



ISAF MIRROR

Issue 49 September 2007

- A Tribute to Mossoud
- Memory of Former King of Afghanistan
- Education for Afghan youth
- Bridges in Afghanistan Going Up

4-5 What Made the Press

- Villagers turn in explosives to PRT
- Nuristan PRT brings aid to Parun
- Musayi Clinic dedicated to 2 fallen Italian soldiers
- ISAF Provides humanitarian help in Kandahar
- New pedestrian bridge opens in Herat village
- ISAF firefighters help battle Mazar-e-Sharif fire

6-7 In memory of Massoud

- A Biography of the Former King of Afghanistan
- ISAF, ANSF combine skills of security at former king's funeral

8-9 The future of education in Afghanistan

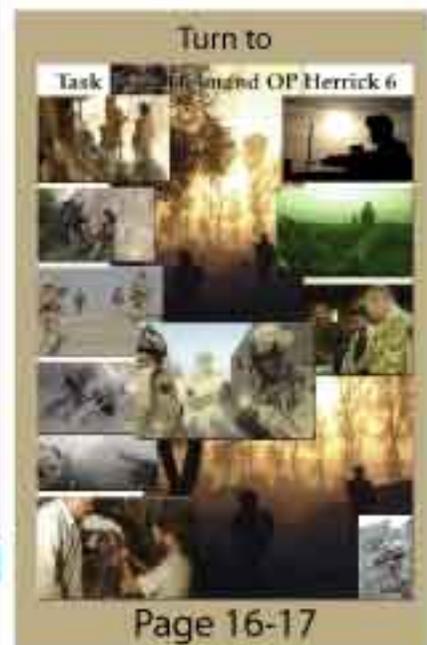
10-12 RC (C)

- COMISAF presents NATO Medals to Irish contingent
- Italian increasing efforts in Kabul
- Finland funds new school in Qabel Bai
- Turkey vows to educate the public with new skills



An Afghan girl studies her mathematics in preparation for an upcoming test.

Photo by: Master Sgt. Russell Petcoff



Page 16-17

Contents

12-15 RC (E)

- **Building Bridges in Afghanistan**
- **Afghans take ownership of Jalalabad District Communication Center**
- **Mehtar Lam PRT trains ANP, ANAP**
- **Afghan forces take mission lead in Ghazni province**

16-17 Operation Herrick 6 in Task Force Helmand

18-19 RC (S)

- **Military forces provide aid to Kandahar locals**
- **The US hands control of southern skies to the Aussies**

20-21 RC (W)

- **Teachers get lesson to instruct future teachers**
- **Donation made to ANP widows, family**
- **The eagles have landed in Herat**

22 RC (N)

- **ISAFS, ANA respond to flooding in North**

23 Around ISAF

ISAF Mirror (Disclaimer)

The ISAF Mirror is a HQ ISAF Public Information product. Articles, where possible, have been kept in their original form. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect NATO, JFC HQ Brunssum, or ISAF policy. Photo credits are attributed to the authors of the submission, unless otherwise stated. Submissions can be e-mailed to: pressoffice@isaf-hq.nato.int

Articles should be in MS Word format (Arial), photos should be at least 4.5cm and 300 dpi resolution. The ISAF Mirror is published monthly and aims to be available by the first Friday of the month.

For more information, please call the editor at 0799 51 1230.

The electronic version of this magazine can be downloaded online at: www.nato.int/isaf

EDITORIAL STAFF

Lieutenant Colonel Claudia Foss
Chief, Public Information

Captain Jonathan Stock
Chief, Internal Information
Editor

Staff Sgt. Ray Winstead
Staff Photographer

Akhtar Ali
Layout Designer



Back Cover

Paratroopers of the 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division conduct Air Assault operations to take them on their mission in Afghanistan in support of Regional Command (South).

Photo by:
Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman

“What Made the Press”

Villagers turn in explosives to PRT

CHAGHCHARAN, Afghanistan – Villagers of Dahane Qutse Sufia, Ghowr province, turned in explosives that they found to soldiers of Provincial Reconstruction Team Chaghcharan.

The explosives included two rocket-propelled grenades, five 82-mm mortar rounds, and one 82-mm, four 30-mm and one 115-mm artillery shells.

