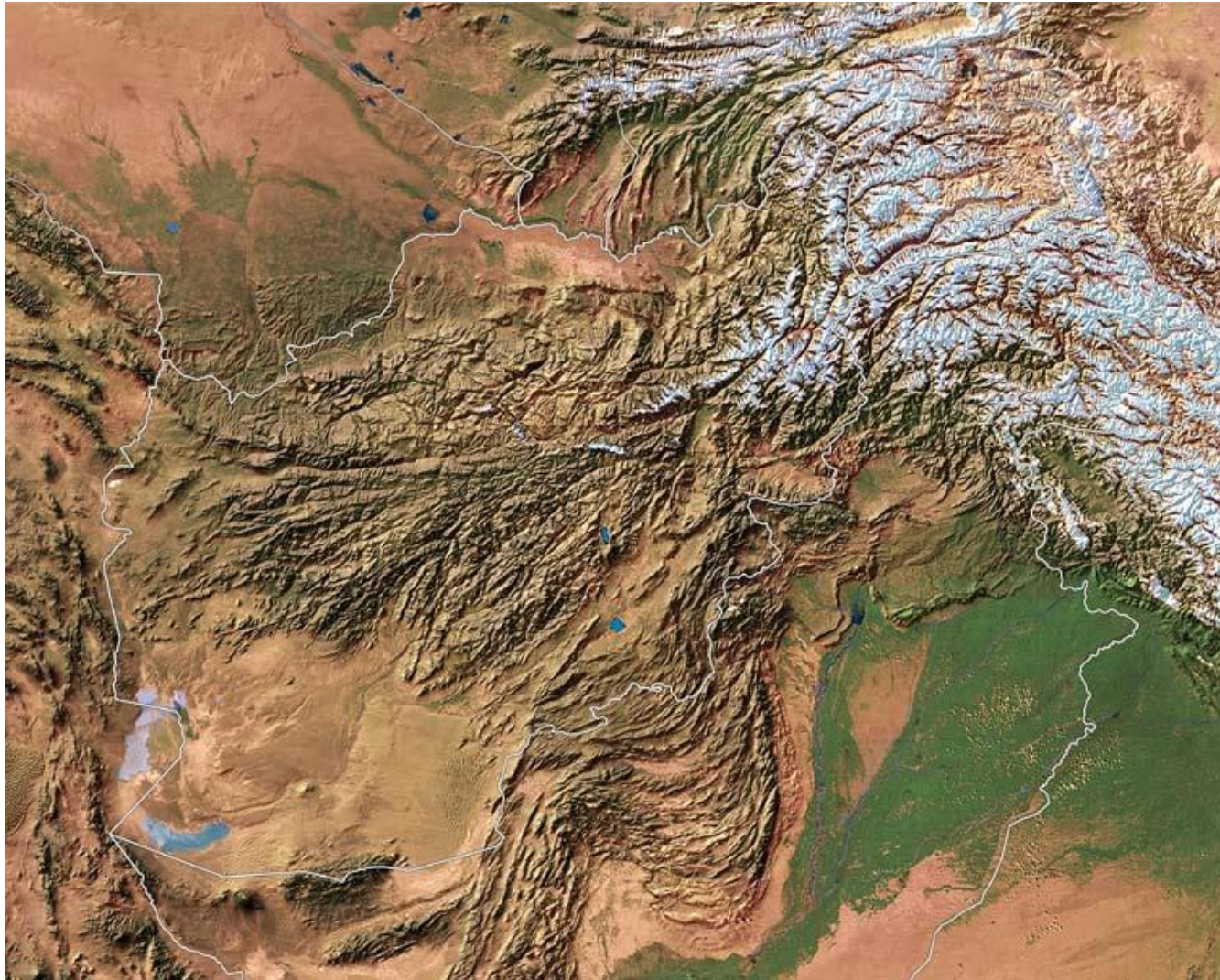


Afghanistan – Training and 1st assignment.



Where to begin ?

After the flight from New York to Paris, Rome, Beirut and then Kabul, we were escorted to a training facility in Paghman for language and technical training. We then were given 'on-the-job' training in Jalabad and Asadabad. With that completed I stayed in Kabul until I could get into my first assignment in Chagcharan, Ghor province.



The Bahar Hotel, Paghman



Our luxurious training quarters included a cot, wood burning stove, study desk and chairs and 8 roommates.



Restroom facilities could be found via a well worn path to an out-building in back of the hotel.



As part of the training we get to go to the Paghman bazaar and buy our own lunch. Can it get any better than this?



