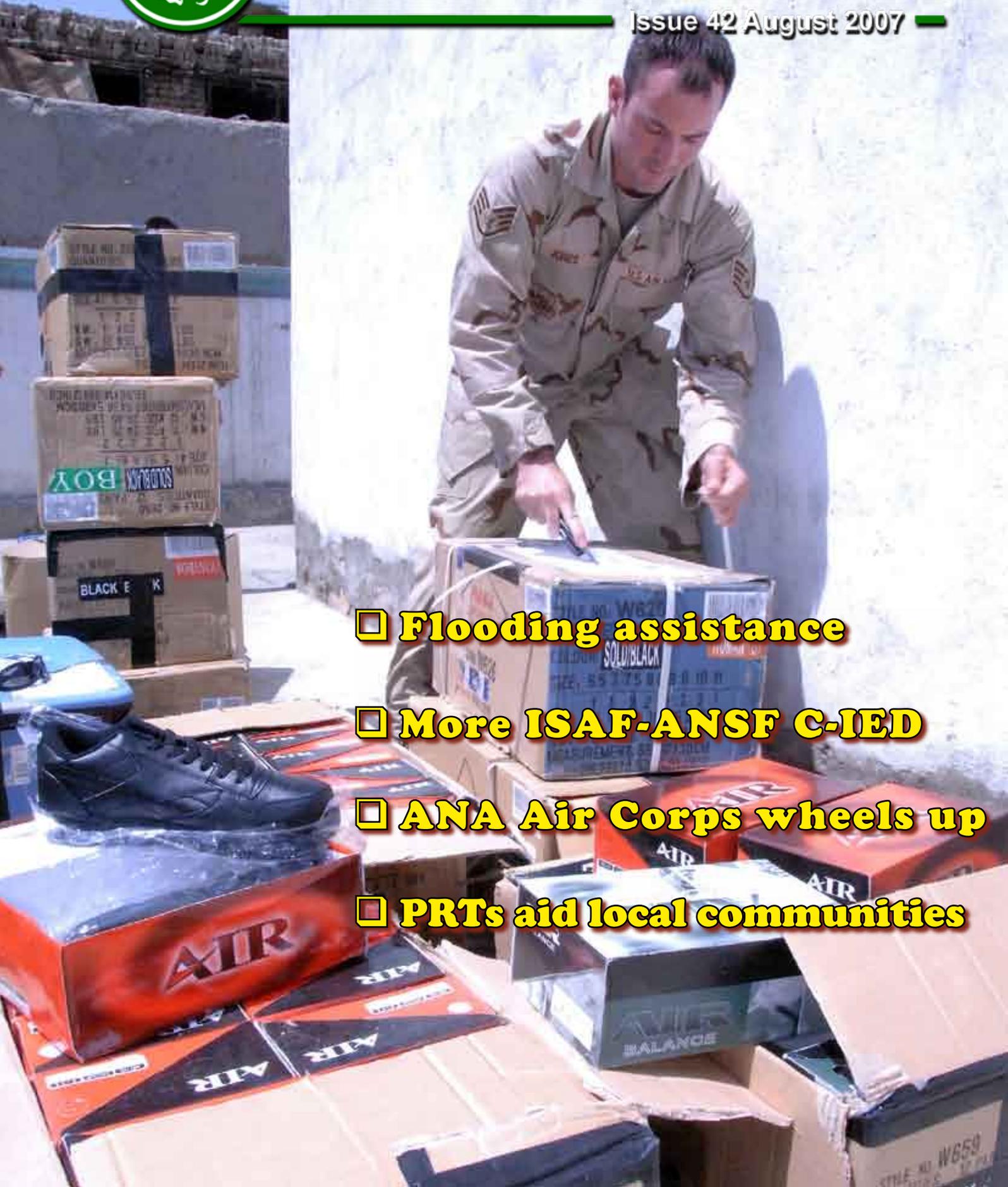




# ISAF MIRROR

Issue 42 August 2007



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Staff Sgt. Timothy Jones unpacks shoes donated to street children at Kabul's Global Point Afghanistan June 23.

*Photo by Technical Sgt. James Fisher*

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**Correction**

It is the official policy of NATO that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should be referred to as such in official publications. In the July edition of the Mirror, there were several references to "Macedonia" made in the story about the football championship at HQ ISAF. These references were incorrect.



**Op Shukran**



An Afghan National Army soldier marches into the Musayi valley on patrol during Operation Shukran in RC-Capital. The event was the first use of ANA Air Corps aircraft in an operational capacity.

*Photo by Sgt. L. Ray Winstead*

For more on the operation .....  
turn to  
pages 8-9.



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**Back cover**



An Afghan boy flies a kite in Andar District, Ghazni province.

*Photo by Specialist Micah E. Clare*

## Parliamentarians get briefed at NATO, SHAPE

(News at press time from NATO staff reports) From July 8-12, some 50 parliamentarians from NATO and partner countries including Afghanistan and Pakistan will meet the Alliance's top civilian and military leaders to get the latest inside views and information on NATO's operations, roles and challenges.

The intensive series of meetings is the Assembly's eighth New Parliamentarians Programme, aimed at legislators who are new to parliament or who have recently become involved in their parliament's committees or delegations which deal with international relations and security.

The Programme is open to legislators from member countries as well as countries and nations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), but this is the first time that the programme has been opened to legislators from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In welcoming their involvement, Assembly President José Lello (Portugal) said, "The New Parliamentarians Programme is one of the assembly's success stories. It provides participants with excellent, up-to-date information about NATO which helps them perform their tasks as parliamentarians."

Parliamentarians approve defence budgets and authorize the use of their armed forces in operations. They are also key participants in their own national debates on foreign affairs and international security. This Programme ensures that they are well-informed about NATO and – equally importantly – it allows legislators to express their own concerns and perspectives directly to the most senior NATO officials".

Participants will meet NATO's Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, and the Supreme Allied Commander, General John Craddock, as well as several NATO ambassadors, assistant secretaries general, and other top officials.

Legislators from 17 parliaments are participating. These are: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Assembly of Kosovo, Jordan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

## Exercise validates JFC rotation of NATO Response Force

Allied Joint Force Command Headquarters Naples (JFC Naples) took over command of the latest rotation of the NATO Response Force (NRF 9) July 1. The change of command was validated and certified during Exercise Steadfast Jackpot 2007.

JFC Naples took over from Allied Joint Force Command Headquarters Brunssum (JFC Brunssum).

Some 2000 personnel from all 26 NATO countries participated in the exercise, which took place simultaneously in Italy, Turkey, Norway and Spain, from 4 to 23 June.

The computer-assisted exercise was designed to validate and certify the chain of command and control elements dedicated to NRF 9.

Exercise events were based on a fictitious scenario involving a NATO-led operation conducted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The main focus was to train as a Combined and Joint Force.

The NATO Response Force works on a rotational basis, where each member state commit forces to go through training and certification, to guarantee the permanent availability of a combat-ready force.

The exercise was organized by JFC Naples, supported by the Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger, Norway. The Land Component Command (Madrid, Spain) deployed 68 people. Other units taking part included the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps (Italy), the Air Component Command Headquarters (Izmir, Turkey), the UK Maritime Force, the Special Operations Component Command Headquarters (Spain), and the Multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion.



**From left to right: Andrea Cellino, NATO PA Deputy to the Secretary General for Partnerships and External Relations, NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and David Hobbs, NATO-PA Deputy Secretary General during a meeting with new parliamentarians July 12.**

## UN, NATO chart Afghanistan approach at Rome meeting

Speaking at a conference in Rome, July 3, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said success in Afghanistan required the fulfilment of six key priorities.

The priorities are a major increase in development; stepping up training of the Afghan army and police; a sustained international military presence; reducing the loss of civilian life and property; engaging Pakistan; and a comprehensive approach involving civilian and military actors.

### Need for more coordination

"The international efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan are already considerable," Mr. De Hoop Scheffer told the conference, "But more remains to be done."

