

ISAF MIRROR

Special Change of Command Issue



VIPs at Change of Command



Flags at Half Masts for the death of Spanish Soldiers



F - 16 at KAIA

**Parliamentary Elections:
Beginning of a new Hope
Dawn of Democracy and
Respect to Afghans**

August 2005

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

Submissions can be e-mailed to: pressoffice@isaf-hq.nato.int. Articles should be in MS Word format, photographs should be at least 7 x 4.5 cm and 300dpi resolution. 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 Ext 1230. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions.

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The deadline for the next edition is:
Saturday 10 September 2005
Have you got a camera ?
Send your pictures to the Editor and they could be on the cover !

Diamonds are the girls best friend. Even boys love the diamond: you may know that a baseball or softball field is called diamond and our Dutch friends invite everybody to join 'em to create a baseball tournament. So feel free to contact Arie Van Ingen in Mazar-e-Sharif.

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Some people just look out of place!



Terrorists and spies use surveillance to collect information.

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

This issue marks a new moment in Afghanistan life, the first parliamentary elections after many years.

These elections will be held under Italian command of the ISAF mission, therefore we print Gen. Mauro Del Vecchio speech, as addressed to H.E. The President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan the 4th of August, 2005:

Ministers, Your Excellencies, Generals, distinguished Guests, Officers, Non Commissioned Officers, Soldiers and civilian members of ISAF VIII, it is a privilege as well as an honour for me today to take over the command of ISAF at a very crucial and challenging time.

The presence of President Karzai today, demonstrates the importance that the Afghan Government places in NATO's long term commitment to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its people

The presence here of so many civilian and military authorities proves the importance the International Community attach to this event that marks NATO's long-term deep commitment to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its people. The Afghan people which have suffered for long time but now, well led by the Afghan Government and together with the Afghan Security Forces, are working hard for a better future of this great country.

On this occasion, I want to recall those soldiers who gave their lives while carrying out this noble mission. Their sacrifice will always be remembered, and the progress we see today and in the future in Afghanistan is their memorial.

We are here to help establish the conditions in which Afghanistan enjoys a representative government and self-sustaining peace and security. In this regard, I would like to thank General BACK for his words and to assure him that under his guidance we will be totally dedicated to achieving our aim.

A lot has already been achieved and ISAF VII has played a pivotal role. In the same way, ISAF VIII will be involved in the support to the very important parliamentary elections in September. We will assist in providing security and in this regard NATO is going to provide additional forces to enhance its presence on the ground. A further key priority is the third phase of expansion. While spreading our influence and security capabilities we will face more and more challenges. In this context, the cooperation and synergy with the Coalition so skilfully led by Gen. EIKENBERRY is also of great importance.

Let me conclude by saying that the tour of duty we are about to start is very demanding. To Gen. ERDAGI and ISAF VII personnel, my heartfelt thanks for their outstanding job and I wish them all a safe journey back to their respective countries. Ethem, thank you again for your support and friendship.

To ISAF VIII men and women, I am confident that your enthusiasm and professional knowledge combined with the respect of the culture and traditions of the Afghan people will allow us to succeed. It will bring you pride, satisfaction and honour to have been part of a process that greatly contributes to the future of this great nation and its people. Thank you.

Mauro DEL VECCHIO

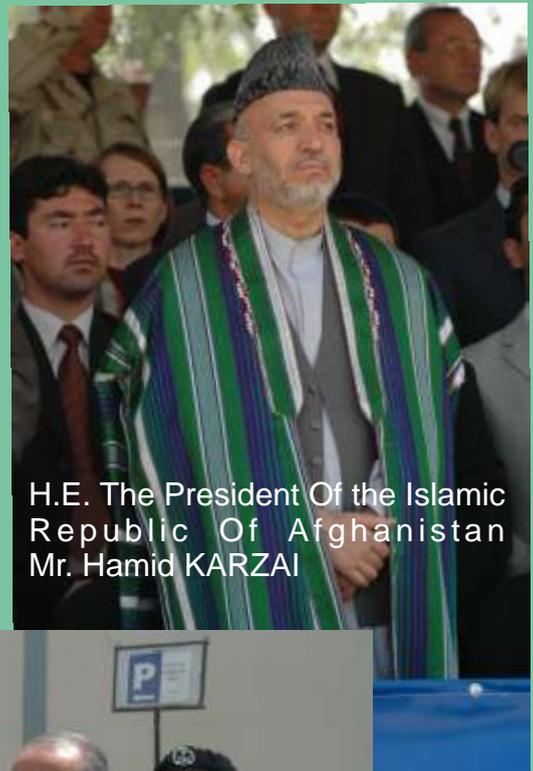
ISAF VIII

Kabul, Afghanistan.