Jalalabad

We then get to travel east for more training in Jalalabad. The trip is like going from winter to spring in 4 hours.





The Bazaar could pass for being relatively modern with paved roads and sidewalks and concrete juies.



Language and technical training
continue with some time left over for a
little monkeying around.



Rick Smith and Friend



We finish training with a trip up the Konar River to Asadabad for some technical project review. On the way we watch the Afghan Navy on maneuvers.





With training completed, we draw permanent assignments and wait in Kabul until we can get into our areas. We stay at the training housing in Kabul until that time. I will go to Chagcharan in Ghor Province when there is a way to get there. At this time the roads are blocked with snow and no flights are going in.



Kabul Training

The training house comes equipped with outside facilities and room mates Rick Smith and Jim Poplack.



We get nice cots and I find a geological map of Afghanistan for wall art. We also have time to shop for supplies for the trip to the provinces.



Our house is conveniently located by some shops and restaurants.



The local kids have fun staring at the strange foreigners.



Major purchases include my first stove, hat and Peace Corps attire.



First trip to Chagcharan

I am finally on my way to Chagcharan via Bamyar on the infamous Baktar Airlines.





Bamyan is a wonderful place if you have time to see it.



Flight to Chagcharan

From Bamiyan, the plane flies over the Hindu Kush Mountains. By this time the Afghans are passing out like flies or throwing up.



My first home is about 3 blocks from downtown Chagcharan. It is a two room mud brick home complete with garden and.....





.... a roommate, Faisal Ahmad Shickibani. He teaches English in the local school but doesn't speak English. We swap words in the evenings to learn Farci. The rest of the time I spend on field trips to start Food-for-Work projects...if I can.

After unsuccessful attempts to start projects, I report back to Kabul and return to Chagcharan to a new house.....



....a new bathroom, and....



...a new roommate, Mr. Teem. Here Tim is pretending there is a glass wall surrounding him. He soon becomes the director of language, local vocal talent and mime extraordinaire.



Our new job scope is to meet with the formen (Boshis) and design and negotiate a contract to build public works type projects like roads, irrigation systems and schools.





Using our trusty Peace Corps truck, which I still claim that Tim broke by navigating me into a ditch, we still make field trips and this time are able to start projects.

We eventually get some counterparts like Tim's favorite Maj Noon, and another PC truck to work out in the rural areas. Some of these places are far enough away that we carry our own 55 gal barrel of gas.

