



ISAF MIRROR

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CAS ON STATION

ANSF Focus

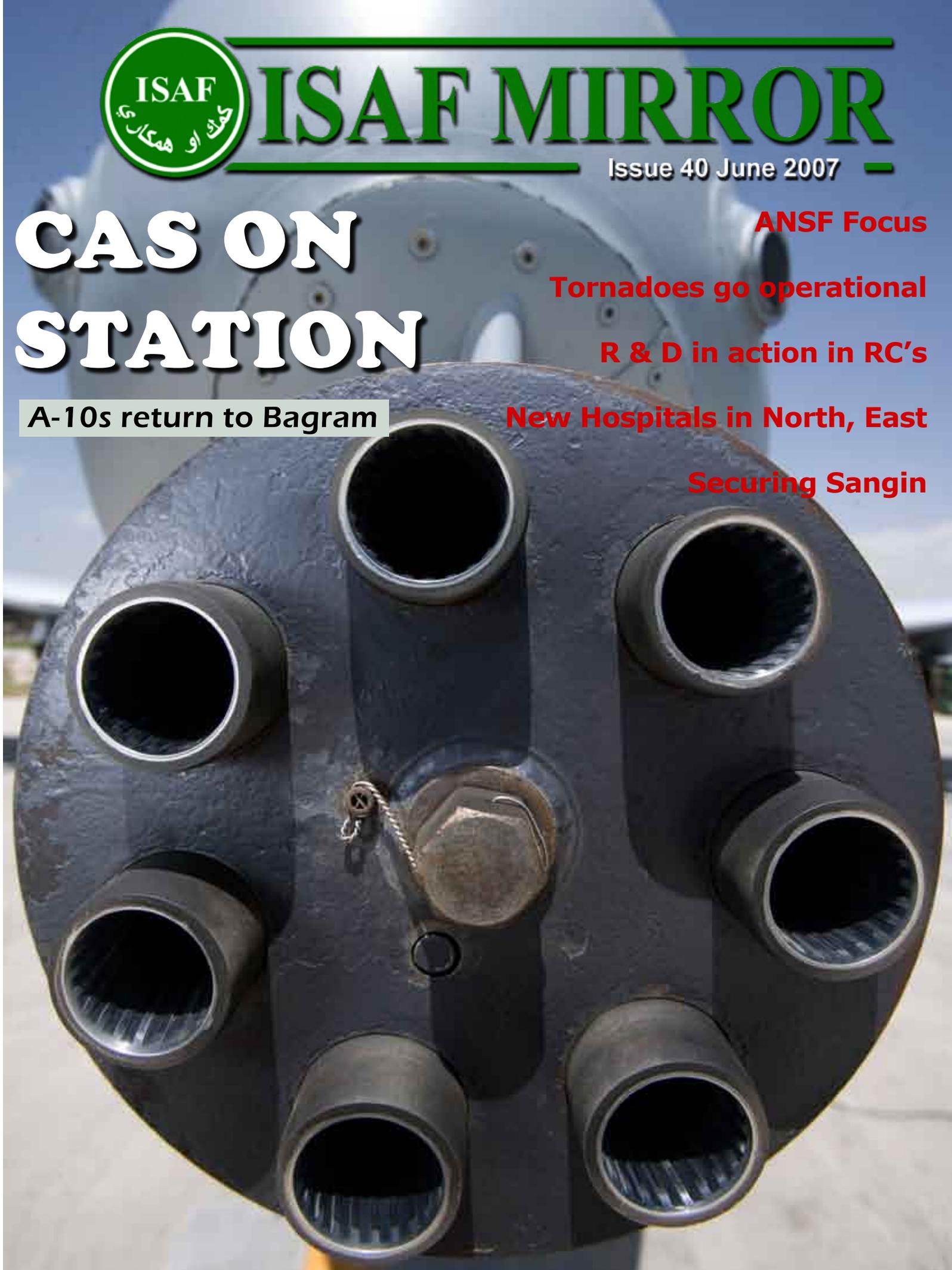
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Eyes in the skies



A maintainer with the Tornado Wing at Camp Marmal opens the canopy to prepare the aircraft for a mission. *Photo by Sgt. Raud Mol*

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The A-10's 30-milimeter Gatling gun

Photo by Sgt. Raud Mol

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**Back
cover**

The mountains
outside
Mezar-e Sharif
Photo by Sgt. Ruud Mol

NATO sponsors young leaders workshop

Forty-five students from different regions of Afghanistan participated in a two-day workshop in Kabul on 7 and 8 May. The event, which was organised by the international student organisation AIESEC, was the first of its kind to be sponsored by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division in the country.

The students were given briefings on a wide range of topics. Some covered different aspects of the development of Afghanistan, such as the political requirements for stability, the role of non-governmental organisations and the private sector, as well as the contribution that young people can make. Another looked at the role of the media in modern societies.

A couple of briefings focused on the evolution of NATO-led operations in Afghanistan and of NATO's wider relationship with the country.

Key speakers included the Afghan Deputy Minister for Information and Culture and an Afghan member of parliament, as well as NATO's Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, his spokesman and a representative of the Headquarters of the International Security Assistance Force.

NATO members, partner chiefs of defence end meetings

BRUSSELS -- Chiefs of defence from the 26 NATO member nations recently wrapped up two days of intensive discussions at NATO Headquarters on a wide range of military-related issues. Chiefs of defence and/or senior officers from 30 partner nations also attended the final day of meetings, in Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue, NATO-Ukraine, and NATO-Russia formats.

"We made progress on a number of key issues on the Alliance's military agenda," said Gen. Ray Henault, Chairman of

NATO's Military Committee, and NATO's top officer. "We reviewed all our ongoing operations, particularly in Afghanistan, and discussed ways and means to continue work to transform our processes, organization and work as needed to meet today's requirements and tomorrow's challenges.

The NATO chiefs of defence also assessed progress on missions in the Balkans, Iraq, and the Mediterranean.

"We took stock of the situation in Afghanistan, which is this organization's number one operational priority," said Henault. "Real challenges remain for the foreseeable future, but we have good reason for optimism at the overall progress country-wide of military related aspects of the Afghanistan mission, including the development of the Afghan National Army," continued Henault.

"NATO has 37,000 well-trained, well-equipped and well-led men and women operating throughout the country, and that figure continues to grow. In the south in particular, we have seized the initiative, consolidated gains from last year's operations and activities, and have strong momentum from this spring heading into summer. That said, we remain concerned about progress to develop the Afghan National Police, as that is such an important element of day-to-day local and regional security. We agreed to look at some ways and means to enhance military support and thereby help build more capability in this national institution."

"The Military Committee agreed that resourcing the training and liaison teams for the Afghan National Army is a key priority. These units, which provide a much needed mentoring and support function, are a top NATO military priority that need to be fielded if we are to further help develop the structures necessary to allow Afghans to eventually provide for their own security," said Henault.

New Life in Kabul podcast

With summer in Afghanistan a few weeks away, Nicholas Lunt, NATO's civilian spokesman in Afghanistan - gives a feel for life in Kabul and beyond in an audio diary, recorded live from Kabul.

To enjoy the podcast, visit: www.nato.int/multi/audio/isaf2-podcast/index.html



May 13, a day of ISAF airpower

From U.S. Air Force News Service

Airpower supported the International Security Assistance Force troops in Afghanistan in the following operations May 13, according to Combined Air and Space Operations Center officials.

An Air Force B-1B Lancer dropped multiple guided bomb unit-31s on insurgent compounds near Kajaki Sofia. The B-1 also performed a show of presence on friendly forces routes in the area.

U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornets dropped GBU-12s and fired 20mm cannon rounds at enemy vehicles and a sniper near Tarin Kowt. The hits were confirmed successful.

Near Now Zad, Navy F/A-18 Super Hornets dropped GBU-12s on enemies in the area including a sniper. The JTAC confirmed the bombs hit their targets.

JTACs are highly trained personnel who advise ground commanders on appropriate air power support, relay the ground commander's intent to air power assets overhead and communicate with aircrews for precision engagement.

French Mirage 2000 fighters dropped GBU-12s and multiple flares supporting coalition forces confronting enemy targets near Orgun-E. Also in Orgun-E, Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt IIs strafed enemy positions with 30mm rounds, helping coalition forces taking fire in the area. Other A-10s provided a show of force supporting a convoy receiving mortar and small arms fire near Ali Kheyl. The show of force was reported successful and the enemy dissipated.

In total, 47 close-air-support missions were flown in support of ISAF and Afghan security forces, reconstruction activities and route patrols.

Additionally, 15 aircraft provided reconnaissance in the theater on this day.



