

ISAF MIRROR

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Volume 6, May 2004

Afghanistan on the Move

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Very Important Passenger



By Anne-Claude Gouy

For two days, Afghan President Karzai stood in the limelight while attending the Berlin donor conference. At the conference, he signed agreements to help stabilize Afghanistan as the country's first presidential and parliamentary elections draws closer. Immediately following the conference, he boarded a German Air Force Airbus for his return flight to Afghanistan.

The flight crew of the *Hans Grade* welcomed on board perhaps their most prominent passenger to date. They first traveled to the German Air Transport Base Termez in Uzbekistan where Colonel Jorg Lebert, base commander, welcomed the President and his delegation. They held a short meeting with representatives from Surchon-Darja, Uzbekistan and then transferred to a German CC-160 for the remaining portion of their flight.

While the flights may not have been as comfortable as a flight on Air Force One, the President returned to Kabul and expressed his gratitude to the crew for a safe flight home.

The ISAF Mirror is a Public Information Office publication. Editorial content is edited and prepared by the PIO staff from submissions sent to them. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect official NATO, AFNORTH or ISAF policy.

SUBMISSIONS:

Submissions can be made to the PIO in the "Yellow Building" or e-mailed to: pressoffice@isaf-hq.nato.int
 Articles should be in Microsoft Word format and no longer than 600 words.

Photographs should be at least 7X4.5 centimeters, 300 dpi, and have captions.

The ISAF Mirror is published monthly and should be available the first Friday of every month. For more information call the editor at ext. 2269. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

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TESSISAF

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NBC training at KAIA

By Anne-Claude Gouy

Every soldier of every nation receives basic training in nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) defense. Even without a specific threat of a chemical or biological attack in Afghanistan, NATO troops continue to conduct training and exercises should such a threat arise.

On March 28 and 29, an exercise took place at Kabul International Airport (KAIA) to evaluate and improve ISAF's capacity to handle an NBC incident. Italian, German and Canadian soldiers demonstrated their knowledge to react to this form of threat.

While every soldier has his own NBC equipment, simple possession is not sufficient. Cpl. David Matthei from the German army stated, "These exercises are necessary because everybody needs to know the best way to use the equipment." While every battle group has its own NBC team, ISAF Headquarters in Kabul is tasked with coordinating the work of each of these national teams so that the overall effect is increased.

How does it work?

In order to secure and check an area, NBC teams work in pairs. Two specially-designed trucks drive side-by-side at about 20km/h. On the back of the truck is a mechanical arm with a small wheel that's equipped with a chemical detector. If chemicals are detected, another mechanical arm takes a sample so that an analysis can be made immediately inside the vehicle.

After an initial detection is made during reconnaissance, a marker is placed on the road to identify the contaminated area. Further analysis is conducted in the area. "The most important advantage of this kind of truck is that we can use it on every kind of road, even in mountains, and that's very important in a country like Afghanistan," said Czech Maj. Vladimir Kalman, NBC officer at ISAF Headquarters.

After the vehicle has concluded its analysis, two NBC specialists get out and examine the area step-by-step in order to locate the contaminated area precisely. After the area has been identified, it is then secured. They do this by checking the entire area, metre by metre, with the detection equipment. When contamination is discovered, the specialists call for a marker to identify the area. The Global Positioning System is used to identify the exact location while the coordinates are transmitted directly to the headquarters. "This is a routine exercise; it's our daily business and our permanent equipment," added Kalman.



NBC teams, working in pairs, progress metre-by-metre wearing their equipment which protects them from chemical or biological agents.

The reason why

Lt. Col. Steve Quick, Canadian Forces NBC officer, stated that, "We haven't seen any chemical, biological or radiological attacks since the second World War." He also added, "We are not anticipating this kind of event, but are just here to assist the Afghan government in the fighting of this type of attack."

ISAF wants to be prepared to assist the Afghan people in a wide range of possible events. The exercise was a well executed event that validated the capabilities of ISAF during an NBC incident or the more likely incident of contamination by industrial toxic hazards.