“We were coming back after our tasks, when the villagers saw us and stopped us,” said Warrant Officer Arturas Traskovskis, PRT Chaghcharan explosive ordnance disposal commander, “This was the first time people have stopped us and turned in explosives, because they were afraid of what could happen if children found them and started playing with them.”

The villagers showed the PRT soldiers where all the explosives were located.

EOD personnel destroyed some of the explosives in place. Others they took out of the village and destroyed them the next day, July 8.

They also destroyed 26 anti-tank mines the police in Passabanda, Ghowr province, turned in to soldiers.

Nuristan PRT brings aid to Parun

PARUN, Nuristan, Afghanistan – Members of Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team air-dropped 16 bundles of humanitarian aid June 28.

Working side-by-side, Afghan National Army soldiers and ISAF soldiers from the PRT secured the drop zone and retrieved the packages that were air-dropped by a C-130.

“Fourteen out of the 16 bundles were recovered,” said Capt. Roberts McDonald, 351st Civil Affairs Battalion Civil Affairs Team, who arranged the humanitarian-aid drop.

Following the drop, the 14 bundles, containing, pick axes, cooking supplies, shovels, children’s sweaters, plastic tarps

and food, were prepared for distribution by ANA soldiers.

The humanitarian aid was distributed the following day to the people of Parun at a distribution point near a Medical Civic Action Program site being held by the Nuristan PRT.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Aird

1st Lieutenant Janet Gull, Afghan National Army, speaks to his soldiers during a humanitarian aid airdrop in Parun, Afghanistan.

Musayi clinic dedicated to two fallen Italian soldiers

KABUL, Afghanistan – A cornerstone-laying ceremony July 7 dedicated the first stone clinic in the Musayi Valley to two Italian soldiers.

Captain Fiorito and Sergeant Polsinelli died May 5, 2006.

The clinic will be built near where the soldiers lost their lives. The 3rd Alpini Regiment raised funds for the 90,000-euro project from donations by Italians

“I wish that the cement that joins together these stones will join deeply and endless the Afghan and the Italian populations,” Colonel Manione, Italian battle group commander.

Local Musayi Valley Afghans will construct the clinic, which should be completed in 100 days.



Courtesy Photo

Colonel Manione, Italian battle group commander, cuts the ribbon for the first stone clinic in Musayi Valley.

ISAF provides humanitarian help in Kandahar

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – ISAF soldiers, along with the Afghan National Army and Afghanistan Regional Security Integration Cell-South, brought medical and humanitarian assistance to approximately 800 Afghans in Kandahar province July 13.

Medical providers assisted villagers with medical care, while other troops distributed medicine, food, toys and school supplies donated by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. ISAF troops secured the village perimeter to ensure everyone's safety during the mission.

"We are satisfied that U.S. forces would like to help us with medical care and assistance," said a village elder who received help during the outreach mission.

One objective of the mission was to give the ANA soldiers the chance to reach out and aid their own people.

Major Shahwali, ANA garrison religious and cultural affairs officer, said it was important for ISAF and ANA forces to be in "close cooperation with each other."

Shahwali spoke with elders and villagers to emphasize the importance of such missions and explained how the villagers can educate the next generation.

"If we have schools and clinics, we have peace," Shahwali said. "Encourage your children to be educated."

New pedestrian bridge opens in Herat village

HERAT, Afghanistan – The Italian provincial reconstruction team opened a new pedestrian bridge July 21 in Qauaria Noghra village, Injil district, Herat.

The 6-meter bridge will allow residents to safely cross a river which is often flooded or impassable in winter. Now school children will also have safe access to their school.

The Italian PRT planned, financed and oversaw the 16,000-euro project constructed by a local Afghan contractor. Construction took 30 days.

Alhaj Mir Abdul, Herat vice governor, Col. Roberto De Masl, PRT commander, and several religious leaders and village elders inaugurated the bridge.

ISAF firefighters help battle Mazar-e Sharif fire

MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan – Firefighters with International Security Assistance Force Regional Command North here helped an Afghan fire brigade battle a blaze that threatened a fuel storage area on Aug 14.