OMLT on the road with ANA

*Task Force Uruzgan
Public Information Office reports*

Afghanistan has a relatively young army: the Afghan National Army was founded in 2001 after the coalition launched Operation Enduring Freedom. Its soldiers are trained in Kabul and in the provinces, they are accompanied by ISAF soldiers of the Observation Mentoring Liaison Teams.

Members of the Royal Dutch Land Forces and the Royal Dutch Marines are responsible for the OMLT work in the Uruzgan province.

According to first lieutenant Robbin, OMLT-officer in Tarin Kowt, they also get on the job training.

“They, for instance, have to deal with a huge knowledge gap on the domain of the non-commissioned officer. Besides that, our Afghan colleagues occasionally tend to think – after decades of warfare – that they know everything, which is of course not the case. A rehearsal is always useful.”

Apart from that lieutenant Robbin is full of praise for the ANA soldiers. “They are very motivated and form a very welcome addition to our operations.” Robbin’s words were underlined during a five-day patrol in the surroundings of FOB Poentjak.

The ANA soldiers who operate side by side with the Dutch Battlegroup members excel in making contact with the local population, estimating safety conditions in the area and searching Afghans. A farmer that visits Poentjak to complain about the treatment that people from his village got from the ANP, states that he has a lot of respect for the ANA. “They are direct representatives of the government of Afghanistan and have no hidden agenda. I fully rely on them.”

U.S. support team builds up ANA forward operating base

*Story by Sgt. LeeAnn Lloyd
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

The soil beneath the boots of any Soldier in Afghanistan is most likely soil that was fought for. Once a location has been acquired, firebases and camps are built up and ways are immediately sought to improve the quality of life for troops who will reside there. The same desire to provide the best to their fighters applies to the Afghan National Army, and helping make their ambitions a reality becomes the mission of a U.S. Army Logistical Support Team.

The 3rd Brigade, 205th Regional Corps Assistance Group Logistical Support Team, based at Forward Operating Base Tombstone, recently implemented the renovation of the ANA’s FOB Price, near the town of Gereshk in Helmand Province. Where mud huts once “protected” fighters from extremists, reliable concrete buildings now exist.

According to Captain Andrew Wagner, 3-205th operations, the difference at Price is like night and day, and assisting with the construction and renovation of a FOB is just the first step toward spelling success for the ANA. Everyone knows a happy soldier is a productive one, he said.

“A lot of these compounds are just mud walls and mud huts. Water is a well that is dug in the ground, drawn up by bucket. Some of the ANA houses are existing buildings, but the conditions are still rough. The soldiers are there, living in something like a combat post and it’s rough. We want to improve on that,” Wagner said.

“These structures and FOBs are going to be permanent; the ANA is not going anywhere. Their compounds need to be able to sustain soldiers, because the bottom line is this: a happy soldier, one that feels he’s being taken care of, he is going to be able to perform better. His morale is going to be higher, and he doesn’t need to worry about what’s going on in the FOB. He can worry about his combat mission outside the FOB,” Wagner said.

What is going on outside the FOB is a fight against terrorism and insurgencies, as well as a battle for the Afghan people to establish an identity outside of the Taliban extremists that at one time defined them.

Village elders are still trying to find ways for their people to live without fear. Over time, that security will come from confidence gained in the ANA troops. Which will lead to step two of the pyramid, Wagner said.

“The second step is using the ANA to interface with the locals. We do that with Shuras; help build that rapport and confidence so that the elders will actively seek out ANA soldiers for assistance with village problems,” he said. “Then we can help the ANA facilitate what they need.”

According to LST Chief Engineer Commander David Rypien, not only are troops interfacing with locals, but most FOB renovation projects require contracting facilitated within local communities. That means the same money that is helping ANA troops build their military compounds is also helping locals strengthen their economy.

“Most of these projects are contracted with locals. A ‘Request For’ proposal will be drafted and sent out,” Rypien said.

“They’re hiring people from the local communities, and wages will be between four and six dollars per day. That seems like very little, but for an Afghan that is a lot of money, particularly for unskilled type of labor,” Wagner said.

The bolstering of a local economy leads into the third step of accomplishing an environment where the ANA acts independently; where it relies on Coalition support not as a middle-man conduit, but as a background support element.

“We want the ANA to be the ones with all the knowledge,” Wagner said. “We want them to be able to come to us and say, ‘This village has a problem. They need a well, or they have a medical issue.’ We can help facilitate that. But ultimately we want them to have that strong relationship and trust with villagers.”

At the top of the pyramid lays success, but below are steps that could take years, possibly even decades, to achieve. It’s a fight that is essential, and success could lie in the fundamental aspects; the first step in the right direction is something as simple as making sure the troops are happy. FOB Price is just one project of many to ensure that happens.



Thunderbolts again rumble in A



Above: Captain Douglas Witmer of the 354th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron at Bagram Airfield prepares to take off. Below: Staff Sgt. Chris Frazier of the 355th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron checks to ensure a weapons pod is secure. Next page: 355th EFS Commander Lt. Colonel Kevin Anderson.

Story by Technical Sgt. James Fisher

Photos by Sgt. Ruud Mol

ISAF Public Information Office

More bad news for the Taliban: A-10 Thunderbolts are again looking down on Taliban extremists. The aircraft, crews, and maintainers are world-renowned for their keen ability to conduct close air support and deter enemy aggression. They deployed to Bagram from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., in early April.

Their unit, at home station the 354th Fighter Squadron, is in Afghanistan to provide the same firepower unleashed in previous deployments since the Operation Enduring Freedom began nearly six years ago.

As NATO forces work to close the final chapter in ridding Afghanistan of the extremists, A-10 firepower is a vital tool in making the country safe for reconstruction

and development. According to pilot Capt. Douglas Witmer, the mere presence of the Thunderbolts over the battlefield keeps extremists from attacking NATO and Afghan Security Forces, and the Afghan people.

“When they know we are overhead, that’s often enough to keep the guns away,” Witmer said. Keeping the guns away is often accomplished by displaying the A-10’s own big gun. This is central to the aircraft’s effectiveness as a weapon system, according to 354 Expeditionary Fighter Squadron Commander Lt. Colonel Kevin Anderson.

“They brought us back because of our 30-milimeter capability. It’s an air-to-ground-gun,” Anderson said. “There are other aircraft out there that perform close air support, but our weaponry makes us particularly effective.”

The 30-mm gatling gun that fronts the A-10’s nose as it moves into the battlespace provides longer range, greater accuracy, and comes with four to five times more rounds than other weapon systems, the commander explained.

“It provides a tighter grouping,” Colonel Anderson said. “I could shoot it from a mile or two away and still hit a very small footprint.” The A-10s can also perform combat search and rescue and forward air control functions if necessary.

“We’re pretty efficient and we can stay [in the battlespace] longer, and we carry a lot of different weapons,” Colonel Anderson added.

Witmer is among those charged with protecting people on the ground from enemy fighters. The Thunderbolt pilot is engaged in his first combat deployment. He said flying close air support in





Afghan skies



**axi in his A-10 Thunderbolt II while
Maintenance Squadron checks to make**



Afghanistan is a combination of deep fulfillment and responsibility.

“It’s an incredible feeling supporting the guys on the ground, and it’s a lot of responsibility with as many friendly forces as we have out there. The last thing an A-10 or any CAS pilot wants to do is harm friendly forces – this is something we’ve been taught from the earliest stages of training,” Captain Witmer said.

Training has made the introduction to combat smoother.

“As a young guy, I had a little apprehension about flying my first combat sorties,” Captain Witmer said. “But in the bulk of it all, we’ve been prepared so well that flying here doesn’t feel too much different than at home.”

One enjoyable new experience has been the opportunity to work with and support international forces, Captain Witmer said.

“We don’t get to do a lot of that back home. It’s really great to check-in with the [air controller] on the ground and be talking to a British guy or communicating with Dutch F-16s, or Frech forces,” the captain said.

Before joining the multi-national forces in defeating the Taliban, Captain Witmer and nearly 200 colleagues set up shop at Bagram in a matter of days. Operational flying began within 48 hours of the A-10s arriving in Afghanistan.

According to Colonel Anderson, the only challenges have been those associated with any deployment, like getting the troops used to 24-hour operations.

“We really haven’t had a lot of difficulty,” the commander said. “We arrived and were flying a full schedule within two days and really haven’t missed a beat since.”

The perspective is the same from the squadron’s maintainers, according to Master Sgt. Paul Delano, the lead production superintendent for the 455 Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron.

“Within 48 hours, we flew our first effective combat sortie and we met the adversary, and without going into too much detail, they know we’re here,” he said.

“Whenever you go somewhere, you have to adapt to your surroundings, get comfortable with one another and bond,” Sergeant Delano said. “You realize you don’t have the family support within arm’s reach, so we’ve become brothers in arms.”