Even if a NBC attack never occurs, an exercise of this kind is invaluable. ISAF continues to improve its capabilities and the training of its personnel in case such an event occurs. "We are not suspecting anybody to attack, but we need to be sure we are able to fight an NBC attack," added Quick, "and we've just shown you that we are!"

Apaches arrive



By Anne-Claude Gouy

An airplane landing at Kabul International Airport (KAIA) is a fairly common occurrence these days. What is not common at KAIA is the landing of one of the world's largest cargo planes. An Antonov 124 is a massive, Russian-built cargo plane capable of carrying 125 tons of equipment. On March 30, one of these cargo planes landed at the Kabul airport and brought with it the long-awaited Apache helicopters.

The Dutch Apaches are being deployed in support of ISAF's mission in Afghanistan. Their roles will include aerial reconnaissance and surveillance, close air support for ground troops, escorting convoys and acting as a quick reaction force. "These helicopters will increase ISAF's self-protection and reconnaissance capabilities, which in turn will improve our capacity to procure a safe and secure environment conducive to free and fair elections, strengthening the rule of law, and the reconstruction of



Photo: Anne-Claude Gouy

In early morning haze, a crowd gathered on the tarmac of KAIA to welcome the arrival of three Apache helicopters from the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The crowd didn't get to hear the familiar whup-whup-whup of helicopters in flight, the distinct shape of helicopters flying against the blue sky, or hear the theme music from "Apocalypse Now". Instead they witnessed the gentle landing of the giant Russian-built Antonov aircraft with the three Apache helicopters inside.

Mission

The Apache helicopters had to be partially dismantled for the journey. They traveled 6,000 kilometres from their home with the 301st and 302nd Squadrons in The Netherlands. The first equipment to be unloaded were the rotor blades measuring 14.6 meters in diameter.

Afghanistan," said Brig.Gen. Gero L.K. Schachthöfer, Deputy Commander of ISAF (Air). This Apache version, Model D, carries a combination of Hellfire laser guided antitank missiles, 2.75-inch rockets, and a 30-mm gun with 1,200 rounds. It has a cruising speed of 245 km/h, a range of 460 km and uses the latest day and night sensors.

Quick reaction

The Apache is not the only fast-reaction capability to come out of The Netherlands. From inception to completion, the commitment to send the Apaches to ISAF took the government of The Netherlands only two months. ISAF's quick reaction capabilities are significantly enhanced with the arrival of these aircraft.



Photo: Anne-Claude Gouy

Top: The unloading of the first Apache arriving by Antonov 124.

Bottom: Test flights were conducted by four pilots so that all six Apaches were operational by the end of one week.

Test flight within 24 hours

By Lt. Lisette Adelaar

The first of six Dutch Apache helicopters began test flights on March 31, less than 24 hours after arriving at Kabul International Airport and far sooner than was anticipated. Of course, the Apache first had to be assembled after being partially dismantled for the flight to Kabul in the Antonov 124. The rotor blades had to be replaced and considerable maintenance work completed before it could begin its first ascent into the skies.

Different from home

The Dutch Apache pilots were looking forward to the challenge of flying in Kabul in support of ISAF missions. "This is different than a normal test flight in the Netherlands," says pilot Wandert. "Here we take off after a good intelligence brief about the actual situation. This is of course due to the situation we have to fly in."

During the first week, test flights were conducted by four pilots so that all six Apaches were operational by the end of the week. "Within three flights of 15 minutes each, we will try to balance the rotor blades," adds pilot Raymond, "and in another flight we will check the maximum power settings in these working conditions."

Afghanistan Conditions

During the test flight, many factors had to be considered and checked -- not the least of which was the weather. Weather conditions and the effects that altitude has on the

airframe are all considered prior to flight. "In the manual, it says that at this height and in combination with these temperatures, the normal starting procedure could give some problems," explained one of the pilots. "But we have several methods we can use



Photo: Lt. Lisette Adelaar

and we will choose the most appropriate for Kabul." The Royal Dutch Air Force has never flown in this combination of altitude and high temperatures. "It's always nice to fly in a totally new surrounding, it's a new challenge," says Wandert. "The weather here is great and the build-up of the Dutch camp will be good for the upcoming missions."