During the conference, the secretary general discussed progress in Afghanistan with President Hamid Karzai and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

This included the need to step up training of Afghan security forces, the issue of civilian casualties, and greater coordination among the international community.

"The effective application of a comprehensive approach by the whole of the international community will enable us to win not just the conflict, but also the peace," he stressed.

De Hoop Scheffer and Ban Ki-moon also discussed the ongoing Security Council discussions on the future status of the Serbian territory of Kosovo.

The conference on rule of law in Afghanistan was organized by the Italian government, which is the G-8 lead nation for rule of law in Afghanistan.



## Show of force

An A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft sits ready at Bagram Air Field. Photo by Sgt. Raud Mol

KABUL – ISAF provided an aerial show of force July 2 when Taliban extremists attacked the Afghan National Police and innocent civilians in a village in Por Chaman district.

Early that morning, the extremists surrounded the village and began firing at the ANP and civilians alike, wounding three police. After the aircraft flew over, the extremists reportedly fled.

"As sometimes happens, all that was needed from the air was a show of force, to secure a situation and deter the enemy," said Lt. Col Maria Carl, ISAF spokesperson.

Based on a request from the Afghan National Army, ISAF called in two A-10 aircraft whose show of force resulted in the extremists fleeing into the mountains.

## Taliban claims of capturing district centers proving hollow

HQ ISAF staff reports

KABUL, Afghanistan – ISAF officials challenged June 20 recent Taliban extremist claims of success in taking district centers in southern Afghanistan, countering that such efforts are only enemy attempts to create an impression of strength that is not backed by an ability to control geographical areas.

"The enemy may be controlling the headlines, but they are not controlling strategically significant areas," said Major John Thomas, ISAF spokesman. "We have seen hollow claims of Taliban controlling district centers, but when Afghan and ISAF forces move into those areas, the enemy turn and run."

The governor of Uruzgan praised ANSF, militia friendly to the local elders, and ISAF forces, for their successful defense of the Chowreh district center when he visited there June 20 for a meeting, or 'shura,' with local leaders. Governor Munib also thanked the central government.

Any area the extremists have controlled in Chowreh or Maineshin "has been

a few buildings in remote areas, and then only for several hours," Thomas said. Further, claims June 19 of insurgent control of Ghowrak district center were accompanied with no corroborating evidence.

"They seem to have no basis in fact," he said.

"The enemy, who are unable to win on the battlefield, seem to be trying to influence public perception by trying to pull off symbolic stunts that have no military value," Thomas said.

## Search of IED factory turns up weapons

HQ ISAF staff reports

URUZGAN – A suspected improvised explosive device-making factory was cleared during an operation here June 28.

"The clearance of this compound hinders the ability of the Taliban extremists to make IEDs and bombs used for suicide bombings that have cause death and injury to Afghan civilians," said Major John Thomas, ISAF spokesman.

ISAF, in support of Afghan National Security Forces, conducted the operation. During a search of the compound a number of weapons and bomb-making

equipment was found.

"Successful operations of this nature have an immediate positive affect on the local population," Thomas said.

## OP Maiwand becomes model

Military planners are saying that Operation Maiwand is a model for future operations throughout the country where the ANSF will eventually take the lead on all military operations.

The objective was to remove the shadow of the former Taliban government and to secure the Andar district of Ghazni. About 600 ANSF forces from the 203rd Combined Task Force, supported by ISAF's Task Force Fury conducted operations during which residents were treated in temporary medical facilities.

Medical team members also trained 12 doctors, one pharmacist, two dentists, two medics and two veterinarians in skills that will benefit the local people and livestock. The goal of Operation Maiwand and other such operations is to create conditions so that when ISAF forces leave the area, security will be handled by the local district people with only minimal outside support, officials said.



## French BG responds to Rochab area flooding

*RC-Capital staff reports*

KABUL (July 7) – The French battle group of ISAF’s Regional Command-Capital recently responded to the flooding in Qareh Bagh district that may have killed three people and destroyed an entire village.

On June 27, the civil-military cooperation team deployed to Rochab, Qareh Bagh district, to help repair and rebuild. The visit was part of Operation Shukran. The French portion of the operation is taking place in the northern part of Kabul, and aims to improve the security and trust

of the local population by reinforcing the local government, said Lt. Serdar Eyiler, Regional Command Capital spokesman.

“This activity helps us make contact with the local population, to reinforce the French force’s willingness to help and to gain acceptance from the population,” said a French official. “A mud corridor destroyed everything in the little village.”

The team brought shovels, rakes and pickaxes to help clear the local road. They gave cement and masonry kits to the residents to help them rebuild their damaged homes.



**A French soldier passes out tools to villagers of Rochab to help clear the village of debris following a recent flood.** *Courtesy photo*

## Turkish soldiers conduct community outreach

*RC-Capital staff reports*

KABUL (July 5) – The Turkish Civil-Military Cooperation team and battle group of Regional Command Capital recently dug wells, and donated medical equipment and recently as part of Operation Shukran.

After a short meeting with the Kadi Zumeray, governor of Khak-e Jabbar, a ceremony signified the hand over of the wells to the villages of Charwazi and Baghay. Turkish officials said the wells will improve the quality and quantity of water available to drink and for agricultural use.

Both village maliks expressed their satisfaction about the work of the Turkish battle group.

The CIMIC team and Turkish soldiers also donated medical equipment to the Chakarie Village Clinic in Khak-e Jabbar. The equipment included two stethoscopes and two blood-pressure readers to the Chakari Clinic; Shinah clinic received a similar donation. In addition, the team handed over 10 boxes of medicine to the Chakari clinic. To the Khak-e Jabbar clinic, the team donated one centrifuge and one microscope.

The Shinah Boys School received 100 school bags, 200 large notebooks, 200 small notebooks, 300 pencils, 30 boxes of chalk and 40 chalkboards.

“In my childhood, I chose going school and working for the needs of other people,” said Major Erdogan, from the Turkish battle group. “The Turkish Republic sent me to Afghanistan to be useful for our brothers, and I am doing so now. The future of this country is on your shoulders. Remember this fact.”

## Italian troops deliver medical equipment to Kabul hospital

*RC-Capital staff reports*

KABUL, Afghanistan (June 29) - Italian ISAF soldiers belonging to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Alpini Regiment, under the command of Colonel Manione Giovanni, delivered 100,000 euros worth of hospital materials June 24 to a clinic in the Esteqlal district in the south of Kabul city.

The materials have been collected in Italy thanks to the president of the “Alpini” National Association. Materials included three operating room tables, three sterilization and one corpuscle-counting machine.

Dr. Ali, director of the hospital said in his remarks that he appreciated the donation because the materials will allow to the hospital to reach the highest level of efficiency in the Afghan hospital system.

## French BG CIMIC team reaches out

*RC-Capital staff reports*

KABUL (July 7) – A French civil-military cooperation team recently completed several projects to improve Afghan lives during Operation Shukran.

On June 29, the French battle group arrived in Qala Eh Ye Mirza, Farzeh district. With the help of the CIMIC team, the soldiers helped lay cornerstones of a girls school and a veterinary clinic. The girls school will accommodate 600 students when complete. Both facilities are scheduled to open in August.

In addition, the French donated furniture and supplies to a local boys school. Later June 30, French doctors conducted a medical visit to Zemmah village, Kalakan district. The doctors treated patients for a variety of problems, such as stomach ailments, and eye and vision problems. They also provided medical care to children and babies.

## ISAF, ANSF tackle IEDs, preserve “new freedom”

*Story and photo by Technical Sgt. James Fisher HQ ISAF Public Information Office*

Soairse Nua, Gaelic for “New Freedom,” is the name given to a series of counter-IED exercises featuring a cooperative effort from ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces. The name seems appropriate. The exercises are focused on thwarting one of the Taliban’s main tactics for stealing the freedom gained by Afghans since the fall of the brutal, repressive regime.

The second exercise in the series took place in Kabul July 11, bringing more than 240 ISAF and ANSF troops together to get better at dealing with IEDs.