Generating multiple sorties each day to support operations on the ground means



a complex scheme of operational and maintenance activity must mesh to launch fully-mission capable aircraft on time,” Sergeant Delano explained.

“Right now we’re hitting our stride, coming together as a team, and we just seem to be hitting everything right on cue,” the master sergeant said.

One member of that team is A-10 Crew Chief and first-time deployer Airman 1st Class Robert McDonough.

“It feels awesome, and you know you are actually doing your job, and all the training back home is paying off. I feel like I’m changing the world,” Airman McDonough said. “In Arizona, we are always training for chemical warfare all the time, and with the Arizona weather, it really got us ready for this.”

The airman said that generating aircraft to fly in Tucson was not much different than in Afghanistan, though the humidity and altitude are both higher here, and that the heat and long hours have been the most challenging factors. He’s grateful for the chance to make a difference.

“I was happy to find out that the Afghan people here are thankful that we’re here. I’m glad that we’re helping them.”

While the enemy may only see the business end of the 30 mm gun, Master Sergeant Delano said there’s a lot of hard work, passion and pride behind putting that gun over the battle.

“To be put in a position where [operations are] real and somebody’s life depends on every action that we take, all of our experience, drive and motivation and our pride in our fleet ... to be able to put that plane perfectly combat-capable in the air and ... save our troops’ lives on the ground and push the enemy further into their holes—it’s beyond words. We’re elated. This is what we are here for, this is what we do. We’re proud, simply put.”

While the men and women of 354 EFS are elated to bring the Thunderbolt into the fight, the enemies of the people of Afghanistan and its burgeoning government must be anything but.

Shura seeks security, reconstruction

*Story and photos by Captain Heather Kekic
Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE

MEHTAR LAM, Afghanistan - The governor of Laghman Province and other provincial leaders attended a shura May 7 in a Najil public park to discuss security in the surrounding villages.

Governor Gulab Mangal attended the shura, which was scheduled to discuss security and its importance to regional reconstruction efforts.

The governor reminded the audience they elected their leadership and told them they should get involved in local government. "You selected the shura for your province and they will do what you want," said Mangal. "It's your responsibility to provide security because without it, there will be no more projects."

The second individual to address the group was Dawlet Shaw shura leader Majididi. He highlighted his district's five-year developmental plan for Laghman Province and explained it includes many improvements like drainage ditches and schools. "These plans will take your ideas," he said. "Today you can select and we will ask for help to fund them."

He posed a question to the group, asking who will help rebuild projects that cost millions of dollars. He then answered his own question, suggesting that locals must ask for help from the people rebuilding Afghanistan.

He highlighted the road repair project that will connect villagers to Mehtar Lam. He also brought up the two micro-hydro projects that recently opened in Nulu and Jamshirasbad. He told the audience that more than 1,000 people now have electricity in their homes.

All of these improvements require security, he noted. "With security your kids can go to school, and without security, there is no school," he said. He posed a second question to the audience, asking, "If you don't support the government, who will?"

"Schools are good, they build doctors and engineers," he said.

Terrorists, on the contrary, "do not want that. When you are educated, you are respected and that is your prosperity for your family."

The Alishang shura leader Asadullah



Governor Gulab Mangal of Laghman Province addresses mullahs and elders in a shura held in Najil to discuss security issues in the community May 7.

followed the Dawlet Shaw shura leader and began by praising the governor and stating the people of Afghanistan have to work together to make a difference. "We have suffered many disasters, but we had an election and our people finally agreed on a government," Asadullah said.

"The enemy of your province and Afghanistan are clear," Asadullah said. "Islam does not talk about suicide attacks. If someone kills himself, is it possible to serve his country?" Islam doesn't say to kill residents. That is not a religious act.

"God says to follow your leaders, your elders, and today you see your elected government," Asadullah said. "Do not contact or associate with the bad guys; do not invite them to your area."

Kalinajil spokesman Amineullah invited the people of Afghanistan to join together. "Join together and be a unit," Amineullah said. Some people use Islam the wrong way. Islam is a development and improvement religion.

He echoed the need for security in the area. He said enemies of the people and their progress came and blasted a local construction company's compressors away. He said he spoke to elders after the incident and they agreed to provide security. "We will fight against the terrorists and take care of the Coalition and the PRT," Amineullah said.

Muhammad Yasin, an Alishang school

teacher, praised the efforts of

Mangal and urged greater initiative.

He said Alishang now has 32 schools for both boys and girls. He then asked the group before him, "Why wait for others to come and work for us?"

He cited recent flooding, explaining when it washed out the road the children couldn't go to school. "It is everyone's responsibility to work for the province and we should do that," Yasin said.

The final two speakers were the military leaders who scheduled the shura. First up was Lt. Colonel Alberto Gonzalez, commander of 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment. "Your government wants to provide for you and it needs your help," Gonzalez said. He asked the audience to join the Afghan National Security Forces and explained that serving their government is honorable.

"What is not honorable is IEDs," Gonzalez said. "IEDs are weapons of cowards. They are for men who are afraid to confront your army face to face. These cowardly acts tell us we are winning the fight and these weapons are killing your countrymen, innocent women and children."

Lt. Colonel Robert Ricci, Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, was the final speaker. "This is a beautiful area," he said. "Let's make it more prosperous for you and your families."

"I hope this is one of many trips we make up here," Ricci said. He told the audience that the choice was theirs. The road construction will be underway shortly, enabling PRT members to travel to their area and identify future construction projects to improve the lives of villagers and their families. "The choice is yours," Ricci said. "Security is our number one concern here. If we feel safe, we'll come back."

"This is a beautiful area. Let's make it more prosperous for you and your families."

--Lt. Colonel Robert Ricci



Extremists killed, four ISAF wounded in ambush

RC-East staff reports

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO – Three extremists were killed following an ambush on an ISAF convoy in the Kuchaman district of Paktika province recently.

The attack was initiated with the explosion of an improvised explosive device. The soldiers received direct and indirect fire from a squad-sized enemy element. An immediate search of the surrounding residences discovered three insurgents killed.

Four ISAF soldiers were wounded in the incidents. Three were listed in stable condition, and a fourth received minor injuries.

These incidents are currently under investigation by Afghan and ISAF authorities.

ISAF troops take on extremists in Paktika

RC-East staff reports

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO – International Security Assistance Forces engaged and killed a large number of insurgents in two separate engagements in Paktika Province May 13.

Approximately 15 insurgents attacked ISAF forces in the village of Gangi Khel, Bermel District. ISAF forces were conducting an investigation of a previous rocket attack when they came under indirect fire. Artillery rounds were fired on the enemy's known location, killing a significant number of insurgents.

Furthermore, ISAF forces killed another large group of insurgents in a separate engagement at a Forward Operating Base near Bermel. Approximately 40 insurgents were observed moving west into Afghanistan toward the FOB. In a defensive response by ISAF forces, artillery was fired from the ISAF base towards their location.

No ISAF soldiers were injured during this attack.

New hospital, same diligent care



Photo by Sgt. Ruud Mol

Registered Nurse Captain Gary Buckner comforts a young patient during treatment at the new Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram Airfield May 8. The hospital is a role 3 facility with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment.

The new hospital, which opened March 4, is the most advanced in the area of operations and features a four-bed trauma bay, three operating rooms and a modern dental clinic. At normal capacity, the facility has 50 beds, twice as many as the old Bagram facility.

The hospital is named for Staff Sgt. Heathe N. Craig, a medic with the 159th Medical Company, who was killed trying to save a patient during a hoist operation.

British Troops receive aviation mission training

RC-East staff reports

BAGRAM AIRFIELD – British infantry soldiers with Company B, 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh, participated in aviation-sustainment training May 5, led by 2nd Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

This training is required prior to the British troops receiving their first mission in country.

Pilots, crew chiefs and fire support personnel from the 82nd CAB provided instructions on how to mount and dismount a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. Furthermore, they covered the effectiveness of AH-64D Apache helicopters and the fundamentals of aviation operations, air-support and

fire-support for the British troops in the event their squads were engaged by enemy fire.

“Our troops will patrol provinces in the surrounding area for the next few months and it is important they are familiar with aviation support and the effective strategies of getting on and off of each aircraft before they are able to execute a mission,” said 1st Battalion, commander, Lt. Colonel Huw James.

The 82nd CAB offers support not only to elements of the British Army, but also elements of the Canadian Army and 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div. Regional Command-South.

“It’s a good opportunity for the British troops to understand how aviation operates here, and the commands we use to move them in and out of the aircraft as quickly as possible without error,” said Sgt. Jesse Blamires, Chinook helicopter crew chief.