NAC visits Afghanistan

By Capt. Mike Nicholson

Members of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) arrived in Kabul on April 26 for an unprecedented trip to Afghanistan. The 26 representatives, along with General James Jones, Supreme Allied Commander, and other officials, met with President Karzai at the Presidential Palace, toured ISAF Headquarters, a heavy weapons cantonment site and met with ISAF and Afghan National Army troops.

The group reiterated NATO's commitment to Afghanistan and ensured the expansion of ISAF through the opening of five new PRTs prior to the Istanbul Summit at the end of June. They also flew to Konduz, Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif to see the effects of PRTs on reconstruction and the spread of the influence of the Afghan government before returning to Brussels on April 27th.

The NAC consists of permanent civilian representatives from all NATO countries. NAC representatives maintain an important profile and are members of NATO's highest decision-making body. They issue declarations and explain NATO policies to their respective governments as well as to non-NATO countries.



Members of the NAC visit with the Afghan National Army



General James Jones talks with some Afghan National Army members



Eurocorps arrives at ISAF

By Capt. Mike Nicholson

Key leaders of the Eurocorps arrived in Kabul on May 1st to take part in a five-day training exercise in preparation of their takeover of ISAF VI. Lieut. Gen. Jean-Louis Py led a group of 26 visitors from 1-5 May who came to Kabul to receive an initial orientation on ISAF.

The five-day event covers the challenges involved in the development of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Key leader training is a critical step in the foundation, education and training of the ISAF command team.

Briefings and classes began with general ISAF overviews and then the group was separated so that they could receive more one-to-one training with the functional area counterparts.

Eurocorps was created in 1992 and is comprised of its five framework nations: Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Spain. Its headquarters is located in Strasbourg, France and employs soldiers from Austria, Canada, Finland, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the UK.

The Eurocorps currently acts as a Rapid Reaction Corps headquarters for both the EU and NATO and is scheduled to take over ISAF VI in mid-August.



Lieut. Gen. Hillier welcomes Lieut. Gen. Py to ISAF Headquarters



Key leaders from the Eurocorps listen to the information briefing

CIMIC opens new girls school



Col. Chris Manning and Mr. Mohammed Ajmal Faizid cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the Ameni Fadawi Girls School.

By Flt.-Lt. Emma Matthews

The Afghan Deputy Minister for Education, Mr. Mohammed Ajmal Faiz, and the commander of British forces in Afghanistan, Col. Chris Manning, officially opened the new kindergarten at the Ameni Fadawi Girls School in Kabul on April 19th.

The project to build the kindergarten was funded by the British embassy and the British Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Team, a group of soldiers responsible for making projects that improve the quality of life for Afghans. The total cost of the project was \$27,450, \$7000 of which was funded by the Reverend Ian Gamble from Donaghadee Parish in Northern Ireland.

The Ameni Fadawi School was previously used as a headquarters by the Taliban who destroyed it when they left. "The construction of this kindergarten is a clear demonstration of the commitment of the people and the Government of the UK to the redevelopment and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and it is a great honour for me to be representing them today," said Col. Manning.

Going up



This NDS employee shows a piece of hashish that was eventually destroyed in this mass drug burning effort.

By Anne-Claude Gouy

Afghanistan's primary agricultural crop, the poppy, is responsible for a large portion of Afghanistan's gross national product. The illegal drugs produced from this flower have fueled the economy in Afghanistan for many years. Now however, the refined poppy is fueling something else – a huge bonfire set to destroy an accumulation of illegal drugs seized by the Afghan National Directorate for Security (NDS).

During the afternoon of Wednesday, March 31st, a huge plume of dense black smoke rose into the sky north-east of Kabul. There was no outcry from environmental groups concerned about the air quality. Instead, the massive conflagration was hailed as a step forward in Afghanistan's steady march towards eradicating illegal drugs in this country. On this day the NDS, supported by ISAF, burned 1,250 kilos of these drugs.

