ISAF MIRROR

"We are very grateful"

President Hamid Karzai

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All is 'well' in Bebe Marau

By Flt. Lt. Howard Leader

A large crowd of men and children was already gathered around the well in Bebe Marau when the Italian engineers marched in for a ceremony to dedicate the new drainage system. For several months, in the tiny, steep back streets, the engineers had worked to divert the course of an open sewer which threatened to pollute the well upon which so many people depend. A new sewer system was installed, the well capped and fitted with a proper pump, a seat installed and, during the ceremony, a tree was planted. The whole effect was to turn a once stinking, rubbish strewn part of the district into a pleasant square where locals may sit and talk whilst going about their business.

Italian engineers prepare the new drainage system.

DCOM ISAF sat with the Mayor of Kabul and other local dignitaries as prayers were recited. Speeches were made, the tree dug in and trays of sweets passed around to all present. The engineers, resplendent in their feathered hats, snapped to attention for the inspection, and the crowd applauded politely.

This was one small project, typical of the kind of work ISAF undertakes whenever the opportunity presents itself.

New Courthouse in Aqchah

By Capt. Tim Rawlinson

Colonel Russel Beattie was invited to open the new courthouse in Aqchah on the 27th of December. The project was funded by the British Department for International Development whose representative works as part of the PRT. The project took 3 months to build and cost $62,000. During the opening, speeches were given followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Col. Beattie cuts the ceremonial ribbon in Aqchah.

Present at the ceremony was the district governor, the provincial judicial chief and the provincial governor's admin officer. They thanked the PRT for their involvement in the project. Colonel Beattie commented that the PRT had given only bricks and mortar, but by far the most important part of the organisation was the people who would build an efficient and fair judicial system.

COM ISAF's Farewell Address

Time has come for ISAF VI personnel to leave Afghanistan. On one hand, it is good to know that in few days we will be back home and back to our families. On the other, it will be difficult to leave, when I consider the tremendous progress achieved in the country thanks to your outstanding performance, both from a collective and individual perspective.

As a whole, ISAF VI has lived this historical period of the first free and fair Presidential election conducting to the definite establishment of democracy in the country.
You have all worked very hard, at all levels, within the different staffs or in the forces deployed in our areas of operation to allow the Afghan people to take in hand its future and start rebuilding the Nation.

The support we provided was outstanding and the results are there; the new government is established and ready to face the challenges towards the National Assembly elections. Whatever your position is in this operation, you should be proud of the achievement of this mission; it was your commitment, it is your success.

All operations have their own constraints. I acknowledge the burdens on your families and I thank them here for all the support they provided for you to achieve your professional skills in the best conditions. All operations have their costs and I want to recall those who lost their lives or were injured.

We reflect on their contribution, up to the supreme sacrifice for three of them, and I acknowledge that their lives were truly not given in vain.

It is time for all of us to go back home. Afghanistan is on the right track to overcome its problems, to reconstruct the whole country and to allow its people to live in peace and in better conditions. It is a message of great hope for the future and you have been a master piece for it.

Recently, President Karzai thanked us for our efforts in providing security assistance to Afghanistan. I too want to thank you for your dedication and support. I wish you a safe return to your countries, knowing that we all leave a bit of us here, and a happy reunion with your families. It has been a tremendous honour to command you.

From minefield to football field

By Capt. Christian Chramer

Just south of Kabul International Airport, Norwegian soldiers have started a job to turn a field filled with mines and ammunition into something more positive. With the help of American and Italian soldiers, they will turn a deserted part of PD 10 into a place where local children can play.