Eyes in the sky



Tornados keep watch over Afghanistan

*Story by Technical Sgt. James Fisher
and photos by Sgt. Rund Mol
ISAF Public Information Office*

They can see everything from the skies over Afghanistan, even if it's not there anymore. And the images they provide to commanders leading the International Security Assistance Force guarantees an unparalleled advantage on the ground.

The German Tornados deployed from Reconnaissance Squadron 51 "Immelmann" have had more than a month of flying over Afghanistan and are providing Kabul with another tool to reach ISAF's ultimate objectives according to deployed unit Commander Colonel Thorsten Poschwatta.

"From a reconnaissance standpoint, we are contributing to a better picture and better intelligence situation," Poschwatta said, explaining that his troops are very motivated toward this end. "This means we contribute to the stability and security not only for ISAF troops, but for the people of Afghanistan."

The aircraft, flying out of Camp Marmal near Mazar-e Sharif in Regional Command-North, have unique reconnaissance capabilities and experience, the commander explained. The troops from Jagel are using a three-camera recon pod capable of long-range, peripheral and infrared imagery.

"Our main task is reconnaissance, while many other aircraft perform this as a secondary task," Poschwatta said. "For us the advantage is that we are only

doing reconnaissance, and my people are very well-trained for this task. Not only the crews and maintenance, but also the people doing the analysis and assessment afterward. We have many people who've been doing this for ten to twenty years and nothing else."

One such specialist is Senior Master Sgt. Andreas. The first line maintenance NCO has been working on the aircraft for 18 years. He said not only do the members of the unit have a wealth of experience, they have also been working together as a unit for a long period of time.

"The cooperation is very good here. It's a team and everybody has known each other for many years in Germany," Andreas said. "The big advantage is that we have a team solidly formed."

The maintainer emphasized that because of this combined experience, conducting their mission, whether in training or operational status, is routine. The unit's motivation has also been elevated since a NATO inspection in November, Andreas explained.

"I am trained and I know what to do," Andreas said. "It makes no difference whether we are working on the aircraft here, in Germany, or in exercises in the U.S.. We are here to make sure the planes can fly and support the pilots so they can provide pictures to NATO/ISAF. The feeling is pretty good."

Exercises in the U.S., along with extended training at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico, have given the unit another advantage, since they've trained in similar desert environments.

"They are very motivated and encouraged here despite the fact that we have hot temperatures here," Poschwatta said. "This is nearly the same environment that we are used to since most of our people were trained at Holloman, flying hot weather."

The unit has also been bolstered by the preparatory work done by the infrastructure engineers at Marmal in the months before they arrived. After the German parliament agreed to honor NATO's request for reconnaissance assets, the base began getting ready in earnest. New hangars, ramp space and facilities we're built and upgraded.

"It was good work over the past three to four months," Poschwatta said from his office at the camp. "If you look outside right now at the hangars, the apron, and the infrastructure that was developed very



Above: First line maintainer Senior Master Sgt. Andreas unloads ammunition from a Tornado after a mission. The surveillance aircraft carry the rounds for defensive purposes only.

**Poschwatta**

quickly – they really did a tremendous job.”

The unit's advance team was also hard at work during this time, according to Lt. Colonel Joerg, the wing's commander for maintenance.

“The main challenge for us was whether we could get everything ready to get the aircraft in – to start the mission on time,” Joerg said. “People did a great job and worked together with the guys from infrastructure – 90 percent was working when I arrived on March 31st and the rest got done by the time the aircraft arrived April 5th.”

And with everything necessary to success in place, the “recce wing” has been doing just that.

Imagery analyst Sgt. First Class Marco said the three lense camera gives the Tonadoes the ability to see things from great distances, both in altitude and laterally, as the peripheral camera can scan from horizon to horizon.

“You can make pictures of people and operations and they don't even know they've been overflown,” he said.

Of the infrared camera that sees differences in temperature, Marco said. “It can see the space where a vehicle was parked hours before and whether aircraft on a ramp have fuel or not.”

These capabilities have led to a message of gratitude from senior leadership, according to Poschwatta.

“Kabul has said the quality of pictures and assessment is what the brought is into the mission for. It's a major part of why we are useful in the AOR,” the commander said.

For NATO commanders, who rely on intelligence in targeting and deterring those who oppose the Government of Afghanistan, the ability to pinpoint these enemies means an unparalleled advantage.

COMISAF visits camp of civil order police



Civil Order Police trainees in Mezar-e Sharif withstand a barrage of bottles from a simulated “riotous crowd” recently.

Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Hans Didi

RC-North staff reports

Mazar-e Sharif -- International Security Assistance Force Commander General Dan K. McNeill visited the training camp of the Afghan National Civil Order Police in Mazar-e Sharif recently. He was accompanied by Major General Durbin, who is responsible for the build-up of the civil-military security forces in Afghanistan, and the Commander Regional Command North, Brigadier General Josef D. Blotz.

In 2006, the Afghan Government decided to found a newly reformed riot police. Its mission will be to support the Afghan National Police during demonstrations, in the execution of control measures and special security tasks. The Afghan candidates are trained by US companies and by German policemen in Mazar-e Sharif for a period of 16 weeks. The aim is to have 5,500 riot police forces available for police service in the years following the completion of training.

Supervised by Detective Chief Inspector Jürgen Hennig and another nine German policemen, a series of training segments was demonstrated to the guests, including cordoning off roads and places, pushing aside protesters. They also rehearsed transporting

detained rioters. The German instructors again and again spurred the future riot policemen on to maximum performance. It was an impressive ninety-minute demonstration in the course of which all participants performed to the limit of their capacities.

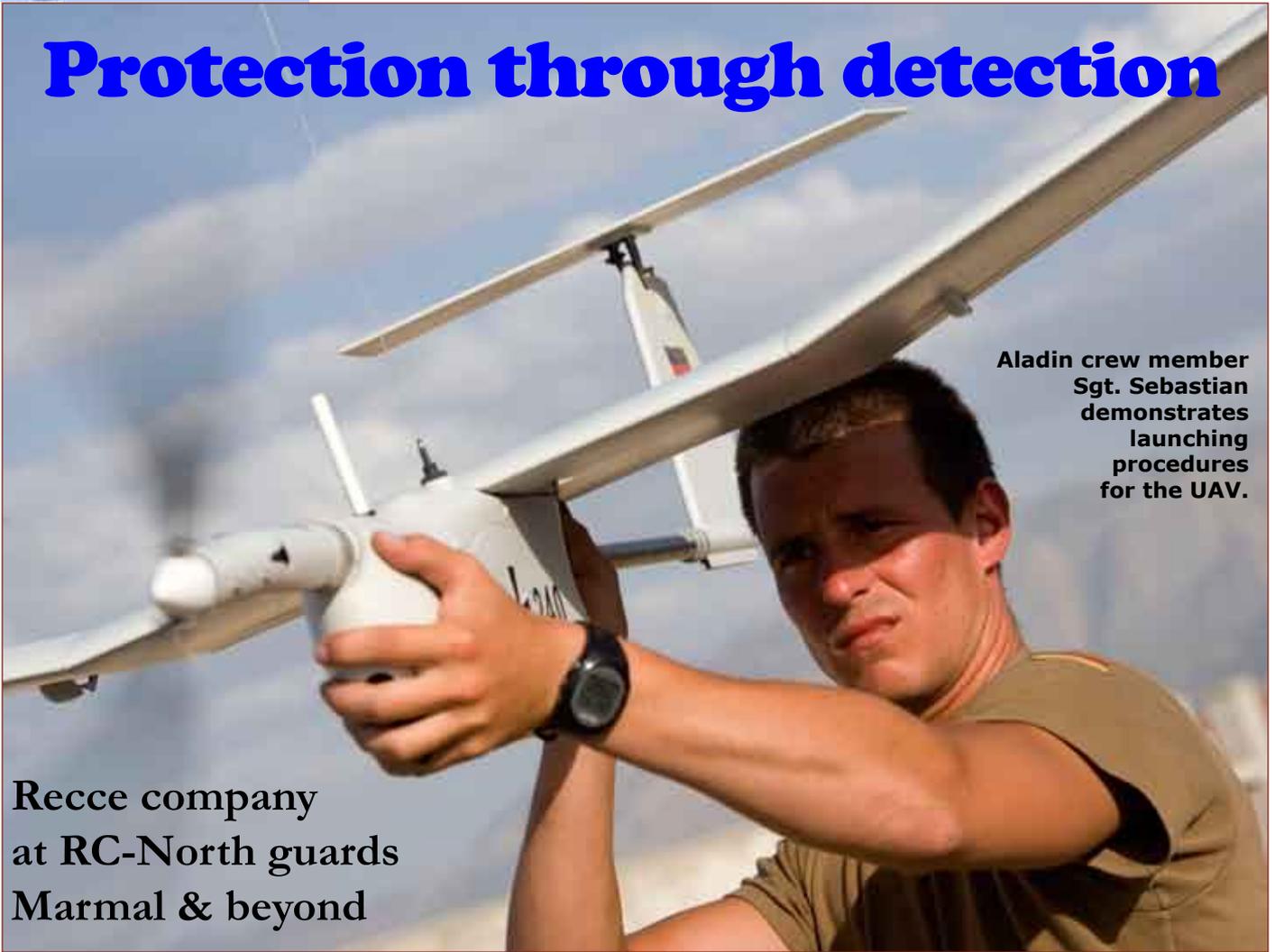
Upon completion of training, General McNeill and Major General Durbin were highly satisfied with the result. “The German instructors did a very good job,” COMISAF said.