Demolition Men

A huge cache of hashish, poppies and heroin was accumulated by the Afghan NDS during the Taliban regime and held by the NDS waiting for a secure environment to ensure its lawful disposal. "We are very proud because we can see today the result of all the efforts of the different departments of NDS," said Mr. Gul Mohammad, Chief of District 3.

The destruction of these drugs is another example of the improving security environment in Afghanistan, and demonstrates the level of

in smoke



Photo: Anne-Claude Gouy

cooperation that exists between the Afghan authorities and ISAF. “We did a lot of operations, and drugs were stored waiting for a safe burning possibility,” added Mohammad. “Thanks to ISAF, it’s now possible. But we still have 250 kilos more that are waiting.”

Unity is strength

The NDS requested that ISAF provide support to ensure the operation ran smoothly. ISAF’s International Military Police stepped in to provide transportation and assist with security arrangements. “We just had a support role,” said Lt.-Col. Steve MacDonald, Canadian security officer and ISAF’s Provost Marshal. “All these drugs were collected by the NDS. We are just offering our assistance for the destruction.”

So with the massive cache of drugs placed in a deep hole in the arid desert outside Kabul, the NDS ignited the illegal heap, signifying its commitment to search and destroy illegal drugs as part of the effort to stabilize its country. “Until Afghanistan is able to prevent the narcotics traffic, we will not be able to bring peace in our country,” concluded Mohammed.



These illegal narcotics were stored in the NDS awaiting disposal. ISAF MP’s were able to assist by providing transportation and security

Kabul Multinational



Military members from all countries participated in the Danish Contingent (DANCON) Challenge, a 25-km march gathering more than 170 soldiers from all contingents in the Kabul Multinational Brigade (top right, top left)



Maj. Thomas Beccarelli of Switzerland and Capt. Christian Detlof of Germany arrive at the DANCON finish line (left).

On April 8th, artillery rounds from the 5th Canadian Light Artillery Regiment were sent downrange during the second range day since the gunners arrived in Afghanistan. This was a joint exercise between Canadian and Slovenian soldiers with help from Afghan interpreters who played a key role in informing local Afghans. The exercise was a great success and was a perfect example of partnership between two nations (bottom left).



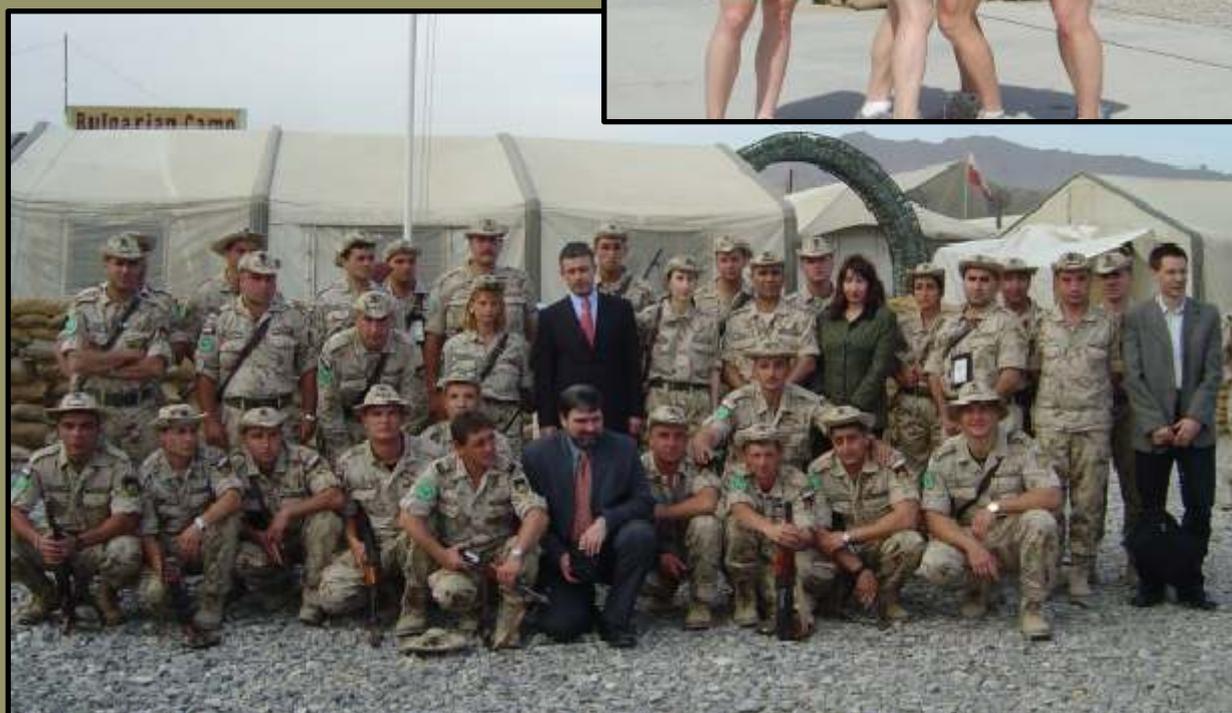
A typical Turkish lunch ended in the securing of an agreement between the Turkish Contingent and ISAF (bottom right).