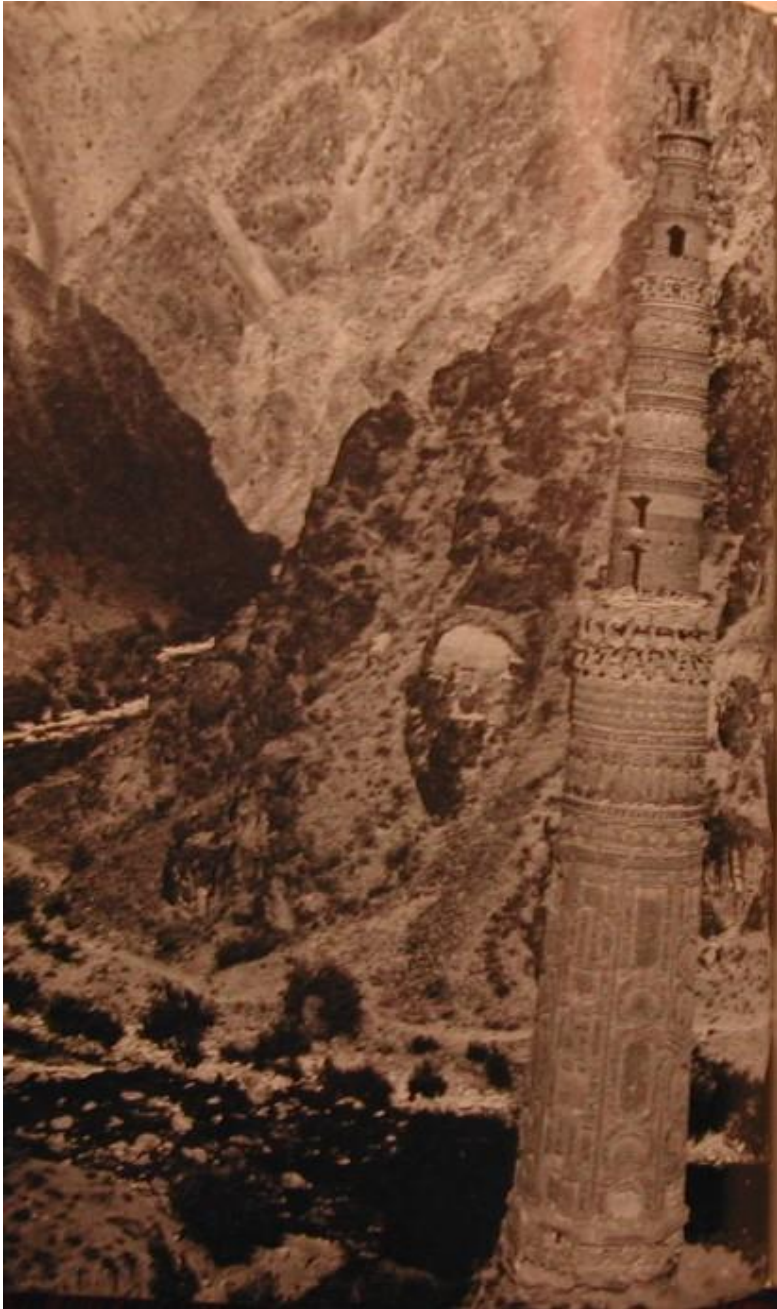


Some of these trips take us by a sarai where passing nomads stay on their annual trip to the mountains in the summer.



As we traveled farther and the roads? got worse, we took Russian Jeeps, camels, horses or walked to our final destination and site to start rural development projects.





One of the more impressive sites was at the Minaret of Jam. Unable to get pictures of the trip, this was taken out of a book. It looked just like the book.

Ultimately, this was my normal work attire.



Kabul – the end of the 1st year

At the end of the first year the FFW volunteers are given the option to go home or to stay on and find other employment. While we wait for a final decision on our fate by Peace Corps, we spend time in Kabul.

Kabul from the Intercontinental Hotel

I was always impressed with the fact that if you really wanted something in Kabul, you could find it there.



I mean, besides the sites of the area, and Kabul did have some historical sites...



Many of which were quite spectacular.



Downtown Kabul and the Blue Mosque.



But what if you needed some clothes.....you could find it in the used clothes bazaar.





How about some bread (nan)? These guys would make it and these kids would sell it to you.



Maybe a light snack is all you need. Here, sand is added to the kernels to pop the popcorn and then sieved to remove most of the sand.





Fruit or vegetables are always available for your meals but Doc Johnson will remind you to soak them in iodine water.

For the entrée, dinner on the hoof or.....



....you can get selected cuts of meat from the local meat bazaar.



How about a samovar or a kettle?



Or you basic cooking equipment and utensils.



Maybe some mats or rope is more of what you need.



You can't stay warm without wood for the stove and someone to haul it home for you.



Could it be tires or car parts for auto repair?



Or someone for tea pot repair.





Maybe something for the soul is all
you need.



Or some good grooming tip.



Pet birds may be just what the doctor ordered.



Whatever you need, it probably can be found downtown, along the Kabul River....including restroom facilities.



And it all can be enjoyed with Coca-Cola.



Peace Corps Friends & Entertainment

Andy Huskey waiting for some news and Betsy Johnson waiting for Andy.



I guess they found each other.





And how would we have survived without Dr. Johnson and his family. The only one who never asked me why I always wore a hat.

And then there was always spring Peace Corps baseball.....with Dan Huber at bat.





Or Dan
coaching.



Peace Corps secret weapon....fast Eddie Crawford.



Ben Santos knows how to swing at the ball.



Some of the other players include Tom Grant on third.