End strength

Afghan National Security Forces will eventually include more than 5,500 riot police available for service. They will support the Afghan National Police during demonstrations.



Protection through detection



Aladin crew member Sgt. Sebastian demonstrates launching procedures for the UAV.

Recce company at RC-North guards Marmal & beyond

*Story by Technical Sgt. James Fisher
Photos by Sgt. Rand Mol*

Major Michael Peter and his troops are keen to unpack their tools -- UAVs, state-of-the-art fighting vehicles, radar and the good old fashioned patrol. Together, his German Mixed Reconnaissance Company at Camp Marmal uses these assets to protect their base and beyond.

Combining the use of these assets keeps the installation safe from potential attacks and attackers, according to Peter.

"The principle is redundant reconnaissance," the major said. "To use not only one asset but at least two assets working together."

This means that before a patrol goes out, a UAV may scan an area from the air to identify potential dangers, Peter explained. The "Recce" unit, at home the Mountaineer Recce Company 230, is charged with keeping the perimeter safe. Their responsibilities include identifying threats in the areas around the installation and other areas in Regional Command-North.

"Our overall mission has two general

tasks. First, to support the [Provincial Reconstruction Teams] on intelligence requests, and to support the facility security echelon," said Peter. "Just as we do now in the area of operations of Camp Marmal, through reconnaissance on the ground and by air."

On the ground, this means a group of patrols utilizing the Fenek Wheel Armed Reconnaissance Vehicle and a radar platoon. In the air, the company has two types of unmanned aerial vehicles at the command. The system known as Aladin is a light-weight drone designed for unmanned aerial reconnaissance, and can scan areas for up to 30 minutes with a range of five kilometers, according to Peter. The second UAV in the unit's inventory, the Luna, boasts a longer range and flying time of up to three hours. Each drone has a platoon responsible for employing it.

Luna also can be equipped with an infrared camera for night missions. It is operated by a mobile ground-control unit of two soldiers, one to control the aircraft and one to direct the camera.

Sgt. First Class Tobias Gassmann, an air picture evaluator operating the UAV's camera, said it's all about making sure the path is safe for the people on the ground.

"It's very interesting, and you see a lot of things which you don't see in Germany," Gassmann said. "You can help the battle groups to have an outside look."

A very demanding level of vigilance is required, according to Gassmann, but the people on the ground depend on it.

"When we fly with the facility security echelon, we can say, the route you want to go is clear, or it's not clear," Gassmann said. "You must at all times look at the picture you are getting and see all things."

Both UAVs can be launched from anywhere a mobile ground control station can go, according to Peter. The lighter Aladin can actually be hand-launched.

"You can [and launch it] as the motor is starting. You have to take it and give it a slight direction and it's working," Peter said.

This combination of air and ground assets is unique to Afghanistan, according

next page



New hospital open at Marmal

HQ ISAF staff reports

An 18 million Euro role 3 hospital is now serving people needing medical care in Regional Command-North.

The state-of-the-art facility opened at Camp Marmal in mid-March and serves International Security Assistance Force and Afghan patients, space permitting.

Dr. Resje Barber, an anesthesiologist at the facility, said that the hospital uses technology and innovative equipment to be flexible for contingencies.

“We can start in the emergency room, and if the number of patients increases, we can start in the mass casualty room for triage,” the doctor said.

The hospital can flex to increase capacity in trauma areas while patients are being med-evaced, Barber explained. She also said a nursing training program for Afghans is also planned.

Marmal classes for literacy



Photo by Sgt. Ruud Mol

A student in the Camp Marmal literacy class learns to read and write Dari with the help of an instructor. Dari, the most commonly spoken language in the region, is offered to all Afghan workers on the base, located near Mazar-e Sharif.

Workers can spend up to an hour per work day in the classes. The time is considered part of their duty time, for which they are paid. Beginning and intermediate level classes are available. The program began in 2006 at the initiative of senior leaders and the political officers.

from page 12

to Peter. “This structure doesn’t exist in Germany, but now we are building up battalions in this structure – with unmanned aerial vehicles and ground units,” he said.

The combination is a powerful instrument against potential attack or ambush.

“The Luna can fly over an area a short time before a patrol is about to go out. We take this first impression, looking for anything dangerous and provide this information to the force protection patrols that go out,” the major said. For this reason, patrol leaders review data coming in from the UAVs along with their controllers operating the aircraft.

“The platoon leader of the patrol can say, ok I want to take a picture of that, or a little bit more of this area.”

The feedback from patrol leaders has been very positive, according to Peter.

“They’re happy. They like it because they are able to see a lot with it,” the major said.

Another thing the troops on the ground are happy about is the Fennek.

The Dutch-made vehicle came into use by German forces in 2004, and from 2005, it has been in use in Afghanistan. The vehicle is manned with three soldiers, including a driver, commander and operator/gunner. Its main weapon is a millimeter ma-



The Fennek rolls onto the road at Camp Marmal.

chine gun, but it’s reconnaissance assets are as formidable, Peter explained. The Fennek comes with a daylight camera which can be elevated more than three meters or detached, laser range detection and GPS-based digital navigation. The best feature may be the protection it offers the troops operating it, however. All weapons are operated from inside.

“The soldiers don’t have to get out of

the car,” Peter said. “There is a three millibar pressurization for mine awareness, and a fire-regulating system.” The vehicle also has a range of up to 2,000 kilometers.

While the Mixed Recce Company at Mazar-e Sharif is enthusiastic about exploiting reconnaissance instruments like the Fennek, they are even more keen to identify potential threats and ensure the safety of people at Camp Marmal and beyond.



DCOM Stability visits PRT Chaghcharan



PRT Chaghcharan Commander Colonel Almantas Leika (right) and ISAF's Deputy Commander for Stability Major General Garry Robison tour the area near PRT Chaghcharan in Regional Command-West's Gowr province.

*Story and photos by Corporal Vilnius Džjavečka
PRT Chaghcharan Public Information Office*

Last weekend the camp of the Lithuanian led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Chaghcharan was visited by the Deputy Commander of the International Security Assistance Force for Stability Major General Garry Robison and the Head of Lithuanian Special Mission in Afghanistan Birute Abraitiene.

The PRT activity was introduced to the ISAF General and the Head of Special Mission by the Team's Commander Colonel Almantas Leika, Deputy Commander of the Civil Mission Tomas Urbonas, and advisor of Special Mission on Development Heidur Kolsoe. The guests also got acquainted with the equipment, armaments, accoutrements of the Danish, Lithuanian and Croatian members of PRT mobile observation and liaisons teams and took a look at the battlefield hospital.

Robison and Abraitiene met with the Provincial Governor Shah Abdul Ahad Afzali and other top-ranking local officials in Chaghcharan as well as visited micro-hydroelectric plant built in Sango Bar with assistance of the PRT Special Mission. The general expressed his admiration of the results attained by the PRT in the province, which is the greatest reward to the Lithuanians on this mission.

"It is my first visit to the Gowr Provincial Reconstruction Team managed by Lithuania and I highly appreciate this

opportunity" Robison said. "Two features of the Lithuanian-led PRT especially impressed me: firstly, it's the amazingly close cooperation of the military and civilian mission components, the feature that highly facilitates fulfilment of tasks. Military operations solely can not ensure success of the reconstruction mission. "The second thing that pleasantly surprised me was excellent cooperation of forces coming from different countries at the international level. Danish and Croatian soldiers serving in the Lithuanian led PRT told me of how they were jointly completing various tasks in the Gowhr province," the general added.

According to Abraitiene all the possible diplomatic and political support comes to PRT from Kabul, team members seek to attract attention of the central Afghan government to the Gowhr province.

