

Fast roping for freedom, Afghan commandos add new skill to fight

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan – A company of Afghan commandos conducted a two-day training course for a valuable skill, June 18 at FOB Salerno.

Helicopter-borne insertion, better known as air assault, is the movement of military forces to engage and destroy enemy forces or to seize and hold key terrain. Fast-roping is a technique for descending a thick rope not unlike the one most Americans used in high school gym class. This technique is useful for deploying troops from a helicopter in places where the helicopter itself is unable to touch down.

With the support and training from Soldiers from Combined Joint Task Force – Afghanistan and Task Force Attack, the 1st Company Commandos, 203rd Corps Commando Kandak, were instructed on proper techniques for fast-roping onto an objective and immediately securing the perimeter. Trainees use a rope connected to a forklift, before graduating to actually jumping from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

During the training, Afghan Col. Ggulam Nabi, the commander of the 203rd, explained the need to have these Commandos trained in air assault.

“This is a tactical advantage we must learn,” said Nabi. “We need to be able to drop forces quickly into the fight. The helicopters can come and drop us onto difficult terrain like mountains, dense orchards and behind the enemy without landing. Because of this we need this training to eliminate terrorists and to defeat

the enemies of Afghanistan.”

Nabi also hopes that his commandos learn enough to train each other in the future.

“That’s our natural behavior,” Nabi said. “When one of us learns something new, they teach it to others.”

“When the people of Afghanistan are able to see what the commandos are doing for them, it helps us to get new recruits, make them professional and to help stop the enemies of Afghanistan from being destructive,” Nabi said.

“The commandos are held in high regard in Afghanistan,” said Afghan Capt. Abdul Saboor, the commander of 1st Company, “We are proud of how we are received by the people. The commandos are doing a great job and are we willing and ready to sacrifice ourselves for the people of Afghanistan.”