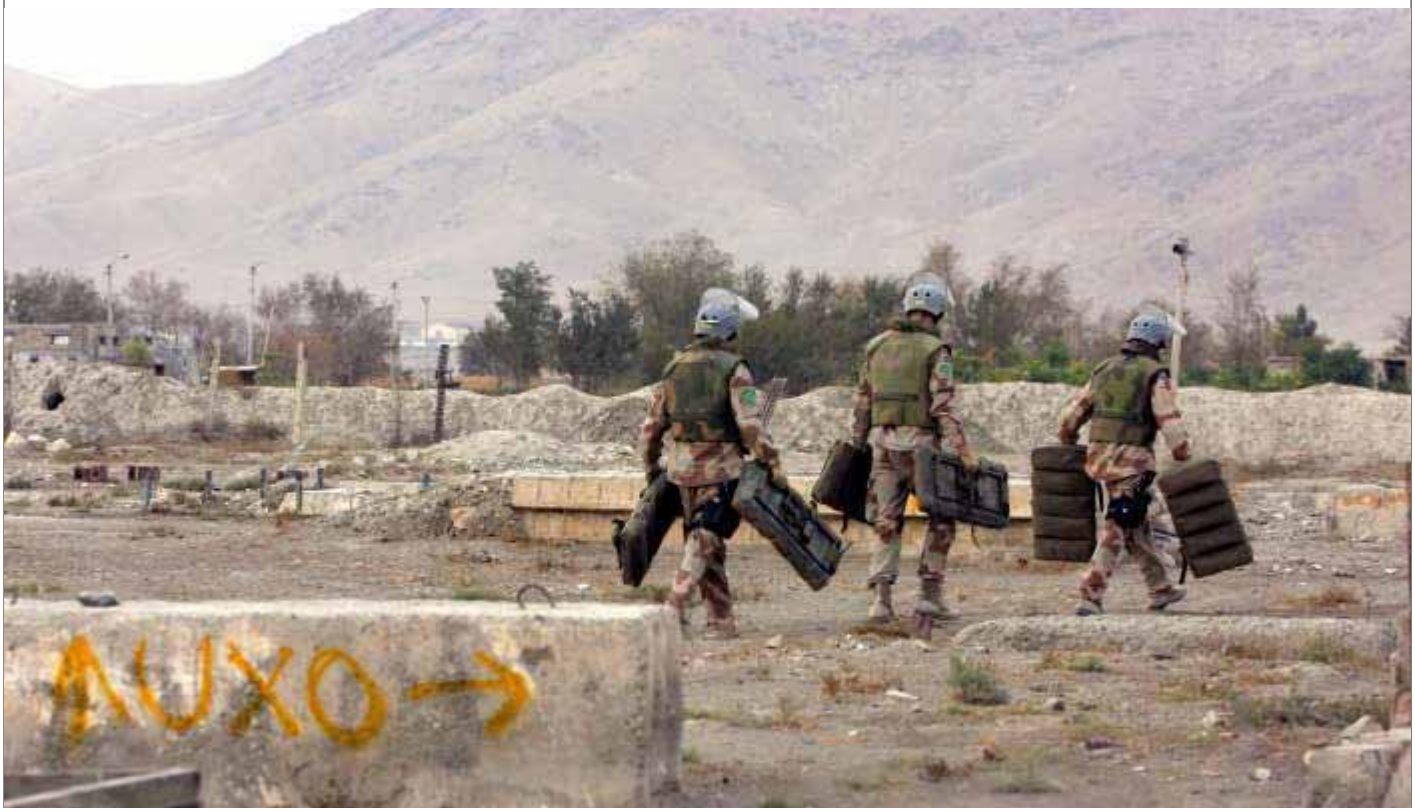
The suburb of Charquala has over the last 20 years been terrorized by numerous battles for control over the airport. Now that the fighting has finally stopped, the debris of war still pose a threat to both locals and the International Security Assistance Force. If the explosives are removed, it will improve the security situation for both the local population and for ISAF.

Crime prevention is another good reason to start this project. Over the last few months, the locals have experienced robberies during the night. Norwegian soldiers that patrol this part of Kabul believe that the robbers enter through the minefields.

Norwegian soldiers talk with the ANA about the site.

The job to remove all mines and unexploded ordnance is still ongoing but the commanding officer of The Norwegian Recce Squadron, Major Trond Haande, is positive that the outcome will be good. "We believe that the robbers will have a hard time getting into the suburb if there is more activity here," said Major Haande.

The project will greatly improve the safety of the area and will provide a good place for the community to gather and play a friendly game of football.



Vets care for over 4500 animals

By Lt. Jean Bolling

Veterinarian Charles-Arnaud de Broucker arrived in Kabul on September 15, 2004 in order to perform the classic missions of a military vet: food hygiene, evaluation of the healthiness of water, prevention of animal illness, and monitoring the MP dogs. He, and the other vets of the Spanish and German contingents, were in for much larger job than previously thought.