"In my view Lithuania has made a very significant contribution, especially bearing in mind that the army of the country consists of seven thousand soldiers only. Lithuania contributes not only to the reconstruction team but also to the mission of special forces. I find it a perfect example of determination and will to reach the goal," said Robison.

"The reconstruction team in Afghanistan does not work for itself, it works for Afghanistan, the people of Gowhr, for stabilizing the regional situation and reconstructing the province. These are the

goals for which the Lithuanian led PRT unites partner countries: the U.S., Denmark, Croatia, and Iceland. It is wonderful that military and civil components of the Lithuanian PRT smoothly cooperate and incorporate different measures to seek the same aim and to represent the same country," Abraitiene said. "The most important thing is making the Afghan people see that with the help of our and other 25 PRTs operating in the country, they can create their future themselves. This year Lithuania has contributed four times more assets for the Gowhr province restoration than it did last year."

One of the key tasks of the Gowhr Province Reconstruction Teams is extending the Afghan Government authority in the province, ensuring security, and facilitating provincial reconstruction.

"The reconstruction team in Afghanistan does not work for itself, it works for Afghanistan, the people of Gowhr, for stabilizing the regional situation and reconstructing the province,"

-Birute Abraitiene



PRT Farah treats Taliban's young victims

*Story and photo by Gina Gillespie
PRT Farah*

When the Taliban attacks, they do it indiscriminately. Even children are not spared.

Rahima is only 11 years old. In early April her life was shaken by an RPG smashing through her home. She was an innocent child caught in the crossfire of a Taliban attack on the employees of Ronco Consulting Corporation.

RCC is an American-based company most commonly known for its experience clearing land mines from post war zones. The attack took place in the Bala Baluk district of Farah province. It left seven people dead and four wounded, including Rahima.

A piece of shrapnel punctured the front part of her neck, damaging her trachea. Multiple shrapnel wounds dotted her torso, and large chunks of flesh were missing from her legs. Rahima was brought to PRT Farah to stabilize her condition, and was subsequently transferred to Kandahar, where they did exploratory surgery on her abdomen and installed a breathing tube to repair the neck injury. She was listed in stable condition.

"Because she is a local national, this is all humanitarian effort," said Lt. Colonel (Dr.) Paul Johnstone, at PRT Farah. "The medevac system is designed for ISAF and coalition forces. Anytime you start bringing local nationals into that system, it's all people volunteering to help. In this particular case we were able to get a British flight out of Camp Bastion, at night.

Four-year-old Naseem is another innocent child caught in the middle of conflict. He came to the PRT Farah aid station with multiple shrapnel wounds and was sent to a Role 2 medical facility in Herat. There he underwent abdominal surgery. When his surgery wounds subsequently became infected, his uncle brought him to the PRT Farah aid station once again for treatment. The medical staff saw Naseem daily for a two-week period, then taught the boy's uncle how to change the dressings himself. They continued to see Naseem every



Four-year-old "Naseem" is comforted by Navy Corpsman Ricky Kaebisch at the PRT Farah Hospital. Naseem was wounded in an attack by Taliban extremists on employees of the Ronco Consulting Company in April.

Tuesday and Thursday at the Farah free clinic on the airport grounds.

Treating children was not what Dr. Johnstone expected when he came to Farah a little more than one year ago. He is used to seeing children with minor ailments or dehydration-related illnesses, and hopes the latest child casualties represent isolated incidents.

But any time there are clashes between the Taliban and the security forces trying to stop them, there is the possibility of

civilian casualties. Unwilling to leave these small victims to their fate, the medical staff at PRT Farah is using all available knowledge and resources to heal these tiny casualties of war.

"The PRT helped us. They sent my nephew to Herat, and I went with him. His wounds became infected and now I bring him everyday to the PRT to get his dressings changed. ISAF forces and the ANA have treated us well," said Sharfodin, Naseem's uncle.



Rewriting their future



ent Reconstrucion and Development Recor

New comm link up across Farah

*Story by Gina Gillespie
PRT Farah*

Lines of communication are stretching across the desert dunes of Farah province, connecting city to city and the remotest villages to the rest of the world.

USAID and PRT Farah are jointly funding District Communication Networks in Pushti Koh, Lash-e Jowin and Shib Koh districts of Farah province. The DCN buildings will provide phone lines, Internet and fax lines to district officials and the general population alike on a fee-per-use basis. At the moment many people are using expensive satellite phones, sending their money to foreign companies.

Not only will the District Communication Networks open the lines of communication for the people in remote areas, but the profits will be returned to an Afghan company. As part of a nationwide USAID program to provide telecommunications equipment for DCN in every district in every province throughout Afghanistan, USAID contracted with Afghan Telecom to supply the equipment for 11 DCN in Farah province. This includes the telecom equipment, satellite dishes, the receivers and the generators to supply the power. However, the government still seeks funding for the buildings to house the equipment. The Civil Affairs team at PRT Farah has picked up

the tab for buildings in three of Farah's 11 districts.

"It's a pretty important network to keep the people aware of what's going on and to educate them," said Captain Terry Hestilow, head of the PRT Farah CA team. He outlined the benefits.

"First the DCNs will generate additional revenue for the Government of Afghanistan. Second, they will provide a means for shopkeepers to communicate with their suppliers to facilitate an increase in commerce. Third, each DCN will establish tele-communications between the local populace, providing phone service to approximately 10 per cent of the provincial population of 348,000," he said.

Abdul Qadir, Provincial Manager of Afghan Telecom, lists some further benefits. With Internet and fax availability, people can fax or e-mail important documents instead of carrying them by hand through Taliban-controlled areas.

Business can be done via a phone call costing 10 Afghanis instead of paying 50 Afghanis for a truck-ride into the city. It will also have an impact on culture, as people surf the Internet and begin to learn about the world outside Afghanistan. Security will improve as residents and government officials can quickly contact Afghan National Security Forces for support.

"This is a priority project because this is going to connect the people with the government and the people with the entire world at a very cheap price per minute. This is a link between the government and the people so they can solve their problems together," said Mr. Qadir.



RC-West Commander Brigadier General Antonio Satta salutes a newly-trained border patrol

More border patrol officers trained

*Story and photos by Pietro Insalata
RC-West Public Information Office*

"Your job requires great sacrifice, even your life, as has already happened in the recent past. But all that you are doing, with self-denial and honesty, will help build a better Afghanistan for yourself, for your families and for the future of your own children."

HERAT – With these words Regional Command-West Commander, Brigadier General Antonio Satta addressed the attendees of the fourth Instructors Training Course for Afghan Border Patrol officers April 24.

They were all lined up for the graduation day held in Herat at the Regional Training Center ceremony square. Fifteen ABP officers, selected by the 6th Afghan Border Police Brigade Commander Colonel Rahmatullah, were recognized at the ceremony. They had successfully completed the training program carried out by the Guardia di Finanza's Task Force Grifo.

The Task Force Grifo Commander Lt. Colonel Paolo Tagliaferri welcomed Satta and other dignitaries. Satta addressed the graduates, and presented them certificates. The Guardia di Finanza, an economical and financial police force which is also part of the Italian Armed Forces, it has been deployed in the Afghan theatre since November 2006 within the RC-West.

Its 14 instructors were selected to train the APB in police activities and in particular, for border issues.



Best wishes for your new school, from Roma!

Students of Mansoni School in Rome, Italy, sent their drawings and designs (above) for students of Pharmakan Village in RC-West. Students from Pharmakan, now in a newly built facility, reciprocated. Comparison between the groups of Italian and Afghan students showed that students of Pharmakan Village have similar talents, especially when it comes to drawing.

Pharmakan School that was financed by Italian Provincial Re-

construction Team, who pledged 228,000 Euro.

The school serves more than 1,000 male students in the village of Shindand. The Governor of Shindand District Khodaidad Arfani mentioned the progression of development and the assistance of “Italian friends.” “You support us and we try to train useful members of society not in tents, but in modern classes.”

Ceremony ushers in school year

Chaghcharan PRT staff reports

A ceremony in honor of the beginning of the school year was held in the compound of the Lithuanian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team located in Chaghcharan, the capital of Ghowr.

More than 350 children from Chaghcharan Orphanage participated in the ceremony. They also presented program for ISAF soldiers in attendance.

Provincial Governor Shah Abdul

Ahad Afzali, Chief of Police General Shah Jahan Naserullah Noori, and more than 30 other local administration participated in the event.

“We are proud of having the possibility to present such a holiday for kids, because they are responsible for the future of Afghanistan. Their own education will bring the prosperity to their country,” Colonel Almantas Leika said in his welcoming speech.

“The future of Afghanistan is in these children’s hands. Regrettably, the war deprived them of their precious parents, who died for the peace and

stability of Afghanistan.” said Governor Abdul Ahad Afzali.