Brigade SNAPSHOTS



A KMNb soldier organizes a meeting between local Afghan children and 'the bunny' (top). A noticeable number of Canadian women participated in the 8.2 km run that was sponsored by the German Contingent (right). The Bulgarian minister for Foreign Affairs paid a visit to the Bulgarian Contingent on April 10 (bottom).



Rural route re-routed right

By Lt.-Col. Klaus Geier

Having tactical knowledge and situational awareness about an area is important in executing any military mission. Having some sensitivity to the people and the nuances of an area is key to maintaining and improving security in Afghanistan.

This is exactly how the German Battalion Group went about its ISAF duties when it suggested that a route inside the Company 1 area of its responsibility be rerouted. This particular route led right through the centre of a typical Afghan village, passing small industries and markets which attract myriads of shoppers, traders and playing children during the day. The road itself is a dry, track strewn with potholes that stirs up an enormous amount of dust when traveled on.

"When having tea with the mayor, we touched upon the issues of noise, dirt and risks of accidents," a Company 1 patrol leader said. "We would never have come up with this issue on our own. Thus, following a thorough investigation and a request to KMNB regarding a suitable alternative, we suggested the road be rerouted."

Because of the impact the rerouting would have on ISAF special maps alone, a lengthy decision-



A German Battalion soldier watches with local children as their vehicles drive down the new route

making process was expected, but ISAF Headquarters and KMNB reacted promptly to approve the proposal. The mayor of Ahmed Sha Baba Mina was highly appreciative and thanked the Germans for their consideration, and participated in the official opening of the new route by taking a ceremonial ride in a Fuchs armoured personnel carrier.

Local Afghan girl receives surgery in Germany

By Lt.- Col. Klaus Geier

Every month, the doctors of the Multinational Medical Task Force at the Camp Warehouse Field Hospital treat and operate on more than 600 Afghan men, women and children. Sometimes these people are victims of accidents, but other times they are just dropped off at the main gate of the camp hoping that the Germans will take care of them in "Kabul's best hospital."

Recently, a 16-year-old girl named Nadrah from a remote mountain village north of Kabul, arrived at the hospital. She suffered from a serious pseudotumor which disfigured the left side of her face, and a major hemangioma threatening to endanger the sight of her left eye. Her condition



was rapidly deteriorating and each day counted in the effort to save her eyesight. A German eye specialist, Lieut. Col. Jörg Frischmuth from the Bundeswehr Hospital in Hamburg, and Master Sergeant Astrid Zeuner of the Rescue Coordination Centre, handled the case from the very beginning.

It was determined that the field hospital could not cure Nadrah's condition. The necessary surgical procedure would have to be performed elsewhere. The "Children Need Us" society was contacted and they found a hospital in Germany capable of performing the surgery.