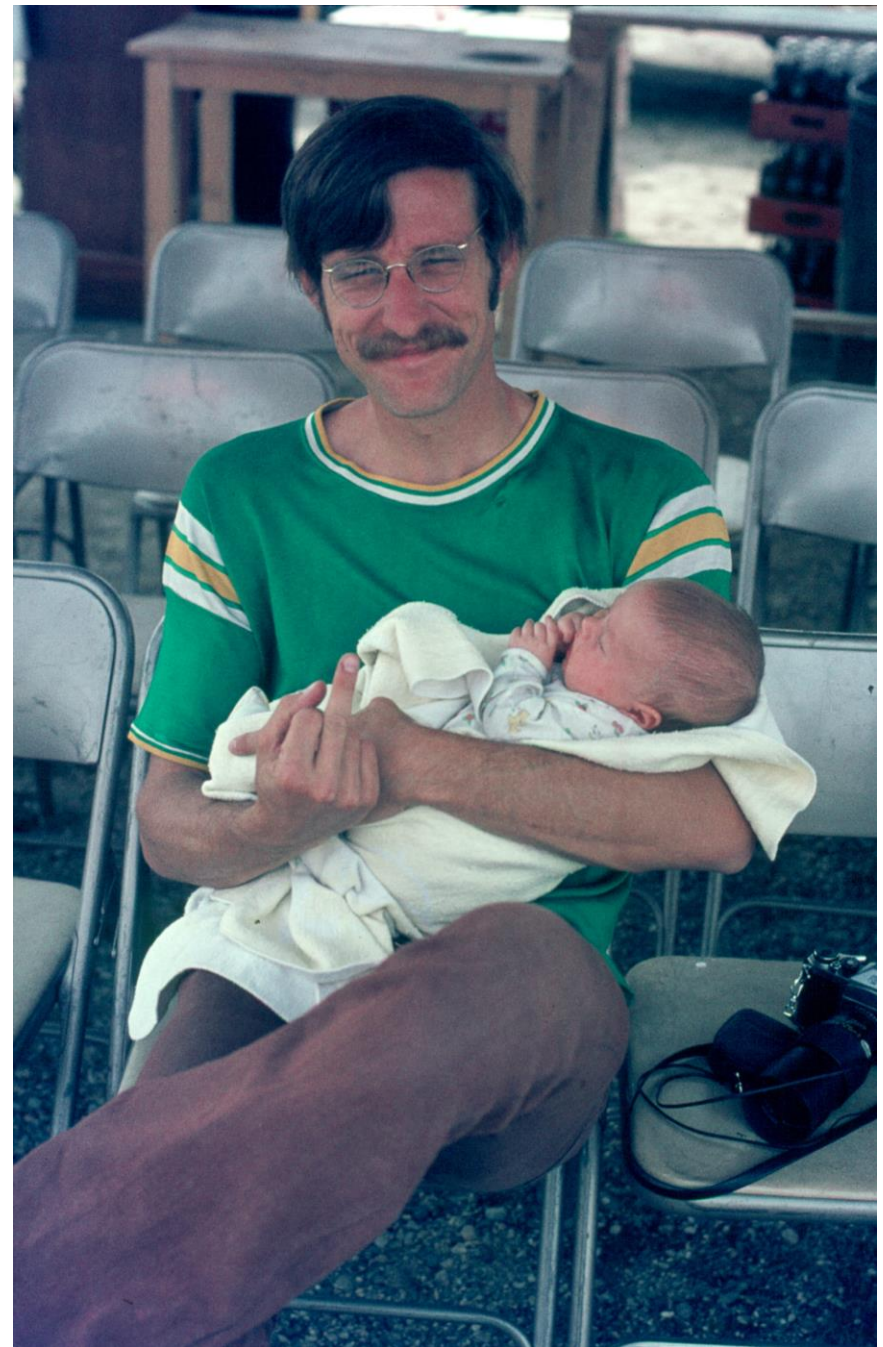
Ed Henry covers 2nd.



Lou Mitchel at home plat or me,
backing him up when he needs a drink
of water.



Dennis Ruff taking care of the junior leaguer and signing in the plays.



The high school girls field a team with one of the Johnson girls pitching.



And I do a lot of observing.

