

Two Tours in Afghanistan

Twenty Years and Two Armies Apart

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The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Government or the Government of Estonia.

Major Kinnunen is a lean, hard, soft-spoken infantryman whose eyes do not always smile when his mouth does. He has recently completed his second tour of duty in Afghanistan, which is not that unusual except that his first tour was over twenty years ago with the Soviet 40th Army. This is his story.

Major Eero Kinnunen has served two tours in Afghanistan, one with the Soviet 40th Army Special Forces (Spetsnaz) and one as an Estonian company commander with the International Security Assistance Force. Both tours were in the Kandahar region.

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Left photo: Private Eero Kinnunen, waiting for helicopters to redeploy from an operation in Registan Desert, December 1986.

Right photo: Major Eero Kinnunen, infantry company commander, Helmand, Afghanistan, 21 March 2008.

I AM AN ESTONIAN from a small town some 250 kilometers southeast of Tallinn. In 1985, after graduation from high school, I began my university education. The first part was a month spent harvesting potatoes on a Soviet collective farm. In those days, the state interrupted all sorts of activities so that students, soldiers, pensioners, and factory workers could “volunteer” to help with the harvest. We were mediocre harvesters, but we had some great parties. Upon my return from the harvest, I was conscripted into the military.

Usually, university students were deferred from the draft until graduation, when they would serve as reserve officers. However, there was a war on and there was no education deferment for me. I was conscripted into the Soviet Special Forces (Spetsnaz) and sent to Chirchik, Uzbekistan, which is close to Tashkent. Chirchik had a mountain training center and a large air base. Our firing ranges and training areas were mostly in the mountains. I have no idea how I ended up in the Spetsnaz, but it probably had something to do with my high school sports (handball, cross-country skiing, and orienteering). At 16 years old, the selection process began by listing your preferences for the draft board. I put down the airborne forces. My Russian was not too good when I started, but it got better during the six months of training at Chirchik, which was good but very hard mentally and physically. We did everything we would eventually do in Afghanistan—long range patrols, ambushes, raids, reconnaissance. Helicopters would drop us off in the mountains and we would have to accomplish our ambush or raid and find our own way back.

First Tour

Most of the Spetsnaz who served in Afghanistan were conscripts, but the rugged six months of training did much to prepare us. At graduation, our first sergeant (a long-serving warrant officer) extolled the deeds of our predecessors and told us to emulate them. We had no idea where we were going to serve inside Afghanistan, but the cadre had all told us, “If they send you to Kandahar, hang yourself, because that is true hell.” We were split into various groups and sent to the airfield at Tashkent to wait for our aircraft. My plane took off in the dark and landed in the dark at 0300 or 0400. It did not turn off its engines and quickly returned to Tashkent. There was no one to meet us. We sat at the side of the runway. Hours later, the sun rose, and we felt like we were in an oven. A vehicle drove down the runway and picked up the officers in our group. We asked where we were. It was Kandahar.

Other vehicles drove up, and the battalion representatives began selecting their new members. The physically fit Russian guys were selected first. The Central Asians were picked last. There was definitely a racial bias in the selection process. I was the only Estonian and was picked quickly after the Russians were. I found that I was now a member of the 173rd Spetsnaz Battalion, which was garrisoned on a piece of the Kandahar air base apart from the 70th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade—the main combat force on the base. The barracks were tents and later plywood and modular buildings. The food was terrible. Water supplies were limited.

We new guys had about a month to get our act together. We did a lot of range firing, small unit training, and a lot of marching. We could shoot as much as we wanted. This was different from the Soviet Union, where the ammunition was strictly controlled and limited. Our platoon leader conducted a trial mission to test our abilities. We went into safe areas in the mountains and desert while he evaluated our performance under pressure. We moved mostly at night. Once the platoon leader was convinced of our reliability, we joined the rest of the battalion in real operations.