What has stuck out in his mind while serving in Afghanistan are his visits to the different nomadic regions. Very few people who live in these regions have access to veterinarians. Outside of the major cities, veterinarian care is either limited or non-existant. While traveling around the region, he is able to perform limited tasks to the animals of farmers in these areas.

In coordination with French CIMIC. Captain de Broucker helps livestock, such as camels, cows, and other assorted animals. To date he has treated over 4500 animals in the different zones of the French area of responsibility.

Motorbikes for Mazar-e-Sharif

By Capt. Tim Rawlinson

Bill O'Donnell, the US Department of Agriculture's respresentative within the Mazar-e-Sharif (MeS) PRT, handed over 16 motor bikes to the MeS Department of Agriculture. The total cost of this donation is about 8000 USD. The motor bikes will be used by the heads of extension departments in the districts where they will travel to the villages, encouraging farmers to avoid growing poppies and giving them advice with alternative plans. Sayed Aziz Ullah Hashimi, head of the Department of Agriculture in Balkh, thanked the PRT for the donation saying that this was an urgent need for them. He added that these bikes will enable the staff to travel to remote villages and do their job better. "This is exactly the time we needed transportation facilities since the government is taking more serious steps to fight poppies cultivation," he said during a speech.

Bill O'Donnell hands over the motorbikes to the MeS Department of Agriculture.

ISAF teaches local Afghans Firefighting

By Flt. Lt. Howard Leader

For the last twelve months members of ISAF have been teaching 19 Afghan fire fighting students on the first such course to be run in the country. These young men are being trained to recognised international standards, with a view to ultimately taking responsibility for the civilian fire cover at Kabul International Airport.

Their course began a year ago with several months of text based academic learning, combined with English classes, which each student takes every evening. During this period the fire school was busy collecting the books and equipment the students would need to progress to each new phase. Having passed the first three stages, the students have graduated to the practical part of the course, and in the last four months have been learning to use foam to suppress fires and cool the fuselage of a burning aircraft. These are the first fire fighters in Afghanistan's history to use foam as a fire fighting aid, and their demonstration for the media in December

Photo by CPL GUERRINI

Photo by CPL GUERRINI

Techniques

showed that they have understood its application well.

The other practical skill they have been learning is search and rescue. In an old building by the runway instructors have built a typical search and rescue training house. It represents an industrial building, complete with dip traps, maintenance pits, rickety floors and industrial machinery. At the media demonstration, four students, with blanked out masks, went through the drills for searching burning buildings and evacuating casualties. This demonstration was especially impressive as, at present, all 19 students are sharing just four serviceable breathing apparatus sets. Afterwards the lead student, named Mohammed, said: "This is a great career for a man and we are all excited to be part of this first course. I am looking forward to serving my people and have enjoyed working with the ISAF instructors."

It is hoped that the course will graduate in May 05.

Photo by CPL GUERRINI

ISAF talks with his Excellency

On January 8th, Flt Lt. Howard Leader had the opportunity to speak with President Karzai on behalf of ISAF at the Presidential palace. This is a transcript of a portion of the interview:

Your Excellency, you made history recently when you became the first elected president of Afghanistan, and you've recently formed your new cabinet. What would you say are the major challenges facing your country in the months ahead?

In the months ahead we have to complete another of the pillars for democracy in Afghanistan for bringing in institutional structures for Afghanistan; that's the parliamentary elections. We are in a hurry to do this on time, hopefully in April or May, and the preparations are going on for this. With the elections for parliament and the provincial elections and the district elections, Afghanistan will complete its state structures coming through people's representation, and that will be another major achievement towards stability, peace, institutionalization, and to the fact that the Afghan people will be governing their country themselves through democratic means.

One of the problems I know you have been eager to address early on in your Presidency is the narcotics issue and that involves the international community as well. Just give me an idea of the scale of that problem and the measures you are taking to address that?