On August 4, 2005, under the bright Kabul sun the ISAF HQ change over of Command Ceremony took place. The Turkish Commander of ISAF VII, Gen. Ethem Erdagi handed over command of the next mission to Italian Gen. Mauro Del Vecchio. In the presence of General Back, the Joint Force Commander of NATO in Brunssum, and of NATO Senior Civilian Representative, Minister Hikmet Cetin, the former commander transferred control to the new leader of the multinational assistance force. H.E. the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mr. Hamid Karzai honored the ceremony with his presence, and addressed the audience a very heartfelt speech, in which he expressed his thankful thoughts to the ISAF VII commander for his great commitment in helping the Afghanistan rebuild. He offered the new commander and new Italian troops, deployed until next spring his sincere wishes. Hon. Gianfranco Fini, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, strongly desired to attend the ceremony, and showed the deep commitment of the Italian Government toward this assignment that marks a very important strong point of Italian foreign policy. The ceremony was attended

by representations of all the armies involved in the mission, whose flags were shown in the parade. H.E. President Hamid Karzai wanted to greet each one of the military representatives, and the handshaking posed a happy responsibility task for his bodyguards that were surprised by the spontaneous and very appreciative attitude of the President. Everyone on the grass field felt with sincere emotion how deeply the President esteemed the deep commitment toward the Afghan people and the Country.

Maj. Luca Di Grazia



H.E. The President Of the Islamic Republic Of Afghanistan
Mr. Hamid KARZAI



Hon. Gianfranco Fini
Italian Foreign Affairs
Minister



Gen. Del Vecchio and Mr. Cetin



ANA Honour Guard



Flags of ISAF nations



Honour Guard Officers



Gen. Gerhard Back
JFC Commander



Gen. Erdagi ISAF
VII Commander



ANA Band playing national anthem

Canadian's Camp Julien Teardown

15 Jul 05

Kabul, Afghanistan

Members of the Task Force Kabul (TFK) Field Engineer Squadron (Fd Eng Sqn) take down one of the giant weather haven tents at Camp Julien, home of Canadians deployed on *Operation ATHENA*.

As the Canadian Forces (CF) expands its security and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, the focus will shift from Kabul to Kandahar. As a result, Camp Julien will be torn down later this fall. In preparation for the final tear down of the camp, Rotation III began taking down non-essential tentage and equipment.

The mission of *Op ATHENA*, Canada's contribution to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), is to help maintain security in Kabul and its surrounding areas so the Government of Afghanistan and UN agencies can rebuild the country. There are approximately 1000 troops deployed on *Op ATHENA*. About 800 are located at Camp Julien in Kabul and the rest are deployed elsewhere in southwest Asia in support of the mission. ISAF currently comprises approximately 8,000 troops from 36 nations.

Photo by the TFK Fd Eng Sqn. and
Cpl. Dan Shouinard TFK



A member of the Task Force Kabul Field Engineer Squadron cleans up some of the leftover kit.



Members of the Task Force Kabul Field Engineer Squadron pack up tents.



Members of the Task Force Kabul Field Engineer Squadron take down one of the giant weather haven tents at Camp Julien.

The First Mission on De-Mining Made by The Latvian Army

Since February this year, the Latvian Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team has been active as a part of the multinational Norwegian Battle Group. Not only as a Battalion resource, but as expertise in EOD matters for the whole KMNB. The six-man crew has previously seen action on the Balkans and in Iraq, but has still gained experience during their rotation in Kabul.

By the end of June the first Latvian team finished their rotation, leaving the job for a new EOD handling team. After four months of service, they are ready for new experiences in Latvia or abroad.

During our four months here we have collected and demolished more than 5 000 types of Unexploded ordinance (UXO), with a total weight of 13 tons, says Normunds Stagitis, commander of the EOD group:

"The experience we've gained here in Afghanistan has taught us to work under difficult conditions. One thing is weather and access to areas containing UXOs, but the most difficult factor is the political aspect. There are different rules, and often there are problems connected to the fact that these UXOs still belong to someone intending to use them. There are lots of sensible matters here".