We had missions within a 200-kilometer radius of Kandahar air base. We worked in the Registan Desert in the south, in Helmand Province to the west, in the mountains to the north, and out to the Pakistan border in the east. We did a lot

of ground movement on foot or in our infantry fighting vehicles. We performed blocking and shaping missions in support of the 70th Brigade. When we moved, soldiers with the most experience walked on point. Our primary mission was to hunt and interdict mujahideen caravans. We would do this with ambushes, raids, patrols, and helicopter inspections. Ambushes and raids were conducted on targets for which we had good intelligence. Helicopter inspections were conducted in areas where we were familiar with the terrain, the normal times of enemy movement, enemy tactics, and the looks of a peaceful versus a hostile caravan. Helicopter inspections normally involved two gunships and two lift ships. We Spetsnaz were in the lift ships. We normally flew into the area at dawn or near dusk—when hostile caravans arrived in the target area, shifted hiding places, or loaded cargo.

When we found a caravan, we would inspect it from a very low altitude to determine its size and probable cargo. If the caravan’s personnel behaved in a hostile manner, the gunships destroyed the caravan. If they behaved peacefully, the lift ships would land in front and behind the caravan and we would conduct a detailed search. The gunships would circle overhead, and if necessary, support our evacuation and withdrawal. We had a lot of success with this technique. We took as few prisoners as possible. Prisoners require guards. We always had five to ten prisoners that we were



Photo courtesy of author

Private Eero Kinnunen on the shooting range in early 1987.

stuck guarding for over six months. When higher headquarters finally took them, they were handed over to the Afghan government—which usually turned them loose. So, it was easier to release them immediately with a warning.

We had little other contact with the people, but we had a linguist assigned to our group. He was a brand-new second lieutenant with no military experience who had just graduated from a language institute. He studied Dari, but the people in our area spoke Pashto. He had little opportunity to improve his language skills. If the people saw us during a mission, we moved. When the people saw helicopters flying around their area, they knew that we were probably on the ground nearby. Then they would hunt us. They primarily used the *Kochi* nomads as their scouts. The nomads were herdsmen, and they would move their flocks of sheep or goats slowly over the area, looking for us. Sometimes they would move three or four flocks over the same area while they looked.

Once we were located, the armed mujahideen would come. Our first reaction was to move two to three kilometers away to avoid them or to get evacuated by helicopter. If it was night, the helicopters would not come and then we might have to build fighting positions and battle it out until sunrise. Communications were always a problem in that terrain. On several occasions, we were unable to establish contact with our headquarters and the enemy hammered us badly. When we had good communications, we could get close air support, which was always welcome. Unlike helicopter transport, close air support was always available. The mujahideen seldom broke contact without the intervention of close air support. We always worked outside of the range of supporting artillery.

Our normal mission was three to four days long. Patrols in the desert and mountains were particularly tough. In the desert, we did not have to heat our rations. We just set them out in the sun and soon they were ready. We normally moved with a three-man point consisting of senior, end-of-tour guys. They moved about a kilometer in front of the group. When I was senior, I hated this duty, but many of the guys wanted it.

We Spetsnaz were well-armed and equipped. We had all sorts of Kalashnikovs with silencers, sniper rifles, Chinese RPGs with bi-pod mounts, AGS-17

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automatic grenade launchers, and NSV .50-caliber machine guns. Our radio equipment was first-rate as well. The guys on point traveled light, carrying a Kalashnikov, a canteen, ammunition magazines, and some grenades. The main body functioned as mules. They carried the .50-caliber and the AGS-17 guns broken down into component parts, as well as the heavy ammunition for them. The sappers carried mines and explosives, the radio-men carried the radios. Unlike the mujahideen who had mules, donkeys, and camels, we carried everything on our backs—45 kilos (100 pounds) was not uncommon. We did not wear standard boots, which were inappropriate for the terrain. I managed to get some tennis shoes.

My company had BMPs [Boyevaya Mashina Pekhoty tracked infantry fighting vehicles]. The other two maneuver companies in the battalion had BTRs [Bronetransportyor wheeled personnel carriers]. Our companies rotated between garrison duties, mission preparation, and mission accomplishment. Garrison duties included guard rotations and normal camp support. We were guarding against the mujahideen, but also against other battalions that might strip our vehicles for spare parts, ammunition, and other essentials. We had next to nothing in the way of recreational activities. We had a sauna, but since we were in the desert, we did not need much help in sweating. We had an outdoor exercise area with some chin-up bars and parallel bars, but little else. Mail came fairly regularly. We were paid 15-20 rubles a month (roughly 20-25 dollars).