The cost for the surgery would be 50,000 Euros. In cooperation with the Press and Information Centre and The Bildzeitung, a high-circulation German daily paper, a campaign called "A Heart for Children," was sponsored and within two days there was enough money to cover all costs. On Wednesday, March 31, Nadrah was flown to Germany and received the surgical procedure to improve her condition.



British team raises money for Afghan orphans

By Flt.-Lt. Emma Matthews

On April 16, a team of British personnel working for ISAF in Kabul pulled a 2-ton vehicle for five miles to raise money for orphans in Afghanistan. The team, led by Cpl Kirton, spent weeks training hard to build up strength for the event. "We have spent a lot of time running and carrying weight; it was tough but we knew it would be worth it," said Kirton.

Team member, Leading Radio Operator (LRO) Belinda Maund said, "We will continue to raise money to make a difference to the orphans in Afghanistan." The total money raised by the event was approximately 8000 Euros.

CIMIC opens new medical facility

By Lt.-Col. Klaus Geier

Since the beginning of foreign missions abroad in the Balkans in 1995, Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) of the Bundeswehr has continued to be a positive aspect. Their expertise, appreciation of foreign culture, and a special feeling for people affected by war characterises CIMIC experts.

This characterization also holds true for the 20 comrades of the current CIMIC platoon of the German contingent. Lt.-Col. Christian Herlt was recently able to handover the Dar-UI-Aman Clinic to local officials, a unique binational CIMIC reconstruction program that was initiated mainly by the leadership of the German-Netherlands contingent of ISAF in 2003.

A ceremony was held inside the renovated building which had taken nine months to restore. Maj.-Gen. Korte, DCOM ISAF, was on hand to give a symbolic key to Medical Director Dr. Fader. "Equipped with state-of-the-art medical technology and with the assistance of a most committed and responsible management, an out-patient treatment centre has evolved which will set standards," Maj.-Gen. Korte said.

It was only last year that the Ministry of Health of the Afghan Transitional Administration had made the proposal to restore the damaged clinic and ISAF contingents had begun work. One of the German CIMIC experts who accompanied this program from the very beginning was Master Sergeant Herbert Bernauer from Kochel am See. "The damage was so bad that we barely could decide where and how to start. None of the walls on the first floor had remained intact," the reservist from Bavaria remembers.



Maj. Gen. Korte hands over ten new wheelchairs to the Dar-UI-Aman Clinic.

The revived Dar-UI-Aman Clinic was completed in only nine months and is named after the part of Kabul in which it is located. The clinic will assume its urgently needed and longed-for service with two doctors and seven midwives shortly. In addition, almost 90 Afghan women and men will find new jobs at the medical facility.

In their congratulatory addresses, the representatives of the German and Netherlands governments agreed that the reconstruction of Afghanistan was inevitably linked to a properly functioning preventive health care system. The ceremony closed with the unveiling of a memorial plate embedded in the wall at the entrance of the building where Maj.-Gen. Korte handed over ten wheelchairs to the new clinic management who accepted this gift with great pleasure.

A St John's soldier's view from Kabul

By Capt. Howard Chafe

My name is Captain Howard Chafe, an officer of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment from St John's, Newfoundland in Canada. I am in Kabul to do my part in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) as the Television Group Supervisor. My job is to make commercials and short feature programmes that the mission commander will broadcast in Afghanistan to tell people why ISAF is here and what we do.

For the next few months, I will be working with my TV crew to assist informing people about this mission. I have three sergeants from Quebec and a video technician from Ontario. We are all members of the Reserve Force.

We live at Camp Warehouse, which is located on Jalalabad Road in Kabul. The camp is split in half, with Canadians living on one half and international soldiers on the other half. There are people from 25 nations taking part, including

soldiers from the former Yugoslavia. As someone who served in Bosnia as a peacekeeper in 1999, it is both surprising and pleasing to see Croatian soldiers as guards at the brigade headquarters. It is a testament to the work in the Balkans and a light of hope that perhaps in ten years we will be able to work alongside Afghan soldiers in a similar way.

I am still new to this country but am sure there are interesting events to come.