The exercise had four phases, according to Lt. Colonel Ray Lane, chief of ISAF’s Counter-IED branch. Aspects which included the exercise control center, cordon, IEDD and exploitation were again anchored by the theme that “cooperation and coordination save lives.” Lane said communication improved as did the exercise in general.

“The exercise was very beneficial from our point of view,” Lane said. “We were extremely happy with the performance. In the after-action review, good points were raised. There was good communication, and we had a better training area and better logistics all around.”

The exercise offered participants a series of scenarios that were based on incidents occurring in Kabul over the last year. ISAF troops from Region Command-Capital and ANSF troops from the Kabul area joined together to tackle the scenarios. Lane said organizers were pleased with a wider range of participants this time, including the Afghan National Army and the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, responsible for increasing ANSF capabilities.

“We had ANA this time, Kabul City Police, crime scene investigators, and CSTCA. This is beneficial from our point of view, because they should take a greater role as we move toward our third and final exercise,” Land said.

One observer there to assist with the crime scene investigation element of exploitation was Deputy Chief Inspector Juergen Manfred, a German member of INTERPOL in Kabul. He works with Afghan law enforcement officials to share tactics and experience. Because IEDs



**French and Afghan bomb disposal teams from RC-Capital examine a device via a video feed from a camera mounted on a robot during the second Soairse Nua exercise July 10.**

are more in the realm of criminal activity than warfare, dealing with them is in the purview of law enforcement, he said. Conducting an investigation right from the beginning is imperative.

“It is more criminal activity. And when we investigate, we want to show [ANSF] that whatever you find, even a rocket, from the finger prints to the [material] it’s made from can tell us a lot – when it’s produced, where it’s produced. But you must get the information right from the beginning,” Manfred said.

The inspector also said that he has been continually impressed by the eagerness to learn on the part of ANSF troops.

“They want to learn. They are very interested, like sponges, soaking it all up,” Manfred said. “It’s our job to share with them what we know. We must remember that we are guests in this country. And if a suicide bomb goes off here, it’s their case. We have to give them the evidence.”

This has been taking place in Kabul, where police have had to deal with a series of IED incidents in 2007. The June 17 bus bombing which killed 35 ANP officers was a good example of putting new tactics into practice, according to ANP Lt. Colonel Said. He served as a cordon commander in both Soairse Nua exercises. He said tactics acquired in the first exercise were employed June 17.

“It is difficult to deal with incidents like this, but we have done our best and applied what we have learned during the

exercises,” Said explained. “In addition to the aftermath of the bus bombing, [cordon procedures] have prevented more casualties and we have saved lives this way in certain areas”

Said also mentioned that while cordon procedures have been very beneficial, watching an explosive ordnance disposal team deal with different scenarios is even more significant for them. Ever aspect of training is building up their capabilities.

“The more training we have, the better we learn,” he said. “The training is helping to build the capacity of the ANP, and a lot of progress has been made since the last exercise. The troops are working together, becoming very familiar with each other and the new tactics.”

This familiarization was effective, according to Lane.

“You can see in their faces at the end of the day, that they have learned something,” he said. “They are part of a team. To see the French and Afghan bomb disposal teams sharing equipment was very significant of the camaraderie and teamwork going on out here. This is what it’s all about.”

Lane added that the training going on in RC-Capital is forming a template for similar training which can be conducted throughout Afghanistan.

By putting this training into practice, ISAF and ANSF can work together to save lives and protect the “new freedom” enjoyed by Afghans.



## Op Shukran showcases ANA Air Corps



HQ ISAF staff reports, photos by Staff Sgt. Ray Winstead  
KABUL – For the first time, Afghan National Security Forces helicopters for the first time transported Afghan National Army soldiers as part of an operational mission, where they performed a joint patrol with ISAF July 9. Soldiers from the ANA 201st Corps began the operation from Pol-e Charki and flew aboard the helicopters into the

Musayi Valley. There they conducted a patrol through the valley with ISAF soldiers. Later in the day another platoon of ANA soldiers arrived for another patrol with ISAF soldiers. “The aim of the patrol was to conduct a deliberate surge operation in the Musayi Valley to interdict and disrupt Taliban extremist activity and to develop a secure and safe environment,” said Lt. Gianluca Greco, Regional Command-Capital official.



**Above: an Afghan National Army Air Corps helicopter approaches a landing zone in the Musayi Valley July 9. The ANA and troops from RC-Capital were conducting infiltration operations as part of Operation Shukran. Below: Anti-mine vehicles from RC-Capital’s Italian Battle Group prepare to take part in the operation. Above left: ANA soldiers patrol through the valley. Below left: troops are inserted for a patrol. Op Shukran was the first time ANA Air Corps aircraft were used for operational missions.**



# ISAF troops help NGO, orphans

Story and photo by Technical Sgt. James Fisher  
HQ ISAF Public Information Office

The ability to reach back for resources is a key to mission accomplishment for deployed forces. For a Ramstein lieutenant colonel deployed to Afghanistan, reaching back is also the key to making a difference.

Lt. Colonel Randy Robertson, the Deputy Commander of the 86<sup>th</sup> Air and Space Communication Group, is currently deployed to Kabul Afghanistan, assigned to NATO's HQ-International Security Assistance Force. The colonel, now serving as the Chief of Key Leader Engagements, got together with some comrades to see what they could do to help orphans and street children in the Afghan Capital. As they assessed the children's needs, they decided to reach back to home station, and Colonel Robertson's hometown for assistance.

A group from ISAF HQ had been providing assistance to Global Point Afghanistan, a non-governmental organization that provides schooling and alternative education for orphans and street children.

"It started out with one of our local NGOs. We were helping them out with providing some basic school supplies and toys for the children," Colonel Robertson said. "The more we worked with them, the more we realized they needed much more. Especially shoes."

The colonel went on to explain that children without shoes were unwilling to go to school during Kabul's cold winter months. But shoes were only part of the problem for the kids at Global Point, according to Director Ramazan Zaib. Global Point's programs have struggle this year due to lack of funding, and they organization needs help.

"We work for orphans and street children. This is so important to us because these children are the future of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, we don't have the possibility even to pay rent on our facility, or to pay teachers' salaries. For the mo-



**Lt. Colonel Randy Robertson distributes shoes to one of the children at Global point Afghanistan. Global Point runs a school for street children in Kabul. In addition to shoes, donation collected by Robertson and his comrades from HQ ISAF helped Global Point pay rent on their facilities for several months.**

ment, our program is running with a lot of difficulties," Mr. Zaib said.

Because of decades of war and turmoil, Afghanistan is extremely poor and many of the nearly 500 children helped by Global Point are not orphans in the true sense, but without a parent to provide for them. They are left to get money however they can to support their families, Mr. Zaib explained.

"What you have are nine, 10 or even six-year-old children responsible for supporting a family," Mr. Zaib said. Global Point is trying to not only educate these children, but teach them trades that they can use later on to earn money to help their families, like tailoring and carpet making. The NGO is trying to give them alternatives to life on the street. But they need help to do this.

"I want to tell the people of the world, please pay attention to these children," Zaib said. Colonel Robertson and his colleagues were paying attention, and by enlisting the help of people at home and home station, they made a difference. They found sources for shoes, school supplies, and more importantly, paying rent.

"When we found out we needed some money, we put a call in to my home unit back at Ramstein. I was amazed at the responses we got," Colonel Robertson said. Ramstein yielded a lot of help for Global Point, including more than \$600 from the Ramstein Enlisted Spouses Association.

Significant contributions also came from his Group, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Air and Space Operations, Communications Maintenance, and Combat Communications Squadrons. He also put a call in to his hometown of Morton, Miss. and his parents' church there.

"They mentioned my request in their Sunday school class and they got an overwhelming response," Colonel Robertson explained. "They were able to raise more than \$500 from the people there in one morning."