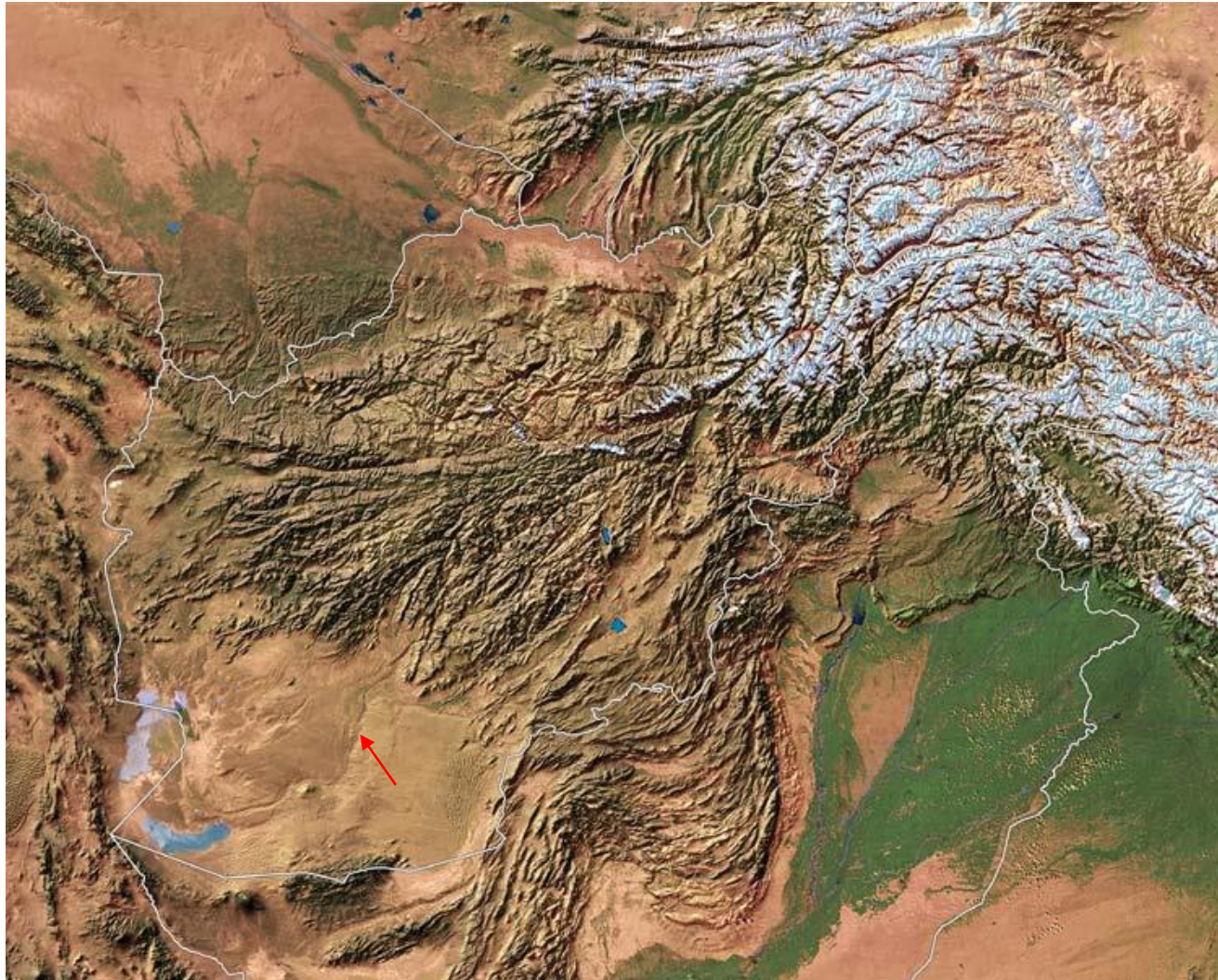


At this point, we have a meeting in Kabul for all FFW workers and all my gear, including my camera, is stolen. I am unable to take pictures of FFW Projects, Operation help, Faizabad and other Peace Corps activity until we go on vacation to Singapore and I buy a new camera.



Afghanistan – The 2nd Year

(You can either go back to the US or stay in Afghanistan if you find a job.)