Four fire trucks, two German mobile medical support teams and soldiers from Provincial Reconstruction Team Mazar-e- Sharif, and military police from Camp Marmal responded to a call for help from the Balkh province governor.

The local fire brigade attempted to put out a fire in a timber storage area that was threatening a nearby fuel storage containing 15,000 liters of diesel fuel and 10,000 liters of kerosene.

With the help of two additional ISAF airfield fire trucks and a shuttle of 10,000-liters water supply trucks the firefighters contained the fire early in the morning of Aug 15. There were no casualties in the fire.

In Memory of Massoud

*Story by Technical Sgt. Angelique McDonald
HQ ISAF Public Information Office*

"Our policy was always to have good and friendly relations with everyone. But we never have accepted being oppressed and we will never accept it."

The famous words of Ahmad Shah Massoud still rings true for today's Afghanistan.

Massoud, an ethnic Tajik, provided prolific vision and leadership that helped his country drive out the Soviet army and resist against the Taliban.

Massoud served as a prominent Mujahideen commander during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, the Minister of Defense; and later, the leader of Northern Alliance.

His political career began in a student branch of the Jamiat Islami, "Islamic Society," an organization opposed to the rising communist influence that became relevant after the coup d'état that brought Mohammed Daoud Khan to power in 1973.

During an organized uprising against Daoud, Massoud was put in charge of the Panjshir with some success. However, the revolt was a failure due to the lack of participation and the inability to entice the Afghan army to join the rebels.

Massoud took part in the war effort against the Soviets. While battling in Panjshir, Salang, and Bola, he led 20 young men in a 40-day fight that they eventually lost.

Wounded and out of ammunition, Massoud returned to his home of Panjshir, where he decided to wage a guerrilla war against the government. Massoud is credited with having achieved control of terrain that was much more difficult to defend militarily and was under constant attack from the Soviet-Afghan Army.

From that time on Massoud's name was inseparably connected with the Panjshir, earning him the nickname "Lion of Panjshir". Many people simply called

him Amer Sahib (Commander) to express their affection as well as their respect.

In April 2001, Massoud addressed the European Parliament. In his speech, he warned that the Taliban had connections with Al-Qaeda, and that an important terrorist attack was imminent. Massoud was the target of a suicide attack which occurred at Khvajeh Ba Odin on September 9, 2001. The assassins claimed to want an interview with Massoud and as they prepared for filming a bomb exploded. It was either in the video camera or in a belt worn by the cameraman.

Even though Massoud was rushed to a nearby hospital, the damage was too great to save the great leader. He died on Sept. 9, 2001; two days before Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks in the United States on the Twin Towers and Pentagon. Although his death was quickly overshadowed by the attacks, Massoud's mission was fulfilled as the Taliban were pushed from control of Afghanistan later that year.

Massoud was named a "National Hero" by the order of Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and remains a symbol of hope for the Afghan people.

His memory is carried on today as many remember his courage as he fought for a free, safe Afghanistan.



A picture of Massoud in memory stands as people honor his sacrifice for the people of Afghanistan.

A Biography of the Former King of Afghanistan

*Story by Sayed Abdullah Sarwary
HQ ISAF Public Information Office*

The late former King of Afghanistan, Mohammad Zahir Shah, was born into royalty in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1914.

Growing up he studied in Kabul and Paris before he was announced Assistant Minister for National Defense and took on the role of Education Minister before succeeding to the throne, after the assassination of his father, Nadir Shah in 1933.

According to a BBC exclusive interview with the former king, although his father was the second top person in the country before getting the throne, he lived his life like it was the life of an ordinary governmental employee. The former king added that his father was only interested in the education and development of Afghanistan as he was seeking how to build more schools.

The former king's reign was characterized by a concern to preserve neutrality and promote gradual modernization. He built the country's first university and developed cultural and commercial bonds with the West.

Travelers began to view Afghanistan as an attractive destination, with its mountains, rich culture and relics of many ancient civilizations. He became a constitutional monarch in 1964 and while in receiving medical treatment in Italy, he was overthrown in a republican coup led by his cousin, General Dawood Khan. He then lived in exile in Rome and became a popular symbol of national unity for moderate Afghan opposition groups.

In the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan and the defeat of the Taliban in 2001, the former king called for a broad-based government of national unity in Kabul. However, some Afghan warlords and politicians feared his return.

