

# DCMA QUALITY ASSURANCE, INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERS ASSIST IN AFGHAN ARMY'S BOOT PRODUCTION

*By Air Force Staff Sgt. Larry Reid, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan*

The Afghan national army and police forces continue to train hard and develop while growing in number each and every day. But, to sustain dedicated soldiers and policemen, they need to have the necessary equipment and gear to be able to conduct their duties.

For one local boot manufacturing company, the goal is to ensure that the defenders of freedom are never without quality footwear while helping to grow the Afghan economy by providing jobs in Kabul and throughout the country.

There are currently 11 different companies that manufacture boots for Afghan soldiers and policemen — four from the United States and seven from Afghanistan. Of those seven, only one makes the boots in Afghanistan. Kabul Milli factory, manufacturing boots for more than a year, is the largest boot manufacturing company in Afghanistan. “My goal is to provide the best quality product for the



*A Kabul Milli factory employee sews a boot together during the boot manufacturing process in Kabul, Afghanistan, Jan. 18. (Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Larry Reid)*

Army and police and to give good service to the Afghanistan national police and Afghanistan national army,” remarked Ihsan Saffi, Milli manufacturing managing director.

To assist in providing quality boots, the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan’s logistics directorate has taken the lead by overseeing a

process improvement program and mentoring its Afghan counterparts on what to look for during the post-production process. “In an effort to ensure that we are providing the Afghan national army and national police a higher-quality product, we are initiating our process improvement program,”

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“We are not satisfied with the current boot quality by the Milli company,” admitted Army Brig. Gen. Gary Patton, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan deputy commanding general (programs). “We are seeing too many defective boots, and that is why we have initiated the product improvement program: so we can get to a more consistent, higher-quality boot for the Afghanistan national army.”

Local vendors were purchasing boots from foreign countries such as China, India and Korea. Kabul Milli wants to establish themselves as a model company for boot manufacturing in Afghanistan by Afghans. “We have stopped our orders from all foreign boot companies effective last week,” Patton affirmed. “The reason is that we want Afghan products, not products from other nations. It’s important that Afghan soldiers know that their country is making their boots ... that’s pride.”

Afghan national army and police leadership at all levels have received feedback on boots from different

manufacturing companies. The results have indicated the need for Afghan boot manufacturers to conduct production domestically. “Right now I have 166,000 boots from different factories ... they are mixed. When we issue them to the units, they complain about the quality ... and we don’t know from which company. It’s a very difficult problem,” said Col. Ali Gouhar, Afghan national army central supply depot commander.

With 400 workers employed at Kabul Milli manufacturing boots, bedding and phoscorite-carbonatite

pipes, the company stands as an economic blueprint for Afghanistan by providing job opportunities and products that will benefit the country in more ways than one. “I want to help the Afghan people, the poor people who are busy working in this company,” Saffi remarked. “I want to provide food for them because it’s very difficult right now having work and getting a job in this country.”

Army Maj. Charles Seidel, local acquisitions chief, said the overall goal is to increase quality while also increasing the local economy. 🟡



*Army Brig. Gen. Gary Patton, center, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan deputy commanding general (programs), inspects an unfinished boot at the Kabul Milli factory, Kabul, Afghanistan, Jan. 18. Members of Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan and the Afghan National Army visited the boot factory to observe the boot manufacturing process and to initiate a process improvement program.*