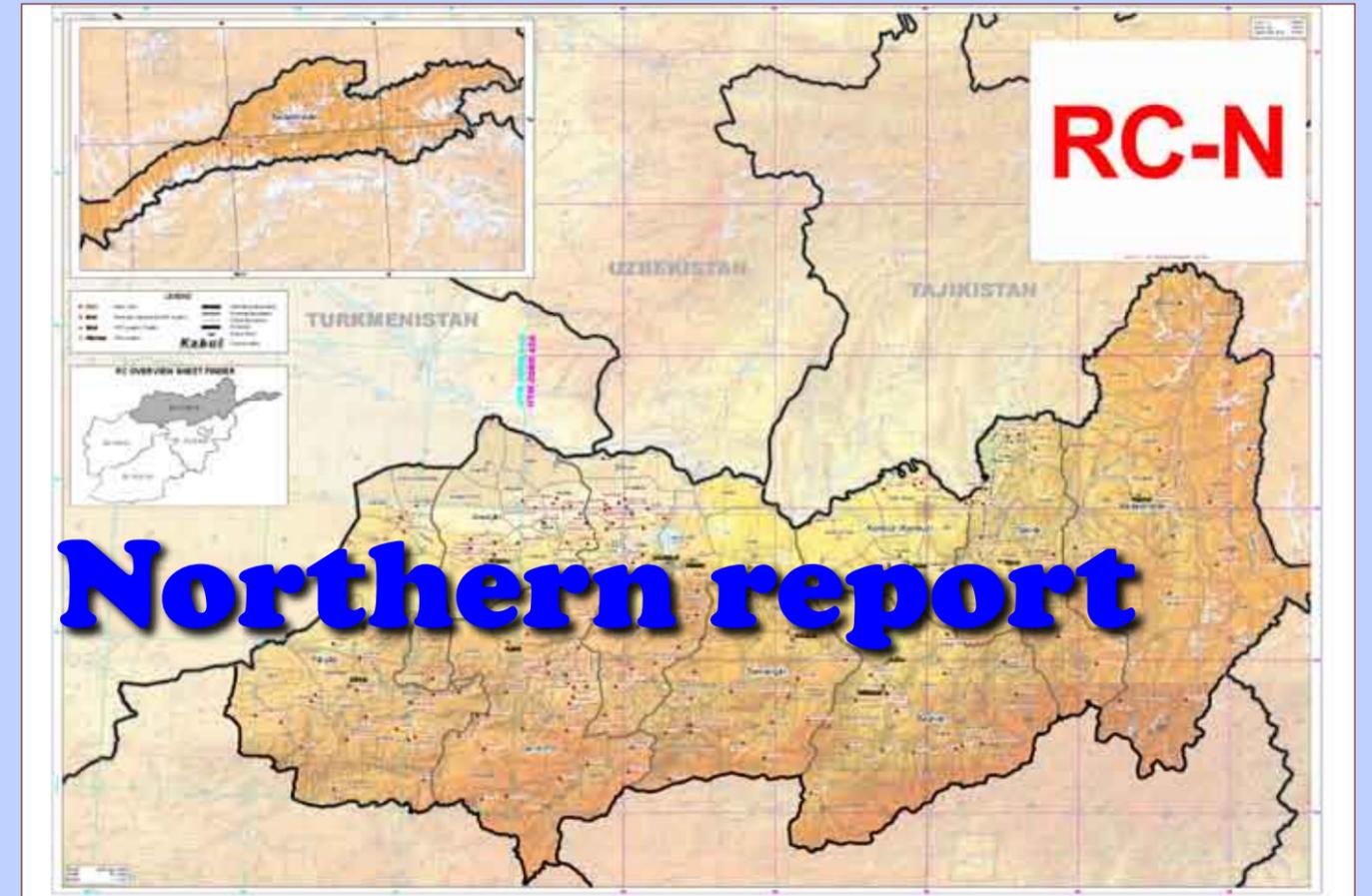
While this was going on, the group contacted two companies and a source for shoes was located. The kids wouldn't have to stay away from school when the cold weather arrived.

"When they saw how much the children needed and what the cause was, they responded," Colonel Robertson said. "We had enough for three months' rent and much-needed school supplies."

The assistance collected was taken to Global Point and the shoes were distributed to the kids in a visit made by the group from ISAF June 23.

"I am thankful to them," Mr. Zaib said. "Thank you very much. I am relying on donors to keep this program going, and some American communities have helped us a lot. Thank you very much."

For more information on how to help, contact Colonel Robertson at [randykrobertson@yahoo.com](mailto:randykrobertson@yahoo.com).



## PRT Meymaneh opens female prison facilities

RC-North staff reports

MEYMANEH – A new prison administration building and a separate wing for females prisoners opened here July 4.

Dr. Mohammed Qasim Hashimzai, the Afghan deputy minister for justice, Brig. Gen. Josef Blotz, ISAF Regional Command North commander, and Lt. Col. Jørn Erick Berntsen, Provincial Reconstruction Team Meymaneh commander, all attended to view the new facility.

"The justice sector in Afghanistan has many challenges, and having facilities is only one of them," Berntsen said. "Hopefully, this will have a positive impact on the local community for years to come."

The new prison administration building has 17 new offices for prison staff.

A separate wing for females has been

constructed within the prison compound. The 320-square meter building contains nine cells, capable of housing two inmates each. The building contains a kindergarten, workshop, classroom and meeting room.

The Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs financed both projects which cost a combined 200,000 USD. The project began December 2006.

## Political parties meet at PRT Meymaneh

RC-North staff reports

MEYMANEH (July 3) – The security situation in northern Afghanistan was the topic for a recent meeting arranged by Provincial Reconstruction Team Meymaneh, between the three main political parties of the Faryab province.

Individual political party representatives from Jumbesh, Azadi and Jamiat met for the fourth time in a round-table discussion hosted by PRT Meymaneh to discuss supporting the national government and countering Taliban

extremist propaganda.

"Less than a year ago some representatives of these parties were involved in armed conflicts with each other," said Oskari Eronen, PRT political advisor. "Therefore, it is a great step forward that the parties now can meet for discussions."

"The discussions proceeded in a friendly and professional spirit," said Lt. Elli Flén, PRT Meymaneh spokesperson. "All three parties promised to do their best to stop insurgents from infiltrating into the province and creating insecurity."

They also agreed religious leaders should support—and encourage support—for the elected governmental representatives while they criticized the Government of Afghanistan for not directing enough resources to security officials in the northern provinces.

The parties agreed that said propaganda from Taliban extremists must be countered and that religious leaders play a key role.

"The tri-party meetings are a part of the PRT's work for better governance in Faryab," Flén said. "Efficient, fair and legitimate governance is the right of every citizen in a well-functioning country. Without good governance there will never be sustainable development or real security."



## Polish Battle Group overcomes language barrier

Story and photo by  
Specialist Micah E. Clare  
4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

ANDAR DISTRICT—Listening to audio books in English, while washing dishes with his wife in Sulecin, Poland, was just one of the opportunities a Polish army officer used to brush up on his self-taught English language proficiency.

At the time, Polish Army Major Thomas Stachera had no idea that learning English would serve him well in one of his most important military assignments: helping turn over the security of a war-torn Middle Eastern country back to its own people.

Stachera, the commander of Combat Team B of the Polish Battle Group assigned to Ghazni province, Afghanistan, found his command of the English language extremely useful in communicating with Afghans, who speak an entirely different language.

“There are not many Polish-speaking interpreters in Afghanistan,” he said. “In order to communicate to the locals and work effectively with our Afghan National Army counterparts, it is important that I speak English well to my interpreter.”

There are only four interpreters in the entire country who can translate Polish into Pashto and Dari, the two most common Afghan languages, said Abdul Nasir, Stachera’s interpreter.

The requirement that all Polish officers must be able to speak English aids in the Polish Battle Group’s mission here.

The Polish Battle Group, which officially took responsibility for the security of several areas in the eastern Afghan provinces of Ghazni and Paktika last month, is the first major Polish infantry unit to participate in international efforts to stabilize the country. It is also the first time Stachera and most of his men have served here.

“It is very different from what we thought it was going to be,” said Polish Army 1st Lt. Thomas Novak, platoon leader, 2nd platoon, Company B. “We trained very hard before we left, but we are finding ourselves adapting to many unforeseen circumstances every day.”