Regardless of individual experiences, we are all a part of one of the most important missions in recent history. The success of elections and reconstruction in Afghanistan can offer hope for similar success in other war-torn nations, and I am sure we can all be proud of the work being done here.



General Hillier shakes hands with Capt. Chafe during his visit to the media unit.



The TV team takes time to enjoy the snow during the month of February.

Foundation stone laid for Afghanistan's future

By Lt.-Col. Klaus Geier

The children here are Afghanistan's most vital assets for the future. Quite a few people are of the opinion that Afghanistan will only reach self-sustaining, political, social and economic growth when today's current kindergarten and school-going generation get to be adults.

While the German CIMIC contingent has a mission of providing support in the reconstruction effort of the new Afghan police force, it also helps in the construction and renovation of schools and kindergartens. The current situation for most schools is not good and most lack the essential equipment and facilities. CIMIC coordinates the shipments of relief supplies, secures structures to prevent them from collapsing, performs minor modifications to old buildings and begins construction on new buildings. What is needed most for these school are donations of everyday school equipment.

Just recently, the foundation stone for the extension of a kindergarten was laid. A popular German daily paper donated 20,000 Euros for the project "which would cost three to four times that amount in Germany," said 1Lt (Res) Raoul Strotz, CIMIC project leader. Strotz is an architect in his civilian life and is currently working on CIMIC projects such as these.

The kindergarten is attached to the Malalai Women's Hospital located in Kabul Police District 4. The hospital is staffed almost entirely by women who perform both in-patient and out-patient deliveries and surgeries. Without the integrated kindergarten, it would be next to impossible for the women to practice their professions. Following the five-year, anti-women Taliban rule, this is a positive development for Afghanistan women.

Previous repairs to the hospital and school building undertaken by ISAF in 2002 did not provide sufficient space for the school children. These current repairs were needed in order to improve hygiene and space requirements for a school that has grown to over 140 children. In three months, two additional rooms and an office will be available. 1Lt (Res) Strotz and his men will monitor the quality of work and progress of the new construction closely.

The construction contract for the new school addition was



The foundation stone for the new kindergarten is laid

awarded to the Nawabi Construction Company, an Afghan company, which is the first local construction company to be headed by an Afghan woman. The Nawabi Construction Company is headed by Mrs. Shahla Nawabi who used to live in London for many years and has now settled back in Kabul with her business partner.

Afghan Minister of Health Gen. Suheila and hospital director Fahima were present for the laying of the foundation-stone ceremony. Afghan hospitality and the gratefulness of the children again was evident throughout the ceremony. Following a prayer from the Koran and some short speeches, Lt.-Col. Herl and Gen. Suhelia embedded a small box filled with pictures from the children and documents about the project into the brickwork.

The amazed children in attendance were happy to receive a crate filled with toys, which was handed over to the kindergarten director. This experience will certainly stay in the memories of the children as well as of the soldiers of the CIMIC team.





24hr Charity Run

ISAF Headquarters sponsored a 24-hour charity run from 1 to 2 May. Runners signed up in half hour time slots as many times as they wanted and contributed either \$10 or 10 Euro for each 30 minutes.

Proceeds from the run are going to the "Kabul to Kandahar for Kids" charity. It is a charity that sponsors local orphanages with food, clothing and other essential supplies.

The event was estimated to have raised approximately \$1000 for local orphanages.



Operation "Envie d' agir" helps Afghan school children

The French Battalion has distributed over 1.5 tons of school supplies that was collected last December from schools that are located near France's 1st Marine Infantry Regiment.

The French Battalion is working with a collection of French institutional partners on the project such as the Regional Education Authority and the General Council of Charente. The project helps show the support of France for ISAF soldiers and the Afghan children.

The aim of the operation, called "Envie d' agir" ("to feel like acting"), was to distribute the items in conjunction with the start of the new Afghan school year. Along with the school supplies, 100 kites were also given to children as a symbolic way of showing cultural revival since this very popular Afghan game was banned by the Taliban.

More than 2500 Afghan children have so far benefitted from this operation.



A French ISAF soldier looks over some of the items a schoolboy has received from Operation "Envie d' agir".