

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 (USMC)—Camp Bastion; heavy transport aviation<sup>55</sup>

Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 (USMC)—Camp Bastion; attack aviation<sup>56</sup>

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 261 (USMC)—Camp Bastion; medium transport aviation<sup>57</sup>

**Regional Command West / “Sassari” Mechanized Brigade (Brig. Gen. Manlio Scopigno, Italy)—Camp Arena, Herat; supporting ANA 207th Corps in Badghis, Farah, Ghor, and Herat Provinces<sup>58</sup>**

Transition Support Unit Badghis (Spain)—Qala-e-Naw; operating in Badghis Province

Transition Support Unit Center / 152nd Infantry Regiment (Italy)—Camp Arena; operating in Herat Province

TF Fenice / 7th Aviation Regiment (Italy)—Camp Arena; aviation support in western Afghanistan

TF Genio / 5th Engineer Regiment (Italy)—Camp Arena; engineer support for western Afghanistan

TF Bobcat / 2-5 Infantry (USA)—Shindand Airfield; operating in western Afghanistan<sup>59</sup>

*Major changes since April 1, 2014:*

—Relief of 1st Combat Aviation Brigade by 16th Combat Aviation Brigade in RC-South

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> 1 Coldstream Guards relieved The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards as the Kabul Support Unit in February 2014 (see regimental newsletter). Their exact chain of command is unclear.
- <sup>2</sup> Established in the summer of 2012, SOJTF-A/NSOCC-A is a two-star headquarters that oversees all three allied SOF commands in Afghanistan: CJSOTF-A, ISAF SOF, and the “black” special operations forces of the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command task force. See USSOCOM Fact Book 2013.
- <sup>3</sup> CJSOTF-A is headquartered by troops from the 3rd Special Forces Group. Its core tasks are to advise the Afghan National Army’s special operations forces (the Afghan commando kandaks and Special Forces) and to train and advise the local police forces associated with the Village Stability Operations program. CJSOTF-A controls six battalion-level task forces: two built around Army Special Forces battalions, two around Army infantry battalions, one around a Marine special operations battalion, and one around a Navy SEAL team. Navy Combat Camera Command Detachment 1210, “CJSOTF-A Presentation,” June 2012.
- <sup>4</sup> Established in 2007, ISAF SOF is a one-star, brigade-level headquarters that oversees most non-U.S. special operations forces in Afghanistan as well as one U.S. special operations unit, TF 10. Command of ISAF SOF appears to rotate between British and Australian officers; Brig. Mark Smethurst was in command as of March 2012.
- <sup>5</sup> The ISAF SOTGs, some battalion-level and some company-level, support the various regional commands, often by advising elite Afghan Interior Ministry units like the Provincial Response Companies, the Kabul-based Crisis Response Unit, and TF 333 and TF 444, and are designated as numbered task forces. For example, press reports mention TF 10 (a company from the U.S. 10th Special Forces Group) in RC-Capital; TF 45 (Italian SOF) in RC-West; TF 47 (German SOF) in RC-North; TF 49 and TF 50 (Polish SOF) in Ghazni and other areas in RC-East; TF 42, TF 196, and TF 528 (British SOF) in Helmand; and TF 66 (Australian SOF) in Uruzgan and Kandahar. (Units that have since withdrawn included France’s TF 32 and the Netherlands’ TF 637.)
- <sup>6</sup> CJSOAC-A is composed of helicopter, fixed-wing, and unmanned aviation units from the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, and conventional U.S. Army aviation units.
- <sup>7</sup> 9th AETF-A does not fall under ISAF command, but its commander is dual-hatted as Deputy Commander (Air) of USFOR-A. It exercises only partial control of the wings and squadrons below it; day-to-day tactical control of those units is exercised by U.S. Air Force Central’s Combined Air and Space Operations Center in the Persian Gulf.
- <sup>8</sup> 451st AEG (formerly 451st AEW) operates MQ-1 and MQ-9 drones as well as E-11A and MC-12W piloted aircraft. See 451st AEG web site.
- <sup>9</sup> II (AC) Squadron, a Tornado GR4 squadron, relieved 617 Squadron in February 2014.
- <sup>10</sup> 39 Squadron is a Reaper UAV squadron.
- <sup>11</sup> 4th ERS is an MC-12 squadron. Bagram Airfield web site.
- <sup>12</sup> 62nd ERS is an MQ-1 and MQ-9 drone squadron. Bagram Airfield web site.
- <sup>13</sup> 75th EFS is an A-10C squadron that deployed in October 2013. See warthognews.blogspot.com.
- <sup>14</sup> 83rd ERQS is an HH-60G rescue helicopter squadron.
- <sup>15</sup> This F-16 squadron deployed in November 2013 and moved from Kandahar to Bagram in December 2013.
- <sup>16</sup> 774th EAS is a C-130J squadron. Bagram Airfield web site.
- <sup>17</sup> 18th MP Brigade relieved 333rd MP Brigade in July 2013. See brigade Facebook page.
- <sup>18</sup> This battalion deployed in early 2012.
- <sup>19</sup> Lt. Gen. Ken Tovo took command of NTM-A/CSTC-A in April 2013.
- <sup>20</sup> 2-508 PIR relieved 1-294 Infantry in early January 2014.
- <sup>21</sup> XVIII Airborne Corps relieved III Corps as the headquarters of the IJC in February 2014.
- <sup>22</sup> 242nd EOD Battalion relieved 3rd EOD Battalion in Kandahar in July 2013 and 184th EOD Battalion at Bagram in December 2013.
- <sup>23</sup> 2-44 ADA deployed in February 2014.
- <sup>24</sup> JTF Sapper relieved JTF Triple Nickel in October 2013.
- <sup>25</sup> 65th Engineer Battalion relieved 307th Engineer Battalion in October 2013.
- <sup>26</sup> 365th Engineer Battalion relieved 8th Engineer Battalion and 122nd Engineer Battalion in December 2013.
- <sup>27</sup> NMCB-25 relieved NMCB-28 in April 2014.
- <sup>28</sup> 489th Engineer Battalion relieved 92nd Engineer Battalion in October 2013. The battalion falls under the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element, not ISAF, but is listed here for clarity’s sake.
- <sup>29</sup> 133rd Engineer Battalion relieved 864th Engineer Battalion in October 2013. The battalion falls under the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element, not ISAF, but is listed here for clarity’s sake.
- <sup>30</sup> ODIN stands for Observe-Detect-Identify-Neutralize. The current leadership of TF ODIN-E arrived in July 2013.