In the challenges that we will have as a government, as a nation, as a state, alongside the rebuilding of Afghanistan, the completion of the institutions of Afghanistan, the rebuilding of the Afghan bureaucracy, the judicial system and all that, we have two other challenges that we must overcome that is a national task for us. One is the continuation of the fight against terrorism to remove it completely from Afghanistan and from the rest of the world. The other task is the fight against drugs, narcotics, which is a menace, which is hurting Afghanistan's image, which is bringing us a bad name in the rest of the world, and this is among the most important of our tasks. All of the things are slowly slowly falling in place. This is something we have to focus this year our attention on and in a massive way that will bring us results that will remove the stains that it has on the Afghan society and bring us to a legitimate economic activity.

How can the International Community help and support you in your efforts to address these challenges?

Some of the challenges that we are having ahead of us can be addressed by ourselves; we are able to handle it. Some of the challenges have to be dealt together with the international community as we have done in the past three years with the help of the international community, with the help of ISAF, with the help of the coalition, with the help of donor states, that Afghanistan has achieved what we have achieved so far. So the gratitude really has two elements in Afghanistan for the success that we have had the element of the International Community and the element of the Afghan nation. The two joined their hands and got us what we have today. With regards to the narcotics fight, we will need the International Community's assistance massively. With regard to the building of the state institutions, we will need the continuation of International assistance. With regard to the fight against terrorism, we will need the continuation of

President Hamid Karzai

the international assistance and what we already have in Afghanistan in the form of ISAF protecting Afghans, providing security and safety to the citizens everyday in the streets and bazaars and marketplaces and homes of people in Kabul, people in other parts of the country, and the coalition is something that Afghans value very much. It is because of this that we are able to have elections, to have a better economy, to send our children to school, to go to work, to rebuild, so its massively important assistance and we would like this to continue for a while.

Where would you anticipate that ISAF should be focusing its efforts and attentions in the 12 months ahead?

ISAF has one very important role that it is already fulfilling very very well; it is the provision of security to the citizens of this country, mainly in Kabul, and also in other parts of the country. In Konduz, in the form of NATO and ISAF, and also in the form of PRTs by the coalition and others, all over the country. Another major task, which it fulfilled once very well, was the protection of the elections. ISAF will also be needed very much to provide security for the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan, so that's one more important task that's ahead of ISAF and we are sure it will do it very well.

When you look ahead to your continued Presidency and the years to come, what would you like to see as the result of your Presidency? Where do you want to be in 5 years time for example?

Well, I have told the Afghan people in my manifestations as a candidate for the Presidency of Afghanistan, that I would like Afghanistan, 5 years from now, to have an income per capita of $500 to $700. Now today our income per capita is $200. This is a massive task. This is a fulsome project. This means a better economy. This means better roads. This means better electricity. This means private investment. This means better education. This means the overall improvement of the standard of living of the Afghan people. So putting it in short form, an abbreviation, I want this country to have a better income per capita, to have a better living in 5 years from what we have today. It's a massive task. We have to work every second to reach there.

Photo by CPL EISELE

ISAF is sharing the challenges that you face. Do you have a message for ISAF personnel who are either working in your country already or will be deployed from 37 different countries around the world who come here?

Well, a message of gratitude. A message of tremendous thankfulness. It is because of their effort, because of the blood that some soldiers of ISAF, from all the countries almost, that have worked with us, that they shed, the blood that they shed, that this country is more stable and that this country now has institutions, and a government, and democracy, and people vote, so we are very very grateful . It has not come without a cost to ISAF; it has come at tremendous cost, the cost of lives. That is something that we will remember forever in this country, and we will be grateful for that in this country. They have done a very good job for us. They have made us once again the owners of Afghanistan and we know how important that is and we are very grateful.

New Police Station for Konduz

By Ltc Joerg Bokelmann

In mid-December, two finalized projects were transferred by the German ISAF PRT in Kunduz to the local police authorities in the province of Konduz. More than 700,000 euro had been invested into building renovations and office equipment of the two police stations in the cities of Kunduz and Aliabad.

On 13 December, three new police buildings in Konduz were handed over. In attendance were the representatives of the German PRT, and Dr. Rudolf Schmidt, the coordinatior of the German contribution to the Security Sector Reform (SSR). The new police headquarters and its office furniture cost 450,000 euro. General Omar Khil, representative of the Konduz police province, said, "This new building is to serve also the citizens of this province. It is to contribute in a better way to the fact that the police can fulfil its tasks to the well-being of the citizens, for the protection of their rights."