First Combat

Following our shakeout period, my first three days of actual combat revealed what Spetsnaz actions were like in the Kandahar area. Twenty men boarded two Mi-8MT helicopters and flew

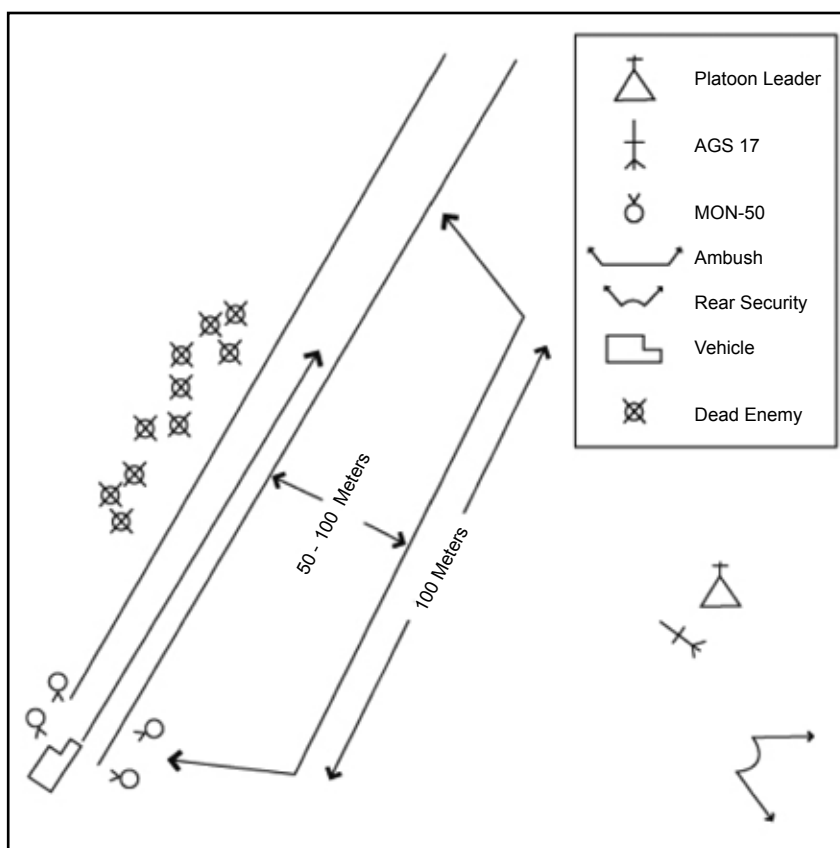


Figure 1

out in the late afternoon. It was early fall. We had an RPK light machine gun, three PK machine guns, an AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher, AKMS 7.62mm short-barreled assault rifles with silencers, AKS-74 short-barreled 5.45mm assault rifles, and a Dragunov SVD sniper rifle. Many of our assault rifles had the GP-25 under-barrel grenade launcher.

Sometimes we flew straight to the insertion point, and sometimes we made several false landings before and after the insertion. This time we flew straight to insertion and then hiked in the dark to our ambush position along a dirt road northeast of Kandahar. The land was fairly flat and covered with low brush and vegetation.

Our ambushes were fairly deep (see Figure 1). We had the first line 50 to 100 meters from the road. The forward position had two sections of six men each and paralleled the road for about 150 meters. Behind that, we had the three-man AGS-17 position and the ambush command post—the platoon leader and the two radio operators. Behind that, we had a two-man rear lookout post. We put four

MON-50 (Soviet claymore) directional mines on one end of the kill zone, firing out of the zone and parallel to the ambush party. The mines provided a way to attack enemy vehicles and to secure against an enemy trying to turn that flank. We did not dig any fighting positions since we did not want to leave evidence of our visit.