Novak explained that he and his men were trained to fight and take prisoners but often find themselves doing the complete opposite, making friends and earning trust.

When he led his men into a small, isolated, yet green and terraced village nestled in



**A Polish soldier gives out toys and candy to a crowd of children one evening at his platoon’s field patrol base in Ghazni Province**

the Andar District hills of Ghazni province during Operation Maiwand last month, they didn’t find the Taliban they were looking for, just an old man sleeping peacefully under an apricot tree.

After the man’s grandson roused him, he awoke to Novak’s friendly smile and an outstretched hand.

“Salam alaikum,” Novak said rendering the traditional Islamic greeting.

Through his interpreter, Novak asked the man how he and the members of his village were doing and if they had been bothered by the Taliban, who, before fleeing the area at the start of Maiwand, had been threatening people not to cooperate with the ISAF.

The old man kindly offered Novak and his men some of his ripe apricots, and proceeded to tell him about how glad the people in his village and surrounding areas were that their main roads were now cleared of roadside bombs. He also gave valuable information regarding rumors he had heard about the possible whereabouts of an escaped Taliban commander.

“This makes the work worth it,” Novak said after the meeting was over and he and his men had left. “I love talking with the locals, but when they return our courtesy with the information we need, it’s especially rewarding.”

The necessity for showing respect and cultural awareness for the residents of an area is something that some of the Polish

soldiers with previous combat experience have brought with them to Afghanistan.

“Even though we are the ones carrying the guns, it’s very important to show [locals] that we are their friends, not enemies,” said Polish Sgt. Jack Jedrzejowski, a squad leader in 2nd Platoon, Company B, who has combat experience in both Iraq and Lebanon. “If we don’t show respect to their culture, religion and customs, they won’t have any reason to assist us.”

Working well with the Polish soldier’s close allies, the Afghan National Army soldiers assigned to them, is also imperative.

“We didn’t expect to be working in such a close partnership with them,” said Novak. “But we find them to be the key to putting the people we visit at ease.”

While an interpreter can’t be everywhere at once, the Poles and Afghans must sometimes be able to understand each other without any words at all, in situations like vehicle searches.

“They point to the area on a truck, and we ask the driver to open it up for searching,” said Mohib-Ullah, an Afghan soldier from the Afghan 203rd Thunder Corps unit attached to 2nd Platoon. “We let the driver know that it’s just a procedure meant for everyone’s safety. We’ve really started working together well with the Polish, and we’re always learning new ways to understand each other.”

The need for communication has also prompted the Polish to pick up some of the native language, an opportunity some of them are very happy with.

“I’ve been able to learn quite a few Pashto phrases,” said Novak. “It’s gotten to the point where I can piece together what some of these village elders are saying to me.”

The two Andar-based platoons find building relationships is quite different from what they were expecting to do here.

But this is a good thing, said Stachera.

“The people here are on our side,” he explained. “It is the most encouraging thing about being here in Afghanistan. My biggest concern here is for the safety of my men, but the more we travel this country, I can see that we are really helping. What we are doing here is really working, and the people are earnestly cooperating with us.”

They see the right thing to do is to work towards unity, and to show the Taliban that they have no place here.”

## IRoA, ISAF provide emergency relief in Gayan

RC-East staff reports

Forward Operation Base Salerno (July 5) – Afghan National Army and ISAF soldiers led an effort to distribute much needed items to small-border villages in Gayan district, Paktika province, July 3.

More than six tons of aid—to include essentials such as tarps; blankets, sandbags, rice, beans and flour—were delivered to villages where entire wheat crops had been destroyed by recent floods.

“Humanitarian aid [from the Afghan government and ISAF] provides temporary solutions to long-term problems,” said Major Donald A. Korpi, an ISAF official. The aid ISAF is providing with the government’s help addresses the immediate needs of the people, he added.

Several bundles of supplies have been air dropped in the villages of Tangerai and Zanghi Bazaar as well as the Gayan District Center itself. Eight more bundles are planned for delivery in the villages of Mamedi and Torah Wrey later this week.

After receiving the bundles, Afghan and ISAF soldiers held a shura with village elders to determine the best way to distribute the aid.

## Leaders meet in Ghazni to discuss further progress

RC-East staff reports

TACTICAL ASSEMBLY AREA THUNDER (June 24) – Afghan leaders from Ghazni province met here June 23 for a press conference to discuss how the government of Afghanistan can improve basic services and security for nearby villagers, building on the successes of Operation Maiwand.

The press conference focused on the continued efforts of the Afghan National Security Forces and some of their major accomplishments during the past month in eastern Ghazni to build support among the people for the government.

“Today’s meeting is a major step forward for the people of Andar,” said Afghan National Army Gen. Khaliq. “The Taliban said the people will never support the army or the police. [However], they have provided information and assistance to security forces that has directly resulted in the capture of several Taliban and the removal of several weapon caches and improvised explosive devices in the Miri and surrounding areas.”

Many of the questions and concerns



**An Afghan National Army hands out humanitarian aid to villagers caught in the flood July 1 at the Zanghi Bazaar. Some of the supplies were rice, beans and blankets. Courtesy photo**

Some local elders pointed to the recent flooding as the worst they had seen in their lifetimes.

“We are extremely proud of our soldiers who have witnessed first-hand how the ac-

tions of a few impact the lives of thousands,” Korpi said. “This will probably be the most rewarding part of their deployment.”

raised by the elders dealt with what forces would remain after the conclusion of Operation Maiwand. Both Khaliq and Afghan National Police Gen. Fatah reassured the people that Afghan police will have a large enough presence to defend the people.

“You have seen what the government and its security forces wish to bring the people of Afghanistan, and you have seen what the Taliban have brought,” Khaliq said. “Our forces will stand by you and assist you as together we defend the soil of Afghanistan and Islam.”

In order to support the ANSF, Colonel Martin P. Schweitzer, commander of Task Force Fury, agreed to provide a large support element in and around Andar.

“This is a huge increase in ISAF presence in this district,” Schweitzer said. “In the months leading up to Maiwand, we had a platoon-size element, about 40 folks in Andar. We are leaving behind a much, much larger force to show our commitment to the people of Andar and assist the ANSF as they continue to separate the enemy and protect the people.”

Prior to the beginning of Operation

Maiwand there were no ANA in Andar.

Operation Maiwand marks a move forward towards integrated government at all levels. During this operation, all levels of government from the national level to the lowest level at the district centers are working together to provide humanitarian aid and security to the people. They work with the people and ISAF forces in determining future projects and infrastructure development within the region.

**“We are leaving behind a much, much larger force to show our commitment to the people of Andar and assist the ANSF as they continue to separate the enemy and protect the people..”**

*– Colonel Martin P. Schweitzer*

# The real kite runners flying the Afghan skies

Story and photo by Specialist Micab E. Clare  
4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE  
SALERNO — Even though best-selling books have painted pictures of Afghan children flying colorful kites high in blue skies against backdrops of snow-capped mountains that tower over quaint villages, not all Afghan children are fortunate enough to own such simple, yet wonderful toys.

However, when the Polish Battle Group arrived in Ghazni province's Andar district near the end of June, the local children were finally able to take part in an activity shared by children in almost all countries in the world: flying kites.

While conducting patrols throughout Andar district during Operation Maiwand last month, the Polish soldiers of 1st and 2nd Platoons, Company B of the Polish Battle Group, made many humanitarian aid deliveries to the poor families living in the area.

The extreme poverty of some of the areas was quite a shock to many of the Polish.

"It seems like time stopped here 2,000 years ago," said Private 1st Class Chris Demko, a gunner on one of the giant Rosomak armored personnel carriers. "We see these kids running around with nothing, not even shoes, and we want to change that."

Everywhere they went, children crowded around the vehicles as the smiling soldiers pulled out boxes of shoes, clothes, school supplies and toys. But the biggest hit of all were the multi-colored kites that the soldiers unfolded for them.

With big grins and excited chattering, the children jumped up and down shouting, "Patang! Patang!" (the Pashto word for kite.)