Colonel Barz helps open the new police station in Konduz.

On 14th December, the new police station at Aliabad was reopened in the presence of Kunduz PRT Commander Colonel Reinhard Barz, and POR Kuhlmann, representative of the German ministry of the Interior. Hundreds of spectators applauded when governor Hashimi from the Khanabad District, General Omar Khil from Police Headquarters Konduz, Colonel Barz and POR Kuhlmann cut the red strap during the ceremony. The 60,000 Euro buildings were handed over to the respresentatives of the Afghan National Police (ANP) who were in attendance. All the speeches talked of the great work and cooperation that is occuring between the ANP, PRT Konduz, and ISAF Forces. After the ceremony, the Afghan officials invited all guests to have a typical Afghan lunch followed by a soccer game that was organized for the event.

Creating and renovating new buildings is only one aspect of the long-range plans that everyone has for the police forces in Afghanistan. With the training and support of the Afghan police, the German PRT in the northeast of Afghanistan, along with other ISAF forces, is making a large contribution to the improvement of the living conditions for the people of Afghanistan. These contributions are helping to improve safety and stability in the country and will eventually lead to a secure and self-sustaining country for the Afghan people.

New Vehicles for Faryab Province

By Cdr. Andy Bolt

On a bright, sunny January day, District Governors and Chiefs of Police from across Faryab gathered in Maimana to receive 30 new vehicles from the Government of Afghanistan. In an official ceremony, Provincial Governor Latif thanked the Ministry of Interior for the new vehicles and encouraged the officials and people of Faryab to do their best to work towards a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. The keys to the vehicles were then handed over to each of the recipients and the vehicles were then driven out of the police compound to begin their life, extending the legitimate authority of the Government of Afghanistan across the Province.

The new vehicles are an important step forward in extending law and order throughout the Province, allowing the police to carry out patrols across Faryab and in particular visiting the more remote villages which, until now, have been beyond the range of the police. The vehicles will also allow the police to respond much more quickly to events, increasing the speed with which criminals will be brought to justice. Similarly, local government authorities are now much more able to bring good governance to the people of Faryab.

Needed clothes given to orphans

By Capt. Mike Nicholson

On 30 December, members of ISAF distributed approximately 1 ton of clothing and toys to a large group of children at the Alloudin Orphanage in Kabul. The toys and clothes were donated by some of the families from Eurocorps as well as other public institutions in the city of Saarbruecken.

The items were transported from Strasbourg to JFC HQ Brunssum in The Netherlands. They were then flown in two different planes to Kabul International Airport near the end of December. The event was organized by Ltn Dr. Fontaine from ISAF HSG and was covered by local media.

The clothes and toys were accepted excitedly by a group of children at the orphanage, some of whom were wearing only sandels for shoes in the middle of winter. These shoes, hats, gloves, and even toys helped greatly improve the lives for some of the future adults of Afghanistan.

OR8 Stefan Wagner fits a child with new boots (above). A new driver in-training (below).

What is the Hajj?

By Capt Mike Nicholson and
Mr. Anwari Hanif, ISAF Cultural Advisor

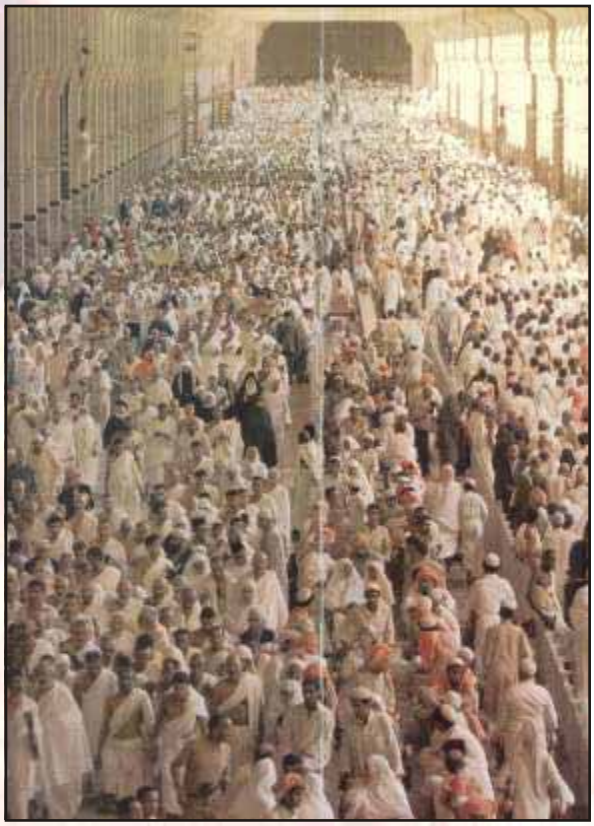
The Hajj is a journey, or a pilgrimage, which Muslims make to the city of Mecca located in Saudi Arabia. The Hajj, which literally means 'to set out for a place', is one of the five pillars of Islam. The pilgrimage is obligatory for men and women as long as they are physically fit enough to make the journey, and are financially able to afford the journey costs. Hajj is performed once a year and is completed with the Eid celebration.