We waited in the dark. The moon, which could provide some illumination, had not yet risen. Then we heard the noise of a vehicle coming down the road. We listened for the sound of other vehicles, but heard only one motor. It was moving straight toward our directional mines and into our kill zone. We detonated all four mines and everyone opened fire. The vehicle was still moving! I was firing a PK machine gun. I could see my bullets hit the vehicle's side. This was no pickup truck. The vehicle drove the entire length of the kill zone and sped away before we could launch an illumination rocket to see what it was.

We moved into the kill zone, trying to determine what had gone wrong. We discovered 10 dead or

dying mujahideen lying on the side of the road. It took several weeks before we figured out what might have happened. Someone in the area had an old BTR-40—a Soviet-built armored truck with a roofless rear troop-carrying compartment.¹ This was probably the vehicle in our kill zone. The Spetsnaz seldom used RPGs in ambush since we never encountered armored vehicles in guerrilla convoys. This was one time when we could have used one.

At dawn, the helicopters flew in to retrieve us. We returned to Kandahar air base, ate, cleaned our weapons, and got some sleep. We were going out again that night. Late that afternoon, we boarded three helicopters. We were now a force of 25, as we added a three-man .50-caliber NSV machine gun team and two other Spetsnaz soldiers. We again flew northeast, but this time we landed in the mountains. We walked most of the night to one of our unit's favorite ambush sites. We holed up on high ground in a hide position, where we got some sleep after posting sentries. At dusk, we moved to the ambush site and our

platoon leader put each of us in position, assigned our sectors of fire, and made sure we knew who was on our left and right. My partner and I were at the right flank of the main ambush position (see Figure 2). Our ambush kill zone stretched 500 meters.

We lined the kill zone with MON-50 directional mines, firing right across the road. The main ambush position was 200 to 300 meters away from the road, and the AGS-17 was positioned forward in the middle of it with the platoon leader. The tripod-mounted NSV was on over-watching high ground some 500 meters from the road. We had a rear observation and security post of four men covering us from adjacent high ground. The ambush overlooked a road intersection. A dry streambed ran parallel to the intersecting road and through a culvert under the main road.

A Spetsnaz ambush of a multi-vehicle column usually let the first vehicle pass since its function was often reconnaissance. The second vehicle was the target for a weapon with a silencer. If we could