On more than one occasion, Zahir Shah found that when he made a speech on live television, the sound failed to be transmitted. He was given the title of "*De-Millat- baba*", otherwise known as "Father of the Afghan Nation" by constitutional Loya Jirga (grand council).

Zahir Shah knew that Afghanistan needed the help of such institutions as the United Nations and the European Union. Following his return home, the former king enjoyed the enduring respect of his people. Although his political role was limited in the government, until his

death on July 23, 2007, Zahir Shah remained a symbol of unity, peace, reform and stability in the war-ravaged provinces of his beloved Afghanistan.

ISAF, ANSF combine skills for security at former King's funeral

Story by 1st Lieutenant Thaddeus Robinson

This most likely would have been the way the former king of Afghanistan and "Father of the Nation" would have wanted to have his funeral to proceed July 24, 2007. One day after his death.

Former King Mohammed Zahir Shah returned to Afghanistan in 2002 after the fall of the Taliban and an exile that lasted 29 years. He wanted to return to his homeland in his final years.

It was a clear, beautiful day as the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan mourned the death of its former king. One of the main concerns was to return the former king to his resting grounds peacefully.

With coordination between the government and ISAF, thousands of mourners were able to pay tribute to the former king as he passed in safety rather than fear.

Alongside Afghanistan forces, ISAF responded to the government's request for support by providing assistance using their counter-improvised explosive Devices branch and a quick response force to coordinate with the Afghan National Security Forces.

The United Kingdom ISAF Combat Engineers, 33rd Engineering Regiment, Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit, worked with Afghanistan Presidential Protective Services to accomplish methodical searches of the grounds prior to the funeral. Their investigation and experience of the search teams, complimented by metal detectors and bomb sniffing dogs, gave assurances to the safety of the site.

The task of the search team was to search the area for any IEDs, or any other dangers to the lives of the

(Story con't. on page 12)

The future of education in Afghanistan

Story by Captain Jonathan Stock
HQ ISAF Public Information Office

The class leader stands at the teacher's instruction, walks to the chalkboard at the front of the class and turns around to wait for further instruction. The teacher speaks in Dari, the native tongue of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and motions for the child to begin writing. The student turns around, lifts her piece of chalk and writes a sentence on the board.



Two young girls listen to their teacher while a lesson is going on.

Photo by
Master Sgt.
Russell Petcoff

"I have a red ball."

The student writes in perfect English. The teacher reaffirms for a job well done. The student sits back in the place of the class leader, or "first position", as they call it in Afghanistan.

Seven years ago in Afghanistan this would have seemed normal, if you were a male that is, except now it is a little different. The class leader's name is Marzia, a 12-year-old girl who was given the opportunity to sit among her peers after the fall of the Taliban.

Before the Taliban's occupation was overthrown in 2001, it was a different time for the people of Afghanistan. In 1979, about 90 percent of the population remained illiterate due to ongoing wars. In the 1990's, there were roughly about 650

functioning schools throughout the country.

The worst of times came in 1996 when the Taliban officially banned females from receiving an education. If females were not being homeschooled against the Taliban's wishes, then they were not being educated at all.

"It was a dark era during the reign of the Taliban for the education of not only females, but for education itself," said the school principal. "I feel a huge change now...you see our students at school with cheerful faces, tranquil minds, and are proud to be in school."

The high school, consisting of grades 1-12, both mixed and segregated classrooms, has approximately 3,000 students who attend throughout the year. Curriculum spans from mathematics to language. However, class time is very limited to the children as there are still not enough schools and

instructors to maintain the amount of parents seeking an education for their child.

Also, the students do not have the necessary materials for an education. Progress is slow, but there is change happening that can be seen, according to a teacher.

"Our children are interested in learning, and their progression is good," said the 6th grade teacher. "We have just now received English books to begin instruction of languages."

However, the walls remain unpainted. There is no switch for electricity. Children fetch water from the nearby well. Teachers complain that when it rains the ceilings leak causing a disturbance in the classroom. There is room for improvements.

Recent reports from Minister Hanif Atmar, the Minister of Education, indicate the government believes the education system can be turned around as numerous

The future of education is evident as last year's education census estimated more than four million students were enrolled in schools throughout Afghanistan.