At the handover ceremony for the two

Latvian teams, the commander of Norwegian Battle Group, Lt Col Jon Morten Mangersnes showed his appreciation for the job done, saying: "You have carried out numerous EOD tasks under sometimes very demanding circumstances.

More than twenty years of fighting in and around Kabul has left remnants of war virtually everywhere.

The whole Battle Group will remember you for that and the people of Kabul are very thankful even if they don't know who you are!"



The Latvian EOD group have shown tremendous support towards the Norwegian Battle Group and other units of the ISAF troops.



Taking care of the explosive

The Norwegian Battle Group consists of a Hungarian, a Norwegian and a Turkish company in addition to the Latvian EOD team. Commenting the cooperation between the different nations, Stagitis seems very pleased.

"The cooperation has been great. We would very much like to work with Norwegians again." He says.

As a new group of Latvian EOD experts take over, Stagitis and his soldiers are rejoining their Engineer unit in the garrison at Ogre, Latvia, enjoying some vacation and awaiting their next mission.

"We will spend some time at home, but there are possibilities of going to Afghanistan for another round. Personally, I hope to be able to do a job on the African continent, he says."



Bringing EOD from the mountain

By the Editors



Commander of the Latvian EOD group, Normunds Stagitis, shows his appreciation to Norwegian Battle Group Commander Jon Morten Mangernesnes by giving him souvenirs from Latvia.

Operation Alma and Balaclava or how to restore security and contact



L.Cpl. Basanta, Royal Gurkhas Regiment



What was not planned.....!

As a part of its new operational role, the Quick Reaction Force Company conducted a long-range patrol within Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunduz and PRT Feyzabad Area of Operations, between 12 - 26 June 05. The QRF consists of forces from UK 2.RGR (Royal Gurkha Rifles) and one platoon from the Swedish Ranger Battalion.

The operation was divided into two phases, Operation Balaclava and Op Alma with all soldiers remaining in the field throughout. The majority of the QRF Coy deployed with its own vehicles. UK Army Land rovers and Swedish Army Land cruisers transported the force for more than 1400 km during the operation. The roads were mainly of a low standard (even by Afghan measures).



Visiting villagers and spreading knowledge



Making their way through snow

Op Balaclava was conducted in the North of TAKHAR Province. The company established a Forward Operating Base (FOB) inside an old "Mujaheddin" fort. The fort was very suitable as a FOB and provided both protection and cover from view. The daily work consisted of meetings with District Governors, Local Politicians and ANP representatives. Foot patrols were also used for socialising with local people. The Afghan people were as usual very friendly, they often expressed their positive feelings towards ISAF, and invited us for dinner on more than one occasion.

After six days patrolling the company moved by road to PRT FeY. The OP Alma mission was similar to the previous phase but the ground was more interesting and challenging. The company was tasked to gather information in three districts in BADAKSHAN where ISAF forces had never been before. Heading north from Feyzabad the roads took us up into the mountains. The track had only been open for about three weeks due to bad weather and strong rivers and went as high up as 3000 meters above sea level. The road had to be cleared from snow that still

Due to flood damage and lack of bridges vehicle movement North of Ragh in Yawan District was impossible. The only way to reach the most remote district capital in Rajistan was by horse patrol. Eight brave men from both 2.RGR and Swedish Rangers travelled for ten hours to fulfil their task. The remainder of the company conducted foot patrols and meetings in the more accessible districts. Because of the wide spread use of transistor radios, even people living in the most remote villages had heard about the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

On completion of OP Alma the company returned to PRT FeY and prepared for the move back to MeS. Due to snow melt and heavy rain in the mountains most of the rivers had become treacherous to cross. The vehicles had to force their way through strong currents on many occasions during the route back.

By the end of the 14 days of patrolling it was clear that the political climate and security situation were stable in the six districts we had visited. All of the districts had made ample provision for the National Elections in September and were expecting a high turnout of voters.

The operation had achieved its aim of establishing contact with the local population and extending the reach of ISAF in some of the more remote areas of the Northern Region.

By the Editors





ELECTION SUPPORT FORCES

1st Netherlands Election Support Battalion

In view of the upcoming Parliamentary and Provincial council elections of September 18th requested additional forces on top of the already available ISAF forces. These Election Support Forces (ESF) are in the Theatre Of Operation (TOO) just shortly before, during and after the elections.