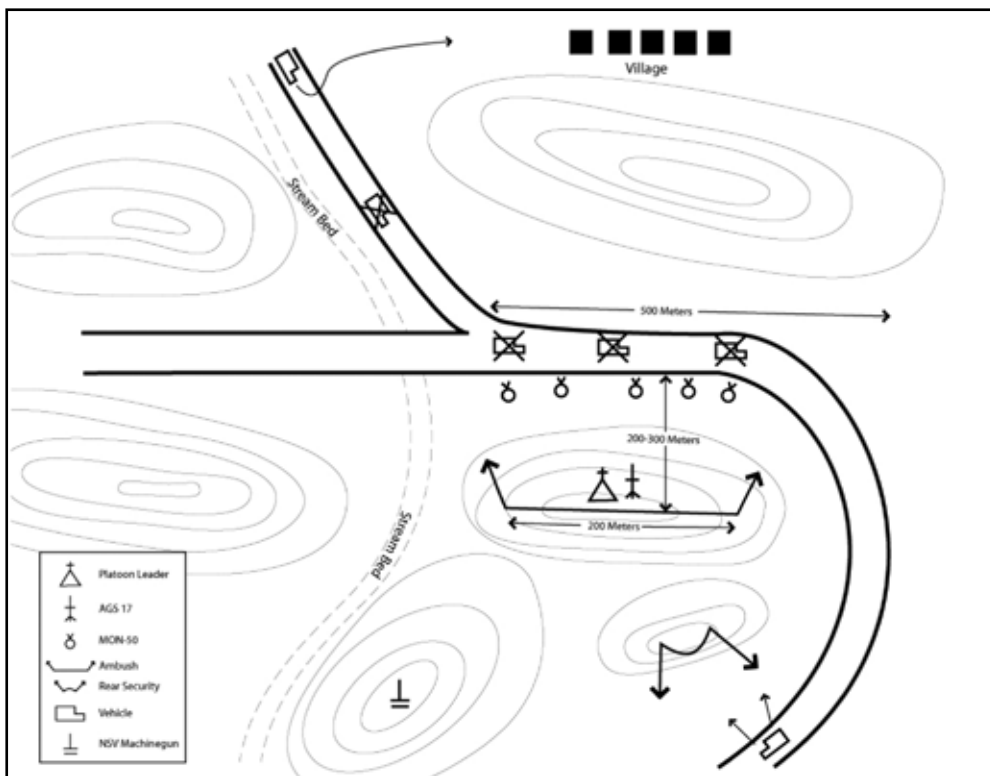


Figure 2

stop a vehicle inside the kill zone without alerting the following vehicles, they would bunch up. The ambush was then triggered with the explosion of directional mines or the firing of a SVD sniper rifle. The platoon leader would then launch an illumination rocket and everyone would open fire against targets in their sector. You fired your first magazine nonstop full-automatic to create a shock effect and establish fire supremacy. Then it was free fire within sector.

The moon was up, so it was not a problem driving without headlights or seeing approaching vehicles. We heard motors moving in our direction. They strained as they climbed and then quieted down again. Finally, the first vehicle drove carefully through our kill zone. It did not stop and we let it go. It was probably a kilometer in front of the others. Finally, the second vehicle appeared. Our lieutenant let it get to our right flank. The silent weapon failed to stop this vehicle, but the MON-50s did. An illumination rocket showed three trucks in our kill zone spaced 100 meters apart. Our main ambush force destroyed them. The NSV machine gun took out a fourth truck that was about to turn onto the main road from the intersecting road. Another truck, seeing the NSV destruction, reversed and probably hid in the nearby village. The mujahideen dismounted from the lead reconnaissance truck and tried to take our ambush from the rear, but our four-man rear security post stopped them.

We moved into the kill zone. There were 10 dead guerrillas. The cargo included ammunition, clothing, and military equipment. We collected their weapons and burned or blew up the rest. One of the trucks was fully loaded with 107mm rockets. When this truck caught fire, it exploded and rockets flew everywhere. We had a free fireworks show watching the rockets arc overhead. We saw nothing else of the enemy that night. We asked to be picked up at dawn, but the helicopter pilots felt that our position was too risky, so we had to run across the mountain carrying our gear and the captured enemy weapons.² We finally boarded our aircraft and flew back to Kandahar air base.

The Spetsnaz did not spend a lot of time on the base. We spent a lot of time on ambushes and raids. Some went well, some did not, and often nothing happened. My year and a half passed. On 9 November 1987, I flew out of Kandahar to

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Tashkent. They gave me a train ticket home and 100 rubles mustering-out pay. I cashed in my train ticket and, adding this to my pay, bought an airplane ticket home to Estonia. I was a veteran and ready to get back to civilian life. I never wanted to see Kandahar again.

Second Tour

Adjustment to civilian life was not easy. It was good to be home and back on campus, but my studies did not seem relevant to my life. A lot of us veterans had a problem fitting back into Soviet society. And things were changing in the Soviet Union. There was a lot of turmoil. As veterans, we had certain privileges, but we were not treated like the veterans of the Great Patriotic War (World War II). We were usually ignored, so we sought each other's company. For two years, we had dreamed our countrymen would welcome and honor us. Then the Soviet Union dissolved and the new Estonian politicians (mostly former Soviet officials) questioned why we veterans had gone in the first place. Estonian veterans of Afghanistan were not honored or granted privileges. I dropped out of school and worked a series of odd jobs. Eventually, I ended up back in the Army as a recruiter. After a few months of work, I was sent to a six-month officer candidate school. After I graduated, I attended the infantry officer basic course and served in a variety of infantry jobs over the years.