Individuals all over the world begin their journey to towards the end of December or the beginning of January depending on where they live. The holy Muslim days are based on a lunar calendar and may occur on different calendar days every year. This year, the 19th of January was Arafat, or the final day of prayer.

Hajj begins at the coastal port of Jeddah. Mecca is one of the holiest cities in the Islam religion and might be compared with the Vatican in Catholicism. The journey continues to the city of Mecca, or 'Makah', which was the actual place where the prophet Muhammad first began receiving revelation from Allah on Jabal An-Noor, or the 'Mountain of Light'. Once they reach Mecca, the men change into white, unsewn sheets and the women change into ankle-length garments with head coverings and perform a series of rituals and prayers.

Large groups of people gather at Mecca, both during the day and during the night.

The Hajj is one of the best forms of worship in the Muslim religion and about two and a half million people make the journey to Mecca every year. While every Muslim is not able to perform the Hajj every year, it should be performed at least once during a person's life.



Over 25,000 people from Kabul and the surrounding areas were able to fly out of KAIA in order to perform Hajj. Those soldiers who were in ISAF during Christmas and the holiday period were able to see how the many nations of ISAF celebrate their holiday seasons differently. Since ISAF was also able to show the Afghans how we celebrate the holiday season, it is important for everyone to have a better understanding of this important time in the year for Muslims and the Afghan people.

Improvements for ISAF Commo

By Lt. Col. Goetz Haffke

"MOVECON this is 527, we are leaving KAIA moving to the HQ, over." This type of communication is happening hundreds of times a day in the Kabul area. But what is behind this communication system and who makes it happen?

The ISAF Command Network (ICN) communications give total communication coverage for the area of operations through the use of three base-stations: KAIA, KMNB and Radar Hill. The installation, programming, configuration and maintenance of the entire system is the responsibility of a 4-man team of British soldiers: Sgt Stephen Boyd, and Lance Corporals Lance Mann, Steven Mabbett and John Young. There are several ongoing upgrade projects to Radar Hill. First is the Bandwidth Management Equipment (BME) that is being integrated into the current system which will allow other security forces the ability to integrate their equipment with the ISAF equipment. The second improvement project is the construction of a more improved guard camp at the foot of the Hill. The third project which was recently completed is the contracting of security forces to guard the route and vehicles that go up to Radar Hill.

Members of the ICN drive up to Radar Hill in order to perform their regular checks

So keep in mind who and what is behind the communication process the next time you say, "MOVECON, this is 527, we have arrived at your location, over."

The new 20-ton crane is moved to the city of Taloqan

Crane moved to Taloqan

By Lt. Col. Joerg Bokelmann

The German PRT site in Konduz recently transferred a 20-ton crane to the city of Taloqan in the northern Afghan province of Takhar. The crane will be used for construction work and a variety of other tasks.