The 2nd Marine Battalion of The Royal Netherlands Marine Corps was already appointed as a NATO Strategic Reserve Force for the period from April 1st 2005 until April 1st 2006 and, therefore, one of the battalions available for the requested task.

After some recognitions (Recce) and the Operational Rehearsal Level 1 earlier this year, a great part of the Northern Region was assigned to the battalion and Mazar-e-Sharif would be the location for their Main Operating Base (MOB).

The battalion is now fully deployed and during the first two weeks of August conducted a Field Integration Training (FIT), which is mostly the of same kind the battalion already performed "at home" but this time in the harsh climate and rough terrain of Afghanistan and, naturally, in presence of the Afghan authorities and people as well as the ISAF units and security organisations.

This FIT was finished on August 18th and from that day on the battalion is fully operational and ready for the task it is needed for .

The Battalion Commander, LtC R. Oppelaar RNLMC, puts great efforts in showing the flag in the whole northern part of Afghanistan . His battalion will be spread out over the whole region in order to show its presence as much as possible. Units from the battalion will be stationed in in Meymana, Pol-e-Khomri and Feyzabad, apart frm the units already stationed in Mazar-e-Sharif. This kind of decentralised deployment will make the battalion seen almost everywhere across the region on a daily basis assures the best situational awareness and it helps to address quickly to problems that may happen.

Focus of battalion's operations will be just before and during the elections themselves, as well as the moment the outcome will be announced.

Assisting the Afghan security organisations like Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) and working close together with all other ISAF/Coalition forces in the area, focusing to establish and maintain a secure environment for the inhabitants in general and voters in particular, is high in the list of priorities of Oppelaar's battalion. Therefore he and his men and women will do their utmost to assist in making these elections a safe, free and fair on in order to help the afghan people one step closer to a democratic and peaceful society.



By Arie Van Ingen , Marn 1, Ned.
Edited by Maj. Luca Di Grazia.

1st Netherlands Election Support Battalion



AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE DAY



On Friday 19 August 2005 it was been the eighty sixth anniversary of Afghan independence from foreign rule. The Olympic Stadium in Kabul held the parade to commemorate the 1919 signing of treaty with Great Britain that marked the end to the three British wars and started a period of reforms and stability under the rule of enlightened King Amanullah. Gifted, and rich, well educated in foreign schools and universities, he was a strong supporter of Kemal Ataturk and Young Turks modern political ideas. His good will was of creating a modern Afghanistan, with a Constitution that allowed all the citizens, women and men, indifferent of their ethnicity or religious belief, to receive the most from a stable and prosperous Country. Under the grandstand, in front of H.M. The Father of the Nation, Zahir Shah, and H.E. The President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mr. Hamid Karzai, Religious and Military authorities, Diplomatic, ISAF and CFC-A representatives, thousands of Afghanistan finest passed astern: Pioneers, Athletes, Policemen, Soldiers, Veterans, Students, Ethnic Representatives, Folklore Groups, Musicians, Riders, all wearing either traditional and colourful costumes or regular uniforms and all willing to show happiness for a moment of reunion and peace under the flag of the recovering Country. But our pictures explain with clarity the beauty of the day, enjoy!
Maj. Luca Di Grazia



AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE DAY



ITALIANS ASSUME THE LEAD OF THE KABUL MULTINATIONAL BRIGADE

Kabul, Camp Warehouse 20 July 2005

The Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB) hosted a Change of Command at Camp Warehouse as Italian Brigadier General Claudio GRAZIANO relieved Turkish Brigadier General Umit DUNDAR as Commander of the Multinational formation that operates in Kabul to support the Government of Afghanistan in order to reinforce its democratic institutions. Italy, as lead nation, will contribute with 1300 soldiers out of a total 4000 troops from 23 Countries operating in Kabul and its surroundings in providing a safe and secure environment. The most important political, military and religious authorities in Kabul attended the ceremony underlining the support of the International and Afghan community to the work done by the soldiers in stabilizing the security situation in the country.

Top NATO officials as NATO Senior Civilian Representative Minister Hikmet Cetin and Lt. Gen. Ethem ERDAGI, ISAF VII Commander, attended the event.

The Kabul Multinational Brigade is a multinational unit that operates in Kabul since ISAF Mission has been established in the Country during 2002. It is based on three Battle Groups, one led by France, one from Germany and one from Norway. In addition there are three Company Level Units, from UK, Italy and Canada, a Multinational Engineer, a Nuclear Bacteriological Chemical (NBC) and, last but not least, a Multinational Military Police Unit. In the ceremony opening remarks, Brig. Gen. DUNDAR described the activities done during his mandate and the results achieved. Gen. DUNDAR also gave Gen. GRZIANO his full vote of confidence, noting he is an experienced officer on international issues at a very high level and that he has covered command appointments in many foreign operations.