Soon the sky had several of the yellow, green and red kites with International Security Assistance Forces logos flying, much to the delight of the children dancing around below.

"These kites are so much fun," said Mahmud-Amid Hahn, a 12-year-old boy,



**Two Polish soldiers from the 1st Platoon, Company B, Polish Battle Group, help an Afghan boy fly his new kite June 24 in Andar District, Ghazni province.**

as he made whooping sounds while his kite dipped and swerved in the air. "The Taliban would never give us these things."

For the children who had never seen a kite before, some of the Polish soldiers stepped in to assist, unfolding the kites and showing them how to take off with a running start to get it airborne.

"Any time spent with children is a good thing," said Private 1st Class Michal Ozog-Warclaw. "It is wonderful to see children who have been through so much with smiles on their faces."

Ozog-Warclaw, who has a daughter of his own back home in Poland, spends as much time as he can with her when he is home.

"I spent many days playing with her just like this in the park, or forest," he recalled.

While the children enjoyed their kites and new shoes, the Polish also gave out school supplies as an encouragement for them not only to play, but to learn and attend nearby schools.

The soldiers hope that their presence and influence in these areas will be able to help change an environment where the Taliban threatened parents against sending

children to school.

"It is sad, because most children here have not had the same opportunities that my own daughter does," Ozog-Warclaw explained. "It is not their fault either. Back in Poland, my daughter is developing in school in a safe, loving community where she is free to learn, play, and interact.

Every person should have access to these things, because being educated is a weapon against people who would tell you to be something you are not."

While the small youngsters who were screaming with excitement have many things to face as they grow older in their still unstable country, the pristine scene of children flying kites, completely free to enjoy their youth, still feels like it could come out of the pages of a book.

"We're simply helping them make their lives better," said Polish Maj. Thomas Stachera, commander of Company B, while watching the children playing as his men prepared to move on.

"I believe this to be a picture of what these people really want, a stable, peaceful, productive society," he said. "These children are the ones who will be able to make it happen."



**A bucket loader dumps sand and rocks at the edge of the Pech River while building a temporary retaining wall so aid could get to the victims of the flood waters.** *Courtesy photo*

## ISAF, local government battle Pech River floods

RC-East staff reports

JALALABAD AIR FIELD — ISAF soldiers responded to flooding of the Pech River in eastern Afghanistan June 26, that killed four people, destroyed a home, several bridges and washed away a road earning the praise of a local official.

"ISAF forces came to offer their help and we appreciated their quick efforts, as well as the central government's, to provide support," said Daree Pech Sub-Governor Haji Zalmai Khan.

The flooding also made the only road to the village impassable. A retaining wall collapsed by flooding in a nearby village was responsible for the four deaths.

ISAF forces provided sandbags and dirt to help support a temporary retaining wall. They also brought other supplies and aid including a tent for the family whose home was demolished.

By early afternoon, construction vehicles had already begun fending the waters off by dumping huge amounts of sand and rocks to allow aid to come through.

Locals also came to the government to volunteer their help as a line of men stood by to fill sandbags and move rocks.

According to an ISAF official, the local

government already had necessary emergency services well under way and were developing plans to repair the damage.

"When I got there to offer our support, it was obvious that the government had things under control," said Major Stephen Sutton, Task Force Rock civil affairs officer.

"It's a sign that everyone turned to the government," Sutton said. "The people

now realize they can all go to the same place, and that they depend on the government's leadership. That is a milestone. It demonstrates the government has become their centre. Which is a relatively new concept here."

The prompt reaction by the authorities was an example of effective local leadership, Sutton said.



**Daree Pech villagers line up to help relief efforts.** *Courtesy photo*



## Bulgarians replace Romanians at Kandahar Air Field

### Force protection responsibility transferred

*RC-South staff reports*

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD (June 26) – The 1st Bulgarian Tower Company replaced the 2nd Romanian Infantry Company as the Kandahar Air Field force protection element during a transfer-of-authority ceremony here June 20.

Capt. Petko Tsankov Tsanev succeeded Capt. Decebel Niculescu as commander of the KAF Tower Company force protection element, responsible for ensuring the security of the largest ISAF installation.

“During the next six months the 1st Bulgarian Tower Company will provide security for Kandahar Air Field,” Tsanev said. “We will execute our tasks with professionalism, honor and dignity.”

In addressing the audience, Stevens said, “It’s an honor today to host this transfer of authority between two magnificent units representing Romania and Bulgaria. Two nations that are NATO members who are committed to our international mission in Afghanistan and who proudly stand and fight alongside coalition forces in the war against terrorism.”

“You have shown that the people of Romania, who themselves felt the dagger of tyranny at their throat, are the strongest fighters for those who are still seeking democracy,” Stevens added.



**Capt. Decebel Niculescu (left) and members of the 2nd Romanian Infantry Company case the colors during a transfer of authority of the Kandahar Air Field Force Protection Element, June 20.**

## Afghan citizens foil suicide bombing

*RC-South staff reports*

KANDAHAR CITY – Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF soldiers worked together on tips by Afghan civilians June 18 to stop a potential vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack here.

“Based on tips from citizens, Gen. Esmatullah Alizai, chief of police for Kandahar province, said security forces were looking for a suicide bomber in a vehicle somewhere in the city. ANSF troops located a vehicle matching the description on the side of the road. When ANSF troops attempted to stop the vehicle, the bomber then fled the scene. He left the vehicle and its lethal cargo parked near

houses on a busy street, according to the general.

“What kind of a person hides in a vehicle and blows himself up?” asked Alizai. “This is not the Afghan way. This is not the way of Islam. The people who do these kinds of activities are cowards and murderers. This explosion could have killed many innocent children and their families. Only by the action of our security forces, assisted by ISAF troops, were we able to make this area safe again.”

The ANSF secured the area and called for assistance from the Provincial Reconstruction Team Kandahar Quick Response Force. They responded and disabled the explosive devices.

Also inside the vehicle was an empty container of heroin. According to Alizai, suicide bombers are known to use the drug before such attacks. Using drugs is an example of how cowardly the enemies of peace and stability are, Alizai said.

**“What kind of a person hides in a vehicle and blows himself up? This is not the Afghan way. This is not the way of Islam.”**

*--General Esmatullah Alizai*

## PRT Qalat’s improving situation in south

*RC-South staff reports*

QALAT (June 20) – ISAF’s Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat soldiers visited two projects June 13 designed to improve conditions for Afghan people. One program is the Green Afghanistan Initiative Center and the other is a girls school.

The GAIN Center is a nursery offering women the opportunity to participate in a work-for-food program. In exchange for three hours of work a day, at least 21 days a month, women receive food items, such as beans, wheat, salt and oil. The GAIN Center opened in 2006 with help from the United States Agency for International Development and the World Food Program. It currently provides work for more than 75 women.

“The director of the center told me that the women who participate in this program are very courageous,” said Staff Sgt. Joyce Cole, a member of PRT Qalat, “because they still come to work even after receiving threats from some of the men in the city.” Women at the GAIN Center have planted and continue to nurture hundreds of trees including apricot, almond, cedar, pine and pistachio.

Another program is a girls school which has an enrolment of more than 1,500 students.

“We have 30 teachers, 10 staff members. And today, we have more than 900



**The director of the Green Afghanistan Initiative (GAIN) Center here meets with Staff Sgt. Joyce Cole, PRT Qalat, June 13 to discuss the work-for-food program. Courtesy photo**

girls in attendance,” said Parwin, principal. “We are open Saturday through Thursday. Our first through third graders attend from eight to 10 a.m. Our fourth through 10th graders are here from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.” Teachers at the school earn approximately \$40 a month.

The school’s curriculum includes classes

in Pashtu, the local language, math, grammar, art and sports for the younger students. The curriculum adds English, sociology and social studies for the older students. All students receive teachings from the Qur’an.

## Taliban extremists used ‘human shields’

*RC-South staff reports*

HELMAND (June 27) – The senior ISAF commander here and the mayor of Gereshk met June 23 to discuss the death of civilians in an air strike June 21 and how to avoid civilian casualties in the future.