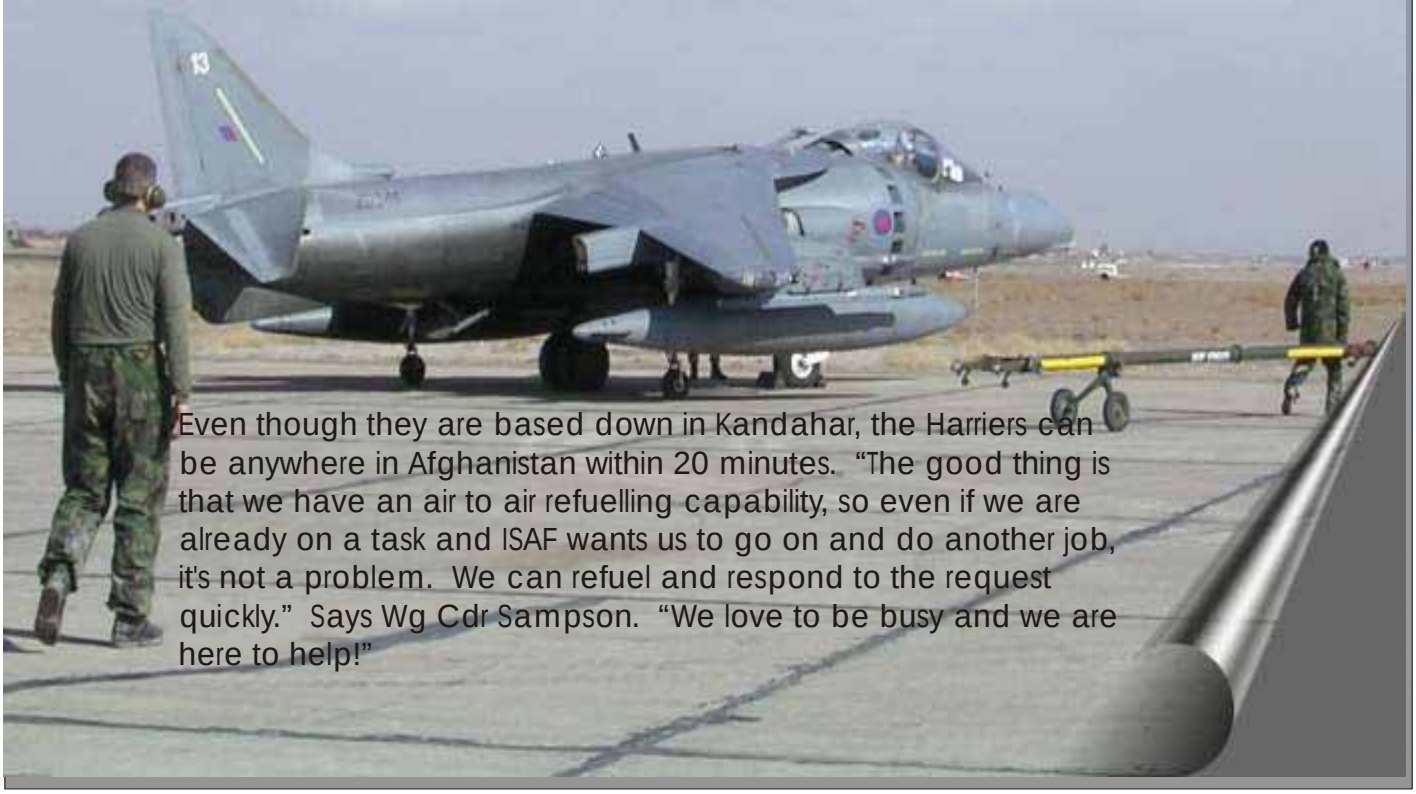
The crane was emplaced recently by soldiers from the PRT, with the additional help of Afghan specialists. "That will become a strong piece of work," said Sergeant B, one of the soldiers helping prepare the crane. Further work is needed in order for it to be fully operational, but the major task of movement and emplacement has been completed, and the crane is well on its way to becoming a useful tool for the surrounding area.

AIR POWER AT YOUR SERVICE

By Flt. Lt. Howard Leader

The unique capabilities of the UK's Royal Air Force Harrier GR7s are available to ISAF on demand. Wing Commander Martin Sampson, Officer Commanding 1(F) Squadron, explained to ISAF Mirror that he has six of the versatile Harriers based at Kandahar, two of which work closely with Operation Enduring Freedom, two are available to ISAF and two stay at a high state of readiness to fly in support of either organisation as required.