*Col. Massimo GIRAUDO
KMNB Public Information Officer*



Brig. Gen. Claudio Graziano



Gen. Dundar, Gen. Erdagi and Gen. Graziano salute the flags



Information about KMNB



The symbolic meaning of the KMNB Sign

	<p><u>Afghanistan</u></p> <p>In Gold colour as a sign of a hopeful and prospering future.</p>
	<p><u>The Fleur-de-lys</u></p> <p>A sign of chivalry, politeness, assistance, security and protection.</p>
	<p><u>The Tiger</u></p> <p>A sign of force, power, speed, night activity and elegance. This is a very positive symbol for the people.</p>



ISAF REINFORCES ITS GRIP ON THE WESTERN REGION

Another rehearsal brings ISAF reinforcements from Kabul to Herat

HERAT FSB, Afghanistan - The Turkish Gendarme Company is ISAF's central area Quick Reaction Force (QRF) and was recently deployed to the western area to the ISAF Forward Support Base in Herat.

In nearly 40 degrees Celsius, the dry and windy landscape around the Forward Support Base is in stark contrast to the Kabul area. Just 18 hours before the QRF company was conducting operations in Kabul city. After a sudden (training) alert and a short planning period the company embarked the C 130 Hercules cargo aircraft which flew them to the western Province of Herat.



Checking the maps

Once in Herat the Turkish Gendarme Company was met and well-received by the local QRF and the training got underway.

The training in Herat consisted of briefings about the ongoing operations in the Forward Support Base Compound and air field area. Familiarization tours were also conducted for the visiting QRF.

During the night at the FSB the Company conducted extensive patrolling with the local unit around the FSB and at the airfield. According to the QRF Turkish Company Commander Adem Can, "The joint patrolling and security tasks at Herat Air field showed that the units are interoperable and can work very well together."

Some deserted villages around the airfield were also searched during the night. The second day was spent familiarizing the visiting unit soldiers with Herat city and surrounding area. The QRF looked at key points, access routes and existing contingency plans together with the local QRF unit. Unlike the FSB area, Herat city is quite green and is a beautiful city with broad avenues and several parks.

The reception at the FSB was excellent and the meetings with FSB and RAC were very helpful both for the QRF Company and the HQ ISAF representatives. The next reinforcement rehearsal will probably take place during preparations for the elections in August.



By Lt Col Sverre G Iversen,
Chief Lessons Learned and Training.

Canadians respond to Slovenian mine strike



After sustaining over twenty years of a Soviet occupation and a bloody civil war, Afghanistan is littered with millions of land mines. These land mines are very real threats for which soldiers from the Coalition and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) must take necessary precautions on every operation.

Unfortunately, this threat became a reality on July 5 for members of Task Force Kabul (TFK) when a vehicle carrying members of the Slovenian reconnaissance platoon (Recce Pl) attached to B Squadron of the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) struck an anti-tank mine during a routine patrol.

The convoy of three Slovenian armoured Humvees were attempting to occupy a hill overlooking a route about twenty kms south of Kabul City when they drove over a mine. Fortunately none of the Slovenian soldiers were injured but they were stuck in location until engineers from the TFK Field Engineer Squadron (Fd Eng Sqn) arrived and could confirm the route was clear of other potential mines and safely extract the soldiers and their three vehicles.

Within thirty minutes of the Slovenian call to Camp Julien, a Canadian team was dispatched to the scene of the mine strike that included an Engineer Response Section commanded by Sergeant Mathieu Allard and an Engineer Reconnaissance Team commanded by Sergeant Scott Bentley along with medical and logistics support.

Upon arrival the Sappers immediately began their extraction drills by prodding and clearing a one-meter wide path towards the vehicles in order to get the Slovenians to safety.

After two hours, the first Slovenian crew was safely extracted and soon after the second Humvee crew was taken to safety. As the engineers approached the damaged Humvee, the clearance began to slow due to the large amount of vehicle debris thrown during the explosion.