Children presented their program in a scene built especially for the event. They reckoned the Holy Koran, read the poems and articles on actual issues, sang national songs, and danced.

Orphan Muhammad Ali attends the seventh grade class at the school. He said it was not the first time he participated in such a celebration, and expressed his earnest desire to learn. “I am ready to study hard for acquiring the occupation, that will allow me to contribute to the future,” he said.



Qalat PRT rolls on with new commander

Fischer takes over in ambush aftermath

*Story by Captain Bob Everdeen
Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat*

QALAT – On the eve of a scheduled change of command for the Provincial Reconstruction Team here, Taliban militants ambushed an Afghan army convoy April 9 a few kilometres from Forward Operating Base Lagman.

The militants attacked the convoy with rockets and rocket-propelled grenades, killing four troops and injuring 19, according to defense ministry spokesman General Mohammad Zahir Azimi. There was no information available on Taliban casualties.

Most of the injured Afghans were transported to FOB Lagman for initial emergency medical treatment before being flown by helicopter to another location.

“We hadn’t even officially taken over command of the base here and were already ‘in the fight’ treating casualties,” said Lt. Colonel (Dr.) Michael Gauron, PRT Qalat. “I was impressed with how quickly our team pulled together—not just Americans, but all of our coalition partners—and were able to take care of all the casualties.”

The change of command ceremony included a number of Afghan, U.S. and coalition VIPs, including Del Bar Arman, governor of Zabol province; Maj. Gen. Ton van Loon, Former Regional Command South commander; and Brig. Gen. Chris Miller, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander and Combined Joint Task Force 82 Air Component Coordination commander.

The incoming commander, Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Fischer, made comments that were in line with the previous night’s events.

“Afghanistan is transitioning through a tough period,” he said. “(The people here) can choose to move forward with their new government and the support of the world, or they can choose to regress to the way of life they had under Taliban rule. It is my hope that they believe in the governor, his staff and this new government as much as I do.”

The change of command ended with new leadership in charge at FOB Lagman, and new, strong ties being forged through the tragedy of a cowardly attack the night before.



Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Fischer accepts the Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat guidon from Major General Ton van Loon, former Regional Command South commander, during a change of command ceremony here April 10. Colonel Fischer assumed command just hours after Taliban militants ambushed an Afghan army convoy that killed four and injured 19 Afghan troops.

“We hadn’t even officially taken over command of the base here and were already ‘in the fight’ treating casualties”

--Lt. Colonel (Dr.) Michael Gauron



Engineers cement Sangin's security

Task Force Helmand Press Information Centre

British military engineers have been cementing the security of an Afghan town in the heart of Taliban country recently.

Members of 26 Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers have just completed three company sized patrol bases for the Afghan National Security Forces in the Town of Sangin in northern Helmand.

Each base will be home to up to 100 members of the ANSF and gives the Afghan's a solid foothold in the town should the Taliban try to recapture it.

"Having removed the Taliban, these bases represent the next step in establishing enduring security in Sangin; their presence seeks to reassure local people, while at the same time deterring the enemy," said Lt. Colonel Ivan Jones, Commanding Officer of 26 Engineer Regiment.

Sitting in the centre of the Helmand Valley, the town of Sangin had come to symbolise the challenges facing the British Army in the province. The small garrison of troops stationed in the mud brick town were too strong to be defeated by the Taliban, but not strong enough to launch a major operation to drive the enemy out.

That all changed in mid-April, when Royal Marine Commandos, supported by Afghan, US, Canadian, Dutch and Estonian forces finally launched a massive operation to clear the Valley of the Taliban influence.

Taliban forces caught at the centre of a pincer operation were either destroyed or forced to flee to the surrounding countryside.

Since then joint patrols from the Afghan National Army and the American 82nd Airborne Division have been carrying out clearance patrols to push the Taliban further back from the edges of Sangin.

Taking advantage of the Taliban's withdrawal, British military engineers were brought in to build the bases in the north, south and at the centre of the town.

Each base's dedicated accommodation block dramatically improves the living conditions for the troops based there and provides them with basic cooking facilities.

The high protective wall and sentry positions give the Afghan forces some form of protection when they are not carrying out operations against their foes in the surrounding hillside.



Members of 26 Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers work on company sized patrol bases for the Afghan National Security Forces in the Town of Sangin in northern Helmand. *Photo by Corporal Adrian Harlen*

With three bases being so close to one another, they can offer mutual support should the Taliban attempt a direct assault against them.

With improvements to the security of Sangin underway British troops have started talking to the community about possible reconstruction work of the town's civic amenities.

The next stage is underway where British patrols containing engineering specialists have started visiting Sangin, and other towns in Helmand to find out what is needed in the communities. But the actual building work is carried out by local Afghan contractors.

"We must empower the Sangin elders to take forward development and encourage the use of local manpower. But where necessary, we will provide specialist support," Jones added.

The visits by the Development and Influence Teams are the first time many Afghan communities have interacted with ISAF forces and many are wary of openly talking to the visiting troops for fear of possible retribution from the Taliban.

A representative from Sangin said. "The Taliban gave very little to local peo-

ple in the Sangin valley but we need to be safe before we will talk to ISAF."

Communities in Lashkar Gah, Babaji and Garmsir have started to see the benefits from the stable environment and ISAF hope to add the town of Sangin to that list

New Sangin bases

Three company-sized patrol bases for the Afghan National Security Forces in the Town of Sangin in northern Helmand.

■ Each base will house up to 100 members of the ANSF

■ Dedicated accommodation blocks

■ High walls and sentry positions

RC-South troops continue to fight IEDs, UXOs

RC-South Staff Reports

KANDAHAR – ISAF medics in both Kandahar and Uruzgan provide emergency medical care to a series of civilians injured by either Unexploded Ordnance or Improvised Explosive Devices planted by insurgent extremists this week. The last 24 hours alone has seen three separate incidents in Kandahar resulting in the deaths of three children and serious injury to a 21-year-old male and 13-year-old boy, both of whom are now being treated by ISAF medics at Kandahar Airfield.

Over the last 12 months, more than 250 civilians have been killed or injured as a result of UXO, IEDs or suicide bombers in southern Afghanistan. According to figures released by Handicap International April 8, almost 10 percent of families in Southern Afghanistan have at least one physically disabled person, many of whom are the victims of land mines, UXO or IEDs.

“The fact that so many civilians, including women and children, continue to be killed and injured regularly demonstrates that the Taliban extremists do not care about the lives of the ordinary Afghan people,” said Lt. Colonel Stephane Grenier, the spokesperson for Regional Command South. “We would ask that if anybody finds UXO or a suspected IED, they do not approach or try to remove it. Instead, we would ask that they contact the Afghan National Police who will take the necessary steps to make the area safe and eliminate the threat,” he added.

ISAF rescues children injured by UXO explosion

RC-South staff reports

KANDAHAR – ISAF troops in the province of Zabul recently provided emergency medical care to three children who were injured by an explosion while playing near their home.

The three children, aged 4, 6 and 7, disturbed some Unexploded Ordnance during the course of their games and suffered wounds to their lower limbs and abdomen when the ordnance exploded.

ISAF forces quickly arrived on the scene and evacuated the children to an ISAF medical facility for treatment.

All three children have now been operated on by an ISAF surgical team in Zabul province and are in a stable condition. ISAF troops then carried out a search of the area and removed other UXOs and another improvised explosive device.

“This was a tragic accident which highlights the dangers posed by UXOs and IEDs planted by Taliban extremists,” said Lt. Colonel Stephane Grenier, the spokesperson for RC-South. “We would ask that if anybody finds UXO or a suspected IED, they do not approach or try to remove it. Instead, we would ask that they contact the Afghan National Police who will take the necessary steps to make the area safe and eliminate the threat.” he added.

Incoming Alaskan Commander visits Task Force Grizzly

RC-South Staff Reports

KANDAHAR – Troops with Task Force Grizzly, mainly comprised of U.S. troops from Alaska met their new commander, Army Major General Stephen Layfield when he visited Kandahar Airfield yesterday to let the troops know how proud he was of them for their service.

“This outfit has accomplished more than anyone could ever have hoped to expect,” said Layfield. “I’ve been in this country for 13 months, and I’ve watched with pride your accomplishments missions from start to finish,” he continued.

Layfield left his post as deputy commander of security with the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul and assumed command of the U.S. Army Alaska in May.

Layfield will also serve as the deputy commander, U.S. Alaska Command, at Elmendorf Air Force Base, near Anchorage, Alaska.

Taliban weapons cache destroyed

RC-South staff reports

KANDAHAR – ISAF in cooperation with Afghan National Security Forces were sent to investigate a possible Taliban extremist compound in central Helmand province May 11. The compound turned out to be the depository of a large weapon cache.