The Estonian Army worked hard to rid itself of all traces of the Soviet days. Soviet-educated officers were initially common, but Estonian-educated officers are now the norm except at the highest levels. The Estonian Army replaced its Soviet equipment with Western equipment—Finnish armored personnel carriers, German and Finnish howitzers, Swedish and German machine guns, and the Israeli Galil and the Swedish AK-4 assault rifles. All ammunition conforms to NATO standards. The



Estonian Army, Captain Georgi Kokoshinski

MAJ Kinnunen, with his radio operator, interpreter, British liaison officer, and Intelligence NCO, talks with a local herdsman, near Now Zad, Helmand, Afghanistan, 21 March 2008.

primary ground force is a brigade. Two of the battalions are manned by conscripts, while the third has volunteer soldiers. This professional battalion was deployed on foreign tours to Bosnia, southern Lebanon, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. I became a company commander in this battalion for three years before deployment. On 9 November 2007, my company deployed to Afghanistan. We arrived 20 years to the day that I had completed my first tour. Of course, we landed in Kandahar.

Kandahar air base had changed dramatically. The living accommodations were great; the food was great; and there was a gymnasium, a large post exchange, coffee shops, and entertainment and recreation. Of course, my company did not stay in Kandahar.

We were attached to the British 52nd Infantry Brigade. We moved to Camp Bastion at Lashkar Gah. We spent two weeks training. The British had completed clearance operations in the Sangin Valley area and were planning to take back the Taliban-held town of Musa Qalah—a logistics and drug transfer point and traditional trouble spot. They wanted to have a large British force available, but the British in the area were dispersed holding the towns of Sangin and Now

Zad, and the Kajaki Dam. My company relieved the British force holding Now Zad. My logistics support unit was at Camp Bastion. My company's living accommodations were mud huts and fairly dismal, but the British left some combat engineers, an 81mm mortar platoon, and support activities in Now Zad, and they cooked for our camp. The British also provided us with close air support and a British artillery/air support controller.

Estonian Army deployments last six months. About half of my unit had deployed before; some of them by now have eight deployments. Three of my men were Afghanistan veterans from the Soviet days. We had our Finnish Sisu Pasi XA-180 armored personnel carriers along.

My immediate commander was Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Birrell, the commander of the British Royal Marines 40th Commando. In an interview on Estonian television, he described our mission:

Since the last Estonian company was here, we now have more FOBs [forward operating bases] and we operate more in the green zones and towns. There is less of a requirement for maneuver units in the desert just now. What we need is to be “in,” since the

populations are in the towns. Now Zad is an area where we know there is an enormous population, but we haven't gotten to them yet, so I am using the Estonians to speak to them and to try and pull them back in. The threat level is quite significant in the whole of the Northern Helmand area. The Taliban is still here and Now Zad is the subject of regular attacks. So far, the Estonians have held the upper hand and really taken the fight to the enemy, which has been excellent and has kept the Taliban on their back foot.³

My company's primary mission was to hold Now Zad and keep Taliban forces in place so that they could not reinforce Musa Qala. The Taliban had turned Musa Qala into a fortified zone with well-built fighting positions and trenches. The civilians had left the town. Once the fighting began, we expected that the Taliban would reinforce Musa Qala, so we mounted patrols and ambushes to threaten local Taliban control and prevent their departure.

This tour was very different from my first. My company was defending two positions outside the semi-deserted village of Now Zad. The village, which sits between the mountains on a wide plain, is a maze of high-walled compounds and dirt streets, but the more challenging area is the green zone east of the city and across the wadi.

A green zone is a verdant, fertile agricultural area with surface irrigation canals feeding small, fenced-off plots full of vineyards, poppy, marijuana, onions, melons, pomegranates, nut trees, and wheat. These green zones are more than farming regions. They are fortified zones for a static defense. The Taliban enjoy freedom of movement and concealment behind the high adobe walls that screen the wadi and protect the individual land holdings. The Taliban engineered these green zones for positional defense. They mouse-holed firing ports into the walls, situated their machine guns with interlocking fields of fire, and established alternate firing positions as well as redundant fall-back positions throughout the zone. They reinforced these with an integrated system of bunkers and trench-works. Their thick adobe bunkers proved somewhat mortar- and bomb-proof. Besides machine guns and small arms, the Taliban had RPGs, rockets, and 60mm and 82mm mortars.