Nearly seven hours after arriving on scene, the last Slovenian soldiers were escorted out of the danger area. Although shaken up, the Slovenians in the damaged Humvee had suffered only minor injuries and were able to walk out. Once the footpath was widened to cover the span of the route, the Slovenians very carefully backed their first Humvee out of the danger area.

Having completed ten hours of delicate mine clearance, Sgt Allard's section was then relieved by Master Corporal Jason Penney's team. Having daylight and a 180-meter long by 1-meter wide safe lane connecting the two remaining Humvees, MCpl Penney employed two clearance teams simultaneously to speed up the process. Before driving the second Humvee out, the lane was confirmed to be safe by driving the Canadian Nyala Mine Protective Vehicle over the route. After another nine hours on the site, Sergeant Solaman Ross' section relieved MCpl Penney's section and the clearance continued in the same manner.

To retrieve the damaged Humvee, the RCD Recce Sqn provided a Buffalo Recovery Vehicle with a 25-ton winch to remove the vehicle a safe distance from the blast site. It was then loaded on a low-bed trailer and returned to Camp Julien.

Upon closer examination of the site, the resulting crater measured almost two metres wide and nearly one metre deep. With the damaged caused to the Slovenian Humvee, the mine strike was estimated to be caused by a five kg anti-tank blast mine.

Overall, the Canadian soldiers spent over 22 hours on the site with temperatures reaching nearly 40 degrees Celsius in order to accomplish the mission. Yet despite these challenges the troops of the 23 Fd Sqn, the KMNB Recce Sqn, the Health Service Support Company (HSS Coy) and the National Support Element (NSE) worked together and exhibited another example of the efficiency and sense of teamwork for which TFK is well known.

By Sgt Scott Bentley



Sgr. Scott Bentley, W.O. Earl Rouzes and Sgt. Matthew Allard, members of the Task Force Kabul (TFK)



Winching out the damaged Humvee



Clearing the path.

DUTCH F-16'S IN KAIA



F-16's OVERHEAD KABUL

Since 01 april 2005 the Royal Netherlands Airforce deployed 4 F-16's to Kabul International Airport (KAIA) to support the ISAF operations. The dutch people deploy for 3 months to KAIA and after that they return home. Nowadays a detachment from Leeuwarden Airbase the Netherlands is stationed at KAIA commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Tankink.

Since 14 july 2005 the dutch are joined by a Belgian detachment consisting of an additional 4 F-16's.

The F-16's are on a 24 hour alert 7 days a week to support the ISAF Provincial reconstruction teams (PRT's). Next to the alert state missions are flown every day to coordinate and train with the teams which are already in the field.

To support the F-16 operations a whole team is present at KAIA. There are around 160 people which support the dutch and the Belgian operations.

The men and women are very proud to be here at KAIA and in Afghanistan. They have the feeling they support the freedom of Afghanistan and peace in the world.

Next to the F-16's the dutch have a PRT at Pol e Khomri and a SRF batallion in Mazar i Sharif. Over a 1000 dutch soldiers are stationed in Afghanistan.

Every day you will see the F-16's fly their missions over Kabul city and the nice country side of Afghanistan. Hopefully the airplanes will never have to use their weapons but if one of the coalition partners

is in distress the dutch are ready to support the coalition troops.

As mentioned before we are coming from Holland which has only a couple of fighter bases and just over a hundred F-16's. We are known for the flowers and the windmills, but next to that we have an operational and very professional fighter force. We are pleased to be stationed at KAIA and we'll make our stay worthwhile.

Good luck to you all with your missions!

Lt.Col. Peter Tankink
Detachment commander RNLAF



The dynamic and powerful F16



Belgian support Lockheed C130



Dutch Med Team.



Dutch EOD specialists and their explosives sniffing dogs.



The Belgian connection.

Their sacrifice for peace and prosperity of Afghanistan.....



For the second time since Spain offered help toward the reconstruction of Afghanistan, a sad destiny hit those magnificent and proud troops. A Cougar helicopter crashed near Herat, killing 17 soldiers on training. No words can sufficiently explain the sadness of those days, all of the world's men of goodwill, all the ISAF personnel feel the pain for their sacrifice.



ISAF VIII PAYS TRIBUTE TO A ONE OF ITS SOLDIER



Unexpectedly death obscured the destiny of this relief mission. On August 6 a young German soldier met his fate on a road in Kabul. A tragic fatality caused by a traffic accident.

But, despite this casualty our task must continue, and we will always remember those who lost their lives during our mission.



ISAF

گھٹک او همکاري