When troops arrived at the suspected location, they were fired upon by Taliban extremist forces. ISAF engaged them and made a precision attack on the compound, having made sure that no civilians were in or around the complex. After a short period most of the Taliban extremists fled the location. The weapon cache was destroyed after the compound had been secured, ensuring that these weapons can never be used again.

Task Force Corsair hosts 2nd annual run, chili cookoff

RC-South staff reports

KANDAHAR – Task Force Corsair hosted the second annual Global War on Terror Trot 5-k run and chili cook out for all ISAF members Saturday.

The race gave 130 multi-national participants a chance for friendly competition and raised several hundred dollars for the Iron Mike Chapter of the Army Aviation Association of America scholarship fund.

Race winners were: best overall time, male, (18:43), Cpl. Cobra Fairington, United Kingdom; best overall time, female, (19:45), Sgt. Diane Mitson, United Kingdom; best overall time, team, (21:16) TF Corsair, Alpha Company 2-82nd led by Capt. Jennifer Phelps.

GWOT Trots were also held simultaneously at Bagram Air Field, hosted by Task Force Pegasus; at FOB Salerno hosted by Task Force Desert Hawk; and in Iraq hosted by Task Force Lightning. The Iron Mike Chapter of AAAA will host the race at Fort Bragg, N.C., U.S.A., April 21.



205th Warriors assist Kandahar students

Story and photo by Lt. Commander Steven Parks, 205th Regional Security Assistance Command Public Affairs Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The International Security Assistance Force’s 205th Regional Security Assistance Command recently donated basic school supplies to more than 500 children in first through 11th grades in the area as part of Project Support Kandahar’s Kids.

The project has been instrumental in providing critically needed school supplies for children in the local area since July. The children received back-packs, pens, crayons and uniforms.

“They helped make the difference,” said Commander Phil Miller, as he credits his family and friends for their donations. Miller works as an embedded trainer and operation mentor in the 205th Corps of the Afghan National Army and is behind this fundraising project.

The school’s principal said he is accustomed to the challenges of educating Kandahar’s youth. He and his staff of teachers recognize the first step to rebuilding their country is through education. The student’s capability and desire to learn are of primary interest to the educators, not necessarily their age.

One of the teachers, who did not wish to share her name due to security reasons, said, “I am serving my country by educating the children. We are giving them the opportunity to learn, they are the future of Afghanistan.”



Young girls from the Shahid Sayed Padsha School in Kandahar show their appreciation for newly received school supplies.

GoA official helps save boy’s life

Story by U.S. Air Force Captain Bob Everdeen Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat

QALAT – A potentially fatal tragedy struck 40 miles north of Forward Operating Base Lagman here April 20 when three young Afghan boys were playing with an unexploded mine they found just outside their neighborhood.

On the breezy, sunny Friday morning, the three boys—brothers Naimatullah, 6, and Noorullah, 4, and their cousin Rahamatullah, 7—scampered around like any youngsters on a day off from school. Their fun ended instantly when the mine exploded, shredding Noorullah’s leg and sending shrapnel into Rahamatullah’s abdomen, rip-

ping at his internal organs.

Officials at FOB Lagman immediately dispatched a helicopter to bring the boys and their fathers to the military hospital.

“They were here within 15 minutes,” said Lt. Colonel (Dr.) Michael Gauron, chief medical officer for the Provincial Reconstruction Team here. “One boy’s leg was missing a large portion of bone, soft tissue and tendon; there was no way to save it or reconstruct it. We stabilized him, gave him medication for pain and a lot of blood.”

The situation became more tense as the doctors explained the situation to Noorullah’s father, Bakht Mohammad, who refused to let the doctors amputate the boy’s leg.

“The doctors and I tried our hardest to explain to Bakht that a decision had to be made quickly, but he wouldn’t budge,” said Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Fischer, PRT Qalat

commander. “He wanted to take his son by taxi to a neighboring town to get a second opinion. My doctors told me that if the boy left the base he would live about 30 minutes. So I called (Zabul Province Governor Delbar Arman) and informed him of the situation. He immediately sent his chief of staff to talk to the boy’s father.”

Nearly an hour had passed since the injured boys arrived at FOB Lagman, but within a short time after talking with the representative of the Afghan government, Mohammad understood the severity and urgency of his son’s situation and agreed to an amputation below the knee. In time and with a prosthesis, his four-year-old son will eventually be able to walk and run.

The tragic event provided living proof that governance is making progress and is being accepted by the people of Afghanistan.



Italian contingent gives new school to students in Shah Tut

RC-Capital staff reports

More than 180 children have now a new school to improve their education. Regional Command-Capital's Italian contingent made the present of a brand new school to the Afghani people of Shah Toot. The facility cost 65,000 euro and needed more than 720 hours of labor to complete.

These projects have been completely financed by Italian private donors and the city of Cuneo, a town in the Italian northwest.

The Italian Multinational Engineer Group, on the order of Lt. Colonel Corrado Michele provided planning and supervision of the project. Italian Contingent Commander Colonel Giovanni Manione has provided the project management with his civilian-military cooperation team.

The Idea of building a new educational structure in Charab Asiab started at the end of 2006, when the 2nd Alpine Regiment was operating in Kabul, the project then passed to the 3rd Alpine Regiment that accomplished it. April 14 was a shining day; and a lot of local people came from Charab Asiab to see the new white building that finally stopped the long distance that Shat Tot students had to cover to go to school every day.

DVs converged on the facility for opening ceremonies April 14. General Kasim Erdem, Commander of RC-Capital, arrived with the Italian embassy officials and military attaché followed by the civilian military cooperation teams.

Waiting for them at the landing zone there were Colonel Fabrizio Bonaldi, Deputy Commander of RC-Capital and the local governor of Charab Asiab.

When the ceremony started General Kasim made his speech in Dari language, followed by Italian Colonel Manione and local Governor of Charab Asiab.



Regional Command-Capital Commander General Kasim Erdem poses with students at Kabul Ataturk High School April 23. The children were celebrating the National Sovereignty and Children Fest. The Turkish holiday is dedicated to children of the world, who were regarded as a guarantee and protectors of the future by modern Turkey's founder Ataturk. *(courtesy photo)*

Hellenic hospital team departs after nearly two years of service at KAIA

*Story by Georgios Tzouvas
299th Hellenic Field Hospital*

The 299th Hellenic Field Hospital and team of Greek forces health care providers completed their mission at Kabul Area International Airport in May.

The hospital is now being operated by Czech forces.

The "Hellenic" hospital began its operation on Aug. 18 of 2005. After Belgium, Holland and Spain, Greece undertook the obligation to deploy a field hospital at KAIA. It was the first field hospital in KAIA fully housed in containers, built up in the way to meet NATO's latest standards.

299 FHOSP was staffed with 50 officers and NCOs from all branches of Hellenic forces --the Army, Navy and Air Force. The members of the Greek mission had a successful cooperation with four foreign teams, three medical teams from FYROM, Croatia and Albania and one surgical Bulgarian team.

The main departments of the hospital

were surgical department with 2 operation rooms, recovery, ICU, wards with 30 beds in total, sterilization, triage, microbiology, radiology, pharmacy and water analysis laboratory. There was also dentist, psychiatrist and veterinarian.

From the first day of operation until March 17, 4,998 patients were examined in the hospital. The hospital participated successfully in several medical evacuations. It had a major operational role in mass casualty plans of KAIA and joined successfully the exercises that took place during its operation.

In addition to the medical services, 299 FHOSP provided educational activities, including medical training, theoretical and practical, of Afghan doctors. In the end of each session, the doctors received certificates of participation at the lessons.

Furthermore, 299 FHOSP came forward to humanitarian actions, offering clothes, food, toys and medical material to Afghan people in Kabul.

Compass points



Queen's Day

More than 2,200 Dutch members of ISAF celebrated the birthday of their Queen Beatrix April 30 with recreation and revelry at several locations in Afghanistan. At HQ ISAF in Kabul, the commemoration included a 5-K fun run, parade and garden party with traditional fun and games.

More than 1,000 people attended the party.



Top: more than 200 troops from ISAF HQ take off at the beginning of the 5-K fun run. **Above:** A Dutch soldier takes part in the traditional "spijkerbroek hangen" or "hanging from the jeans." More than 30 revelers attempted to obtain the longest hang time while suspended over a pit filled with water.

Left: Major Tjeerd Dijkstra, Lt. Colonel Grin Kustner, and Captain Herman Wijnands prepare decorations for the Distile Garden party.

“With security your kids can go to school, and without security, there is no school. If you don’t support the government, who will?”

-- Dawlet Shaw shura leader Majididi