I pushed patrols into the villages and into the green zones. I put my armored personnel carriers into stand-off positions, trying to keep 500 meters between them and possible RPG firing points. Flank security for my patrols was always a major consideration. Afghanistan's terrain quickly absorbs available combat power, particularly in the green zones. After fighting our way through the first two or three walled complexes—often with the aid of mortars and air strikes—our combat power was expended. Then I would begin the withdrawal. Even if I had no contact on the way in, I would always have contact withdrawing. The Taliban always launched a pursuit. They hoped to get close enough so that we could not successfully employ our mortars. It also demonstrated to the local inhabitants that they were still in control. The trick was to begin my withdrawal before the Taliban could detect it, so I would establish a base of fire as I began to thin my forward elements and pull back my flankers. Then I would bound my squads back.

Guerrilla warfare is about maintaining lines of advance, withdrawal, and communication. The guerrilla leader and the counterinsurgent commander are both trying to interdict the other's lines. Consequently, guerrilla warfare is a fight where both sides try to stop the other's logistics. Normally, Now Zad had a monthly resupply by



Estonian Army, Captain Georgi Kokoshinski

Major Kinnunen with his radio operator, near Now Zad, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 21 March 2008.

truck convoy and relied on sling-loaded Chinooks in between. While the fighting was going on in Musa Qala, the British were trying to push a truck convoy there. In support of this, I conducted a feint. I moved my company south out of Now Zad and secured a crossing point over the wadi, as I would usually do when the truck convoy came (see Figure 3). When the convoy got to a southern road or wadi juncture (wadis make great alternate roads), they turned northeast toward Musa Qala. Then I moved my company quickly to secure the southern high ground overlooking the village of Dahana, which sits in a mountain pass about four miles from Now Zad. This, of course, drew the Taliban to my area, and they fired several 107mm rockets at us from Dahana. I put a road checkpoint and my tactical command post in Dahana Pass.

From this elevated position, I could control movement in the area. I could also see that the Taliban had established their own checkpoint four or five kilometers away in the Taliban-controlled village of Cangolak. They were stopping all traffic moving south. Meanwhile, the convoy I was aiding

went on to Musa Qala unmolested. Deception is difficult in an environment where the enemy can see your every move, but it is important—and possible.

I had a lot more contact with Afghans during my second tour of duty. I had three Afghan interpreters that the British supplied. We met with the local village leaders regularly. During the summer, we were welcome. Children asked for candy, and people were happy to see us. In the winter, the children disappeared, and we were not very welcome. We understood that the Taliban occupied the villages in the winter. However, NATO rules of engagement prevented us from searching them. I was responsible for conducting presence patrols and meeting with locals within 10 kilometers of Now Zad. (I shortened this to six kilometers in the north; otherwise, it would have been a full-blown fight in the green zone.) We conducted *shuras* in Now Zad, and on three occasions, I had applications for sanctuary and cease-fire agreements from the attendees. The problem, of course, was removing the Taliban infiltrators from the group, so I could not grant sanctuary.