- <sup>31</sup> The current headquarters of RC-Capital arrived in November 2012. ISAF.NATO.int, “Subordinate Commands | RC-Capital.”
- <sup>32</sup> 10th Mountain Division relieved 101st Airborne Division as RC-East in February 2014.
- <sup>33</sup> 3rd SFAB, 10th Mountain relieved 4th SFAB, 3rd ID and 4th SFAB, 101st Airborne in November 2013. See brigade and battalion Facebook pages.
- <sup>34</sup> 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne relieved 4th SFAB, 10th Mountain in late February 2014. See brigade Facebook page and battalion Facebook pages.
- <sup>35</sup> 159th CAB relieved 10th CAB in January 2014. Each of its battalion task forces combines UH-60, CH-47, AH-64, and OH-58 companies and provides direct support to a BCT. See brigade Facebook page and battalion Facebook pages.
- <sup>36</sup> 1-227 Aviation relieved 1-135 Aviation in January 2014.
- <sup>37</sup> 10th Armored Cavalry Brigade relieved 25th Air Cavalry Brigade as TF White Eagle in December 2013.
- <sup>38</sup> The Nordic-Baltic Transition Support Unit was established in March 2013 and comprises 450 Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Latvian troops.
- <sup>39</sup> See RC-North Facebook page.
- <sup>40</sup> 1-41 Infantry relieved 6-4 Cavalry in January 2014. See battalion Facebook page.
- <sup>41</sup> 2-121 Infantry deployed in January 2014.
- <sup>42</sup> 4th ID relieved 3rd ID as RC-South in early July 2013. See division Facebook page.
- <sup>43</sup> 4/4 ID relieved 2nd Cavalry Regiment in early April 2014. See brigade Facebook page.
- <sup>44</sup> 2-12 Infantry relieved 3rd BCT, 1st ID at the end of February 2014. See 3/1 BCT Facebook page.
- <sup>45</sup> 151st Infantry Battalion relieved 34th Infantry Battalion in July or August 2013.
- <sup>46</sup> 16th CAB relieved 1st CAB, 1st ID in April 2014.
- <sup>47</sup> I MEF (Forward), also known as Marine Expeditionary Brigade—Afghanistan, relieved II MEF (Forward) as RC-Southwest in early February 2014.
- <sup>48</sup> 1/7 Marines relieved 3/7 Marines in March 2014.
- <sup>49</sup> 3 Mercians relieved 4 Rifles in early October 2013.
- <sup>50</sup> 32 Engineer Regiment relieved 22 Engineer Regiment in October 2013.
- <sup>51</sup> 3 Regiment RHA relieved 1 Regiment RA in October 2013.
- <sup>52</sup> 1st Marine Regiment replaced 2nd Marine Regiment as TF Belleau Wood in late February 2014.
- <sup>53</sup> 1/9 Marines, or elements of the battalion, deployed in late 2013, seemingly relieving 2/8 Marines.
- <sup>54</sup> 3rd MAW (Forward) relieved 2nd MAW (Forward) in early February 2014.
- <sup>55</sup> HMM-466 is a CH-53E squadron that relieved HMM-462 in March 2014.
- <sup>56</sup> HMLA-369 is an AH-1W and UH-1Y squadron that relieved HMLA-167 in November 2013.
- <sup>57</sup> VMM-261 is an MV-22B squadron that deployed in January 2014.
- <sup>58</sup> The “Sassari” Brigade relieved the “Aosta” Brigade as RC-West in February 2014.
- <sup>59</sup> 2-5 Infantry relieved 1-214 Field Artillery in December 2013. See battalion Facebook page.