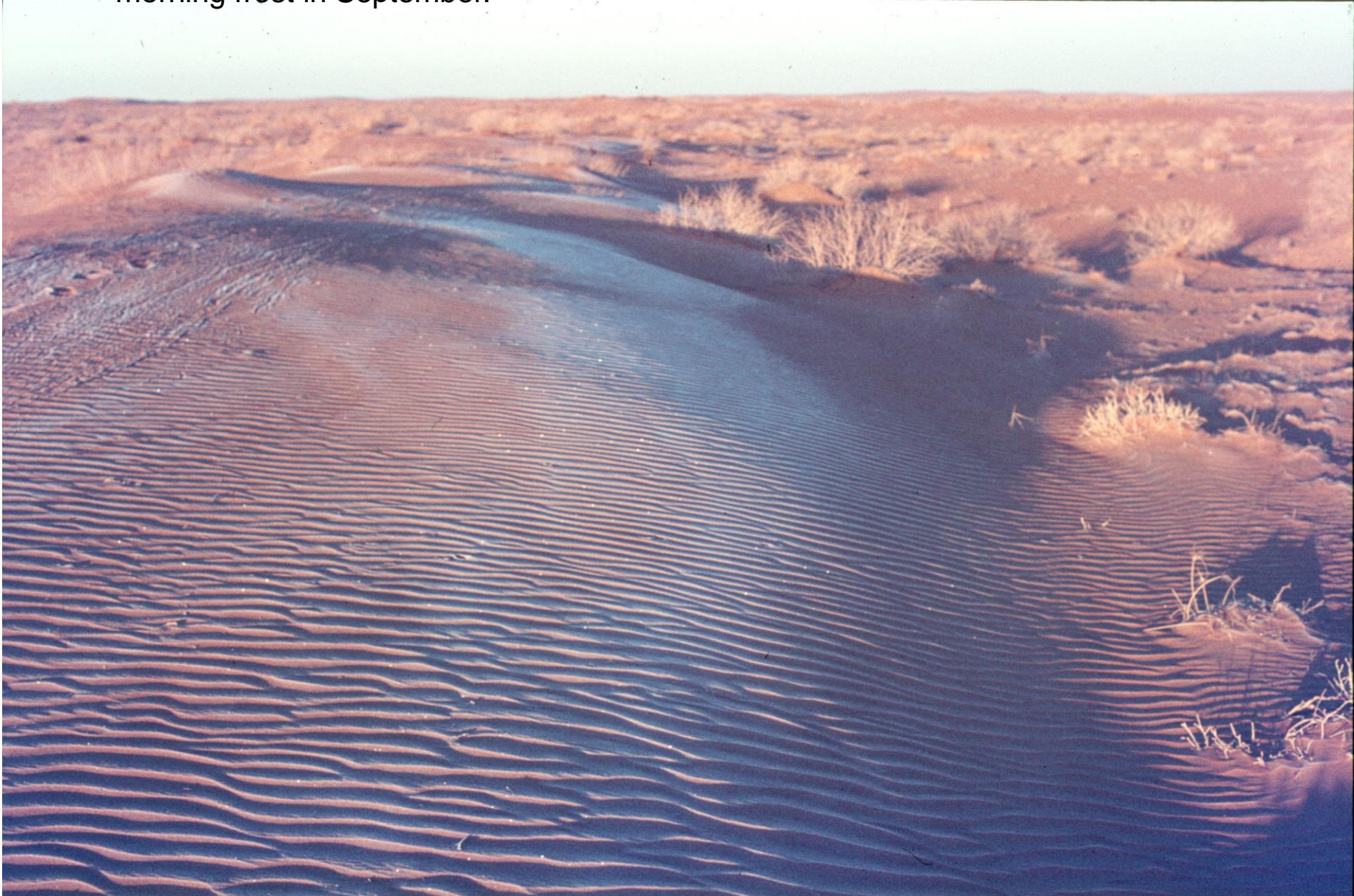


The Desert Trip





A trip into the desert from Laskagah to find the migration paths of the Nomads. It started with trying to find the watering holes. This was a typical desert dune with morning frost in September.





Dick Scott with the UN led the trip with the aid of his trusty driver in the background. Some may recognize the Peace Corps issue sleeping bag and my saddle bags in the fore ground. A guide was brought along for the first leg of the trip to show us how to get to the first watering hole. We had maps, satellite images, topo maps and compasses which we thought would get us to the other two watering areas.

With flat terrain in the background, this was a typical campsite about to be set up. Our food consisted of what we could shoot from the truck, a box of apples and onions and of course the obligatory rogan. The gazelle was shot by chasing it with the truck. It provided food for the 5 of us for about 3 to 4 days.



Breakfasts consisted of the same gazelle as the rest of the meals. Dick Scott brought with him a driver (far left) and translator (green coat) and _____ who all assisted in daily tasks and navigation.



Getting ready to strike camp. Food supplies are getting shorter.



With the help of the guide, we eventually came upon a series of mounds and then a large playa lake



At the deepest end of the lake, the nomads dug a deep pool or trench where the last of the water would collect. There they would build some type of structure where they could rest and water their sheep before continuing their trip in or out of the country.



With the aid of our Afghan guide, it only took 2 days to find the first lake. With all of our equipment it took us another two days before we came upon some sheep and camels and no idea where we were. A direct line distance of 100 miles.



Eventually we found someone who, reluctantly, gave us some direction.



They didn't know what to think of us. We left following their directions....
Nesdeekus.





Eventually we find the second lake and structure.