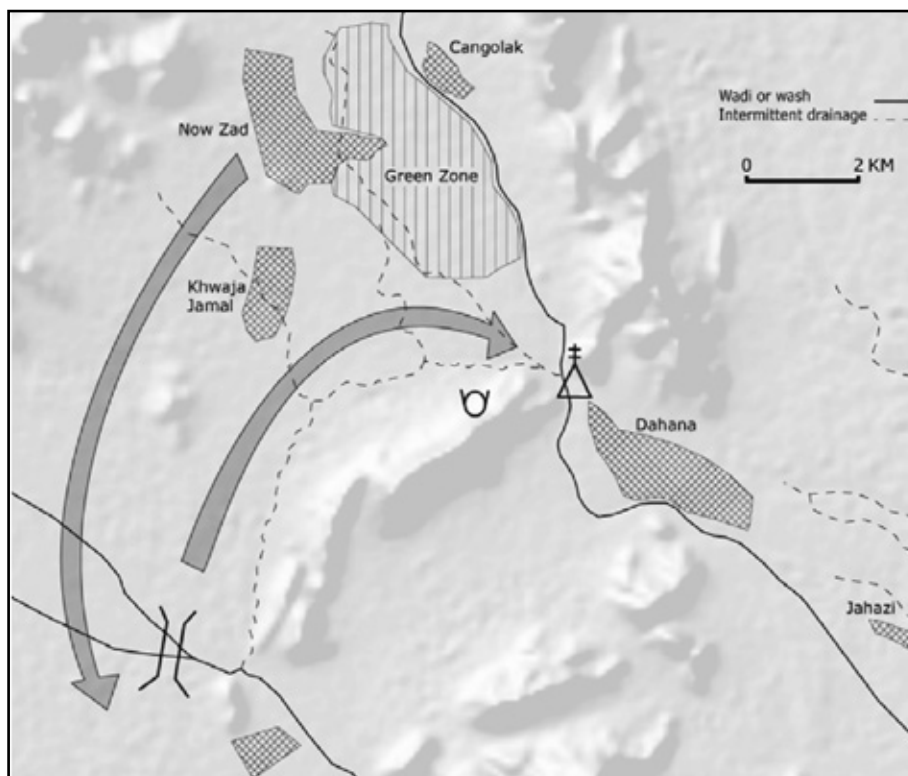


Figure 3

The cease-fires were obviously designed to let the drug harvest proceed unmolested. There were two different groups of Taliban in our area, the local members who were eager fighters but not well trained, and the outside Taliban, who spoke with a different dialect than the locals and were better trained. The latter group included those who placed the IEDs along the roads. Most of the IEDs seemed to be manufactured at the same facility and had Iranian parts.

We left in May. Another Estonian company from my battalion replaced us, so the transition was easy. The commander was a friend of mine. The Estonians have made a difference during their time in Now Zad. The Taliban are no longer able to exert the onerous influence that they previously enjoyed.

Differences Between the Tours

The first major difference was the rules of engagement. Soviet rules were loose, when they existed at all. NATO rules are very restrictive. They save civilian lives, but they also allow the Taliban to live and to fight another day.

The enemy is different. The mujahideen and Taliban have the same basic skills, but the Taliban seem better organized. The mujahideen had more heavy weapons. The Taliban have some well-trained specialists—gunners who can hit your 100- to 200-square-meter camp with a 107mm rocket from seven kilometers away on the first shot. However, if you can kill the gunner, it will take them weeks to replace him with someone efficient. They have gone to 60mm mortars because our counter-battery radar can detect 82mm mortars, but often misses smaller rounds. Once, a Taliban forward observer chased my command post and

me with some 40 rounds of 60mm mortar fire. He knew what he was doing, had good communications, and kept us running.

There was a huge difference in logistics support and welfare. Living accommodations were relatively better during my first tour, but availability of good food and drinking water was much better during my second tour. We had two wells at Now Zad, so we were not dependent on bottled water. During the first tour, there was no construction or fortification material available, so we had to scrounge it ourselves. In the second tour, we had HESCO barriers and all sorts of fortification material. We had open Internet, daily email contact with families, and DVDs for entertainment. During the first tour, a letter would take a week to arrive and we were not allowed any packages. The Spetsnaz battalion might show an occasional movie outdoors at night.

My first tour was all about offensive combat and taking out enemy logistics. My second tour was static defense, and the challenge was keeping the enemy from gaining the initiative. In both tours, the fight was about logistics and interdicting the enemy's lines of advance, withdrawal, and communications. Deception was important in both tours, but more difficult in the second.

I have spent more of my life in the vicinity of Kandahar than I ever wanted to. Yet, I will go back again and, strangely, I am looking forward to it. The challenge, the camaraderie of my fellow soldiers, and the ability to help bring peace to a very violent corner of the planet are important to me. I have lost friends in both wars, and both have kept me from my family. There are many emotions involved in this story that are difficult to express, but such is a soldier's life. **MR**

NOTES

1. The BTR-40 was produced between 1950 and 1960 as an armored reconnaissance vehicle. One hundred of them were sent to Afghanistan as part of a military aid program between 1959 and 1960.

2. Captured weapons were the commander's way of proving his reports and

effectiveness. Evacuating the other material was difficult, but captured weapons were almost always evacuated.

3. "Hüljatud Linna Valvurid Válsilm," [Guardians of the Abandoned City], Estonian National Television, January 2008.