"Our onboard equipment, combined with this unique aircraft, gives us tremendous flexibility to carryout a range of tasks." said Wg Cdr Sampson. "For security operations we are providing close air support at pretty short notice. ISAF has found our reconnaissance capability very useful. A good example was our ability to patrol the polling stations during the Presidential elections, giving people a feeling of safety and security while they went to vote."



Even though they are based down in Kandahar, the Harriers can be anywhere in Afghanistan within 20 minutes. "The good thing is that we have an air to air refuelling capability, so even if we are already on a task and ISAF wants us to go on and do another job, it's not a problem. We can refuel and respond to the request quickly." Says Wg Cdr Sampson. "We love to be busy and we are here to help!"

A10 Warthogs are no Hogwash

By Flt. Lt. Howard Leader

Bringing stability and security to Afghanistan requires an elaborate web of personal expertise and equipment working in concert. One of the more unusual assets playing a vital role in this mix is the U.S. Air Force A10 Warthog. This unlikely looking aircraft has proved itself time and again in different theaters of operation across the globe. Its Combat Air Support capability is legendary and, whilst that has been part of its role in Afghanistan, here it is performing another useful function. The Warthog's advanced sensory and target marking equipment enables it to be an all seeing eye for security forces in pursuit of suspects. Many has been the time when security forces have surrounded a position and the Warthog has marked and tracked suspects trying to slip away under the cover of darkness. The laser technology employed on the aircraft can lead ground forces straight to the fugitive and an arrest is sure to follow. When there's a Warthog on your back, there's no place to hide.

There are two Warthog units based at Bagram and, early in January Major General Wolf-Dieter Loser visited one of them. The 'Cajuns', more formally known as 706th Fighter Squadron, entertained Gen Loser to a comprehensive briefing, followed by a tour round a Warthog with pilot Lt. Col. Mike Bumpus. Lt. Col. Bumpus is actually in the reserve. His civilian job is flying jets for United Airlines, but he has thoroughly enjoyed being in Afghanistan. "The terrain and weather conditions here make the job challenging," he said, "but it's been great to work with so many experienced people on an operation of this kind." At the end of the visit, Gen Loeser presented Lt. Col. Bumpus with a commemorative coin, and with just two weeks to serve in country, Mike Bumpus has a fitting ISAF souvenir to take home.

Lt. Col. Mike Bumpus shows Maj Gen Loeser the inside of the Warthog

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

Would you like to have something printed in the next edition?

Submissions can be e-mailed to **pressoffice@isaf-hq.nato.int.** Articles should be in Microsoft Word format and, whenever possible, no longer than 600 words. Photographs should be at least 7 X 4.5 centimeters and 300 dpi. The ISAF Mirror is published monthly and aims to be available by the first Friday of the month.
For more information please call the Editor on HQ ISAF (079 51) ext. 1230. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions.

Chief Editor:
Lt. Col. Patrick Poulain
Chief PIO

Editor :
Cpt.Mike Nicholson
BCH Borderes Cédric

Front page : photo by CPL EISELE

The deadline for the next edition is Tuesday, February 15th, 2005

What did you enjoy most about your ISAF rotation?

Lunch Time! Language is a problem, but the food is good.

OR4 Caiazzo Massimiliano, IT, in ISAF for 4 months

Meeting a lot of people.

OR1 Rosa Beard, SP, in ISAF for 5 months

Being able to be somewhere that few people have seen.

OR5 Paul Henriksen, NO, in ISAF for 2 months

Seeing the country - I've been lucky to get around a lot. I've seen the country in 2 seasons.

OF4 Dave Martin, CA, in ISAF for 5 months

Meeting people and to understand what is happening here.

OR3 Frederic Naroyanin, FR, in ISAF for 5 months

Meeting people from all the different nations.

Mr. Derek Fernandez, IN, in ISAF for 3 months

The mentality of the people here and the experience of the job I did here

OR4 Stefanie Long, GE, in ISAF for 3 months

Working to help the people of Afghanistan.

OR9 Dannie Hennart, BE, in ISAF for 6 months

Driving is a lot different from the UK. There seems to be no road rules.

OR1 Nick Metcalt, UK, in ISAF for 3 weeks

Appreciating how lucky we are when I compare my home with some of the people here.

OR4 William Hierholzer, US, in ISAF for 3 months