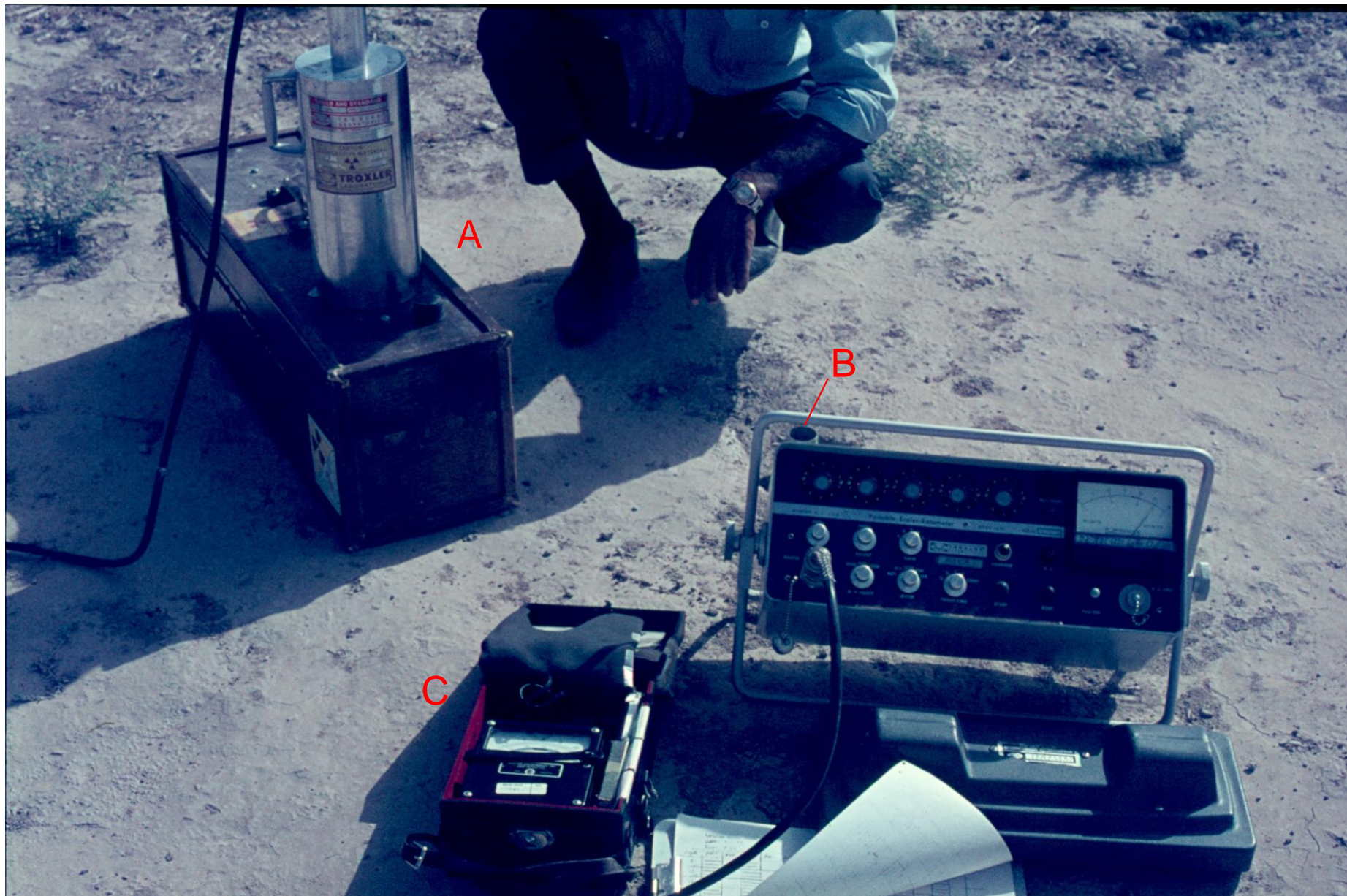
This area was a bit drier and had less of a drainage area. After a few feeble attempts to locate additional lakes, we eventually decide to head back to Lash.



Normal SW Afghanistan Projects



Armed with my extensive knowledge of desert flora and fauna and a geology degree, I have the awesome responsibility of dropping a radio active source (A) down an aluminum tube (B) to measure soil moisture. Additionally I get to measure the sunlight intensity from sunup to sundown every day (C).



Many of the soil moisture stations are established in vineyards and melon patches to determine irrigation frequency. One problem, we have no control over the water for irrigation. Attah, the driver helps me find these locations.



Much of the work is performed under Harold Pillsbury with USAID. We also teach the use of insecticides and spraying techniques for grapes, melons and cotton. Dr. Pillsbury is from the University of Alaska.



My vast experience in counting light beams obviously qualifies me to train new Ag. Extension PCVs and set up a training program in Lashkagah.



Jane Willard allows me the privilege of staying at her house in exchange for “training her servant”, Obidollah. He and I become running buddies and I do very little training.



Obidollah and his family plus niece on left.



Obidollah's pride and joys.



Obidollah's wife, Magul, sister-in-law, and all their kids.



Despite the workload, there is still time to site-see with Mary Johnson. Here's the arch at Quali Bost.