The mayor of Gereshk and his chief of police explained to family members of the deceased that the death of the civilians appeared to be an accident. They said the deaths were likely due to the Taliban using civilians as human shields during an attack against ISAF in the Barazezay Kalay area, the official added.

ISAF officials asked the Afghan National Army to patrol the area and talk to the locals to calm their fears and anger. At approximately 10:30 a.m. June 22 Taliban gunmen opened fire on one of the ANA patrols. The Taliban used the funeral of

those who died as cover for the attack and fired an estimated 60 rocket-propelled grenades.

The ANA withdrew from the battle without taking any casualties in order to prevent further civilians from being injured.

At 2 p.m. local senior Afghan officials and ISAF officers conducted a shura to discuss the incident. Senior ISAF commanders expressed their deep regret at the tragic incident.

The shura confirmed a number of Taliban fighters had been killed in the fighting and said that the Taliban had been using the civilians as cover for attacks upon ISAF and ANA forces and that the Taliban were ultimately responsible for the deaths.

The incident in question occurred when ISAF forces were conducting an operation in the village of Barazezay Kalay to protect Gereshk and remove the Taliban extremists from the area. During a patrol through the village at 9 p.m. the patrol came under intense

small-arms fire from a large compound. The gun battle lasted four hours with extremists firing at ISAF troops from among the civilians in the compound.

The ISAF troops repositioned to the Helmand River where they stayed out of sight of the compound but where they would have an opportunity to protect the area from Taliban infiltration. As they were repositioning, approximately 20 Taliban fighters were seen and positively identified in this compound. ISAF officials decided to engage them with aircraft.

The following morning, representatives of the Afghan authorities in Gereshk informed the local ISAF commander that there were reports that a number of civilians had been injured in the area that night.

# American forces celebrate 4<sup>th</sup> of July

## American Troops don't let deployment spoil the fun

Story by Captain Vanessa Bowman and photos Sgt. Tony J. Spain, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD (6 July) – American Armed Forces did not let a deployment, thousands of miles from home, spoil their 4<sup>th</sup> of July fun as they celebrated Independence Day with a barbeque and a day of competitive events at Kandahar Airfield Wednesday.

Multi national forces joined in the festivities, which began at 6:30 am with a 5-kilometer fun run held by the U.S. Garrison Command.

Later in the morning, the U.S. National Command Element, Joint Military Police held a 9mm pistol shoot. A pool and ping pong tournament at the Morale Welfare and Recreation center was also held.

The 9mm pistol shoot had more than 40 participants including shooters from other ISAF Nations including Canada, U.K., Mongolia, and Bulgaria.

“We thought it would be a good thing to build some camaraderie between service members and [international] members to come out and have some friendly competition,” said Master Sgt. William Ward, U.S. NCE, Joint Military Police Force and a native of Johnson City, Tenn.

Specialist Brandon Kathrens, 478<sup>th</sup> Personnel Support Battalion, and native of Holton, Kan., has shot for 10 years, remarked that he enjoyed the competition and would like to see more held in the future.

After an afternoon break, the activities continued with an American-style barbeque consisting of hotdogs, hamburgers, barbeque chicken and popular picnic side dishes like potato salad.

The barbeque was enjoyed by international forces as well.

“I was supposed to go to the gym, but was drawn to the aroma of a good old barbeque,” said Flight Lt. A. Mason, U.K., Royal Air Force. “Thanks to the USA for



**Specialist Matthew Littel, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 18th Airborne Corps, sings “Luck be a Lady” by Frank Sinatra during the KAF Idol competition on The 4th of July. Littel is a native of Dallas, Texas.**

an excuse to leave work early!”

One of the biggest events of the day was the command sergeant major dunk tank. Service members got three softballs to throw and try to dunk the sergeant major of their choice for 30 pushups.

“The best activity this afternoon was the dunk tank,” said Chief Master Sgt. Benjamin Caro, U.S. Garrison Command. He thought it was great to see how much fun people were having with it.

The main event and attraction of the day was the KAF Idol competition, a singing competition modeled off the hit television show American Idol. There were 10 contestants who performed songs for the audience and the panel of three judges.

The contestants were forewarned

before the competition that just like the real American Idol show this contest had a judge from the U.K. and his name was Simon.

KAF Idol’s Simon proved to be just as blunt as the real American Idol’s Simon Cowell.

“In the song you say you had a bad day, and it didn’t get any better,” he told a contestant.

Some of the other events included a sand volleyball tournament, egg race, balloon toss, tug-of-war and a raffle for Sony Play Station 3.

“It was a well-planned event and the Soldiers had a great time as well as the other nations helping us celebrate, said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class James Wilkins, B Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment and native of Benton Harbor, Mich.

As Americans celebrated their own independence some guests such as General Abdul Raziq Sherzai, commander Afghan Air Corps and Afghan citizens served as reminders of the mission to bring freedom and independence to those oppressed in Afghanistan.

The commander of KAF closed out the celebration with remarks explaining what the 4<sup>th</sup> of July was really about.

“Fourth of July is a celebration that is not about us, not about the events today,” said Col. Richard L. Stevens, Task Force Anzio, commander of KAF. “It is about taking a stand and standing up for what we believe in. We are here today to help the Afghan people in their fight for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July is about patriots. It doesn’t matter what nation’s uniform you wear you are all patriots.”

“[The 4th of July] is about taking a stand and standing up for what we believe in. We are here today to help the Afghan people in their fight for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

–Colonel Richard L. Stevens



## Farewell with honors

Brigadier Generals Mohammed Hussain and Esmatullah Alizai take a salute from Major Chip Madic, the deputy commander of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. The Kandahar-based generals are being posted to new provinces and were recognized June 26 by the PRT for their tireless efforts in promoting security and stability in Kandahar province. *Courtesy photo*

## ANSF, ISAF reestablish control in Chowreh

RC-South staff reports

KANDAHAR – Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF troops recently re-established control in Chowreh district of Uruzgan province after days of instability and fighting there caused by a Taliban attempt to take control of the area.

Based on shura meetings with local leaders and their own assessments, ISAF officials now believe there were a number of insurgent and civilian casualties. Exact numbers of dead are impossible to determine, said ISAF officials, as is the cause of death, in many cases.

“We are pleased the district is once again safe for the local population, but saddened that there apparently were civilian deaths and injuries,” said Lt. Colonel Mike Smith, ISAF spokesman.

Previously, ISAF could confirm only that there were less than ten

civilians injured and that there were no known civilian deaths. “After three days of fighting, it seems likely to us now that there were some civilians not only injured but killed,” he said.

“Some may have been killed at the hands of the Taliban, some may have been caught in cross-fire and some may have died in airstrikes against enemy positions,” said Smith. “We will continue to attempt to determine just what happened but in cases like this it is always difficult.”

Afghan national security officials reported that Taliban extremists killed Chowreh citizens, including women and children in an attempt to undermine the local public’s resistance to their presence and terrorize them, Smith said.

“No matter the cause, we mourn any loss of innocent life. We are here to help provide safety and security to

the people of Afghanistan, so even a single death is cause for sadness,” he said.

ISAF officials have said previously that they continue to work to coordinate operations with Afghan officials to minimize the risk to civilians of military operations, but that ISAF forces will always maintain the right of self defense by returning fire against enemy firing positions.

During the fighting, local militia succeeded in helping the government defend the district center, which never fell. Afghan government and ISAF forces now fully control the entire Chowreh area, having recaptured the three remote police checkpoints that briefly came under insurgent control.

ISAF leaders have held shuras with local elders since then to discuss ways to further assist them.



## Afghan children learn about dangers of mines

*RC-West staff reports*

HERAT, Afghanistan (June 26) – More than 6,000 Afghan school children in Herat have learned more about the dangers of mines and how to keep themselves safe through Operation White Butterfly, a PRT Herat program.

The Italian-run PRT has visited children in more than 16 schools since starting the program May 31.