Mary and her teacher friend explore some of the ruins of Quali Bost.



Most of the ruins are underground. Tom Shield (lower left) finishes a search for treasures.



A trip to the Kajakai Dam takes us along an irrigation canal road where we cross at a siphon.





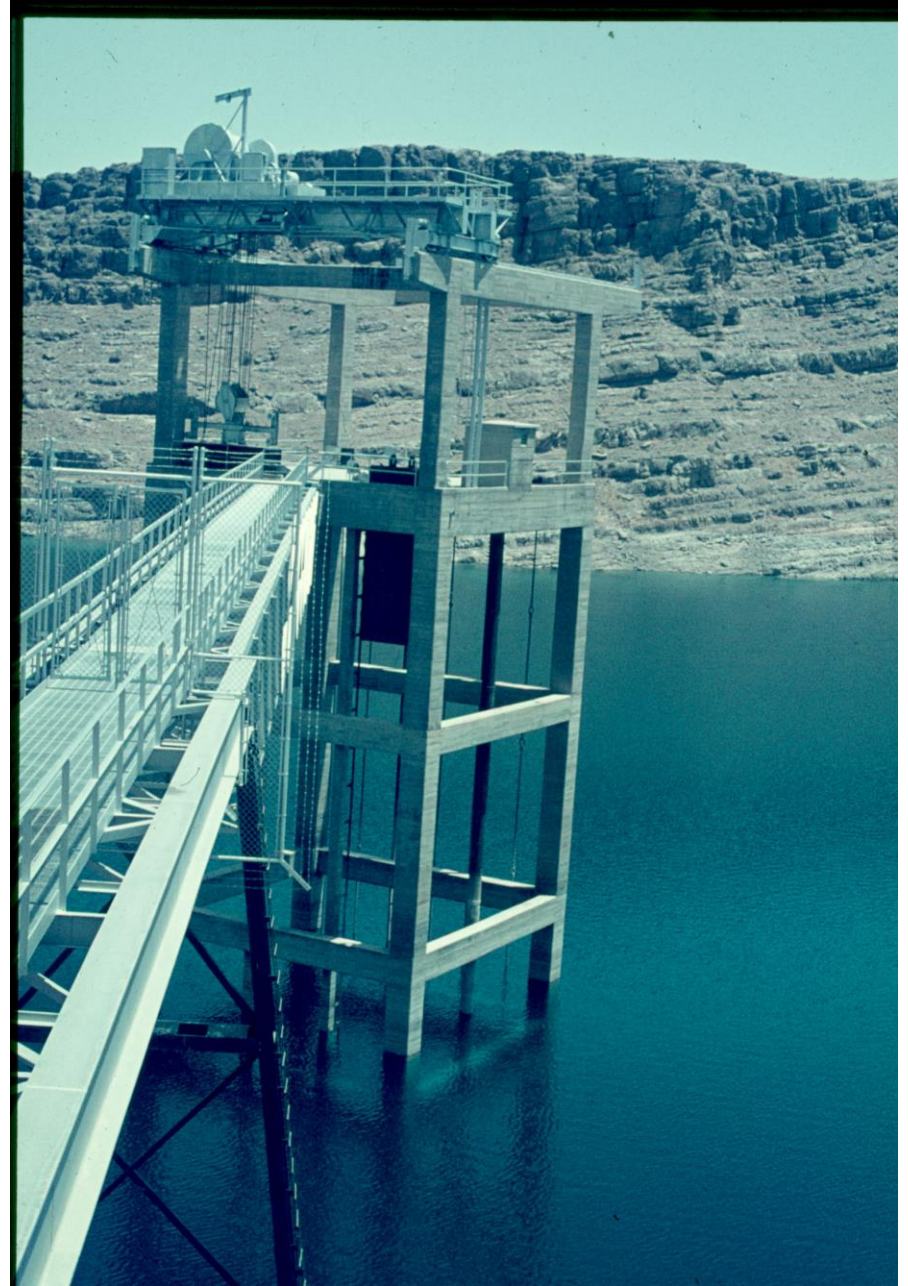
The Kajakai Dam project provides electricity and water for SW Afghanistan and was being built by HAVA (Helmand Argandab Valley Authority). This water passes on to the canals we traveled on the way here.



It is a earth filled structure along the Helmand river.



This project was supported by USAID and various UN organizations.



This second year ended with me on staff to train Agricultural extension volunteers and finally heading back to Kabul. There I meet up with Andy Huskey, travel to Delhi, London and then back to the US.

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