The program's name comes from the "White Butterfly," an anti-personnel mine shaped like a butterfly. General Antonio Satta, PRT Herat commander, is overseeing the program throughout western Afghanistan.

Recently, the PRT members presented the program to 500 students of the Baba Hagi School. Captain Saverio Cucinotta, chief of explosives ordnance disposal at PRT Herat, taught the students how to recognize and avoid the white butterfly mines, and what to do if they come upon one. During the class discussion, a young Afghan girl named Khaterah told the Italians that one of the devices was close to her house. Afghan National Police responded to handle the unexploded ordnance, according to an RC-West official.

Warrant Officer Raspa Gualberto



**Above: A Baba Hagi student holds up a poster of mines during a presentation by the Italian EOD team from PRT Herat. The visit was part of Operation White Butterfly. Below: Afghan girls here from EOD members as well.** *Courtesy photo*

received applause from the students and faculty members when he said the Italian EOD team had defused approximately 4,000 explosive devices in the past six

months. Mohammed Ismail, director of Baba Hagi, and Mohammed Azim, head teacher, thanked the EOD team for teaching the students mine awareness.



## Free medical clinic at Farah



**An Italian physician assistant examines a patient at a free clinic held for Afghan people at the Farah Provincial Reconstruction Team June 14. The patient is an injured Afghan National Police officer who was previously shot while trying to stop drug smugglers on the Afghan-Iran border.** *Courtesy photo*

## PRT provides medical care to Afghans in RC-West

*RC-West staff reports*

FARAH (June 26) – ISAF soldiers at Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah held a free medical clinic for local Afghans recently.

About 50 local Afghan men, women and children received medical care at the free clinic in just one day. The PRT hosts the clinic for Afghans every Tuesday and Thursday and usually handles between 40 to 70 patients, according to Lt. Commander Kelley Newman, physician assistant.

"People that have various illnesses will come in and get evaluated. We try to help them by evaluating their condition. The things we can treat and make better, we do," Newman said.

On this day, some patients complained of mild headaches, or minor aches and pains. A few children had irritated and itchy eyes. The staff provided them with

medication. Another woman complained of pain in her lower back. After a routine examination, the staff provided her with pain medication and taught her some stretching exercises to relieve the discomfort.

On other days, patients may present more serious conditions needing further medical attention the clinic couldn't provide. When this happens, the clinic staff directs them to other medical facilities.

One such patient was an injured member of the Afghan National Police, who was suffering from complications from a surgery that took place after he was shot in an operation to stop drug smugglers along the Iran-Afghanistan border.

"If it was not for this clinic, I would not have any—or know of any—other options for medical treatment," said the injured ANP officer. "I am grateful for any

help they can give me."

In addition to providing medical care, the clinic also educates Afghans on the basics of medical care. The goal is to teach them to become self-sufficient and take better care of themselves.

**"If it was not for this clinic, I would not have any—or know of any—other options for medical treatment."**

*--Injured ANP officer*

## ISAF soldiers vaccinate in Chaghcharan

Nearly 300 people receive protection against Hepatitis A

RC-West staff reports

CHAGHCHARAN (July 7) – Medics from Provincial Reconstruction Team Chaghcharan PRT vaccinated 295 Afghan men, women and children against hepatitis A in the Chaghcharan hospital in visits July 3 and 4.

“We work closely with the medics from the PRT since it was established,” said Juma Gul Jaqubi, Chaghcharan hospital director. “It is very good for the community to have them nearby, because they help us with many situations, such as this one.”

Captain Andrejus Budakov, chief of PRT medical section, said they conducted the vaccination program because it is not a requirement in Afghanistan, so most people do not receive it as a result.

“In our country vaccination against hepatitis A is mandatory, but it is not in Afghanistan,” Budakov said.

“Not everyone in Ghowr province understands what hepatitis A is,” Budakov said. “But the fact we are vaccinating them makes a really big impression on them,” he added.

In addition to the vaccination program, the PRT medics work closely with local doctors, helping them with consultations and treating residents of Ghowr province.



An Afghan man receives a hepatitis A vaccination from a PRT Meymaneh medic. *Courtesy photo*

## PRT holds farewell ceremony for Ghowr governor

RC-West staff reports

CHAGHCHARAN (July 5) – The governor of Ghowr province paid a final visit to the commander of Provincial Reconstruction Team Chaghcharan July 1 during a farewell ceremony.

Ghowr Governor Shah Abdul Ahad Afzali noted that the PRT's soldiers were beloved by the local Afghans.

“Your soldiers are liked here because they respect Afghans and our traditions,” Afzali said.

“Chaghcharan has changed in two years,” said Afzali during his meeting with Colonel Dalius Polekauskas, PRT Chaghcharan commander. “Today people live in their own homes. Stability is coming to Afghanistan.”



Governor Shah Abdul Afzali (centre) walks with Colonel Dalius Polekauskas and elders July 1.

Afzali thanked the PRT for the successful support it had provided in bringing a peaceful and stable environment and,

more importantly, hope for his people.

“We don't see a difference between us and you,” the governor said. “We are the same as you.”

Polekauskas stressed the governor's contribution to the multinational community's success in helping to reconstruct the province and bring security.

“Before coming here, I heard about the very good relationship between the governor and the PRT,” Polekauskas said. “In a couple of months I became assured of that myself.”

Afzali has been governor for two years. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has appointed Ahmady Baz Mohammad to be the next Ghowr governor.

## Compass points

### Canada Day

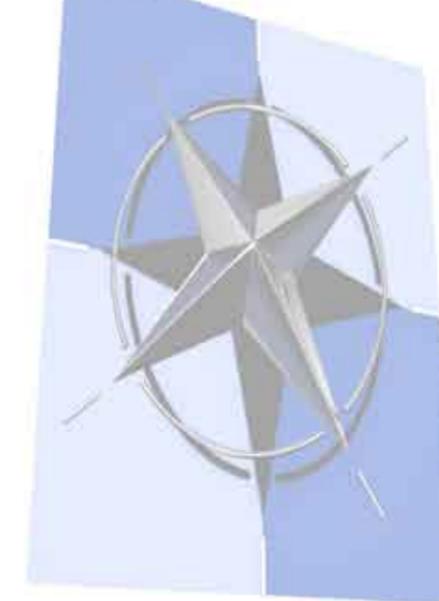


Members of the CJ-9 team pull their way to victory in the tug-o-war during Canada Day festivities July 1 at HQ ISAF. Inset: a participant sports a Canadian Flag temporary tattoo on her biceps. Canada Day marks the birth of Canada as an independent nation. On July 1, 1867, the British North American Act was signed, creating the Federal Government of Canada, giving them independence from Great Britain. Though often thought of as the nation's birthday, July 1st only celebrates Canada's independence.

### Jude Law visits



Actor Jude Law signs an autograph for new ISAF Chief of Public Information Lt. Colonel Claudia Foss during a visit July 14. Law, representing Unicef and working on a documentary on the UN-Mandated annual day of peace September 21, visited troops at ISAF bases. “To all the men and women serving ISAF here in Afghanistan, it was my pleasure to meet a few of you and learn first hand of the great work you are doing. Be proud of yourselves, you are doing great things,” he said.



## A Difference

How can we make a difference  
asked the young man with a frown  
when grief and pain and sorrow  
make each breaking day their own.  
A world of insecurity,  
a land upon its knees.  
How can we make a difference,  
oh this I ask you please.

How will you make a difference  
the old man did implore.  
Our people are forsaken,  
abandoned evermore.  
Hearts immersed in darkness  
as sunshine turns to shade,  
how will you make a difference?  
How will you make a change?

How do we make a difference  
sighed the soldier wearily.  
The battles, they continue --  
Flags 'mast in memory.  
As time treks slowly onwards  
like the shifting of the sand.  
How do we make a difference?  
What is the greater plan?

How did you make a difference  
said the wise man in reply  
What memory will grant to you  
a future, tranquil joy  
When the children's smiles that shine for miles  
light up your passing day,  
you know you've made a difference  
before you went away.

--anonymous ISAF soldier