Photo by Capt. Jonathan Stock

A group of young girls sit in class waiting for instruction.

grants are becoming available for construction of new schools and projects around the country.

"I thank Mr. Atmar, who eliminated using tents for classrooms, and has begun to build buildings to hold the classes," said the school principal. "He has offered building an eight-class school compound along with another six-classroom building that is currently in construction."

While these young students, like Marzai, have never experienced the isolation and segregation brought to their parents in education, they are viewed as the future of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan with many expectations for their generations after.

With contributions for security coming the International Security Assistance

Force, these students will be able to see many changes of development for the better in the coming years as peace spreads throughout Afghanistan.

Someday in the near future, Marzai's dream of becoming a doctor and helping other people may be possible, as her education progresses from where it could have still been so many years ago to where Afghans are today.

Two students sit patiently in class



Photo by Master Sgt. Russell Petcoff



COMISAF presents NATO medals to Irish contingent

Story by Major Robert Kiely
Photos by Hagop Vanayan

On Aug. 4, Gen. Dan K. McNeill, ISAF commander, held a special ISAF medal presentation ceremony to acknowledge the current Irish forces contingent



General McNeill pins on a NATO medal to one of the members representing Ireland in Afghanistan

serving in Afghanistan at ISAF Headquarters.

Lt. Col. Ray Lane, Irish senior national representative, conducted the special ceremony in Gaelic, the traditional language for Irish events.

IRCON XV arrived in theater Mar. 7 and will remain until Sept. 2. This is the first time Ireland has extended its Afghanistan mission tour duties to six months. Previous missions have lasted up to four months.



The Irish contingent, currently serving a six month tour, waits at parade rest during the NATO medal presentation.

The Irish contingent was made up of personnel from all over Ireland to include operations in counter-improvised explosive devices, information operations, joint visitor's bureau, a member in the combined joint operations center, and other operational specialties.

General McNeill praised the endeavors of the Irish during their tour of duty. He said that, although a small contingent, the contribution the Irish have made to the ISAF effort was immense.

He presented each member of the contingent with the NATO medal, his "Commander's Coin for Excellence," and thanked them for their efforts.

Italians increasing efforts in Kabul

Story and Photo by Capt. Gianluca Greco
RC Capital Public Information Office

The Italian contingent, Alpines 3rd Regiment, was successful during its mandate in Kabul. They were able to strengthen their presence while also increasing reconstruction and security to the Afghan people.

One of the first activities involving Italian soldiers was the building of the Red Circle by-pass in the western part of the capital.

The Multi National Engineer Group took part in the construction of this by-pass after the main bridge collapsed due to flooding.

Italian soldiers took were able to build the by-pass, rapidly restoring this key route, in just three weeks.

In the village of Shah Tut in Chahar Asiab district, the heavy rain during the last week in June caused the Kabul River to flood. Since many buildings in the village were damaged by the flood, the Italians supplied the families with tents, food, water and essential first aid. Also, the Italian contingent financed the rebuilding of the village water system that was seriously damaged by the flood.

A great contribution was made by the Italians to the reconstruction of the health system in Kabul.



The Alpines 3rd Regiment Contingent passes out supplies to locals in a valley south of Kabul city.

On June 28, Italians delivered a huge quantity of hospital materials to a health clinic. The materials were collected by the "Alpini" National to include operating tables, sterilization machines and a corpuscle counter machine.

Dr. Ali', director of the hospital, expressed his happiness and appreciation of the donation because the materials will allow the hospital to reach the highest level of efficiency in the Afghan medical system.

Additionally there is an ongoing project at a school in the center of Kabul city. This school will be totally restored and it will have a new wing built for 8 classrooms.

The school will be called Bolzano-Kabul school because the province of the Italian city of Bolzano, which in cooperation with the Alpines Troop Command, financed the project.

The Italians have also performed a number of joint training activities with the Afghan National Army. One of the most significant joint activities finished on the April 13. The aim of the joint training was to teach to the Afghan soldiers the operating procedures used by Italian Alpine troops. During the period almost 91 joint patrols were performed.

The efforts of the Italian battle group during this operation have made a significant difference in supporting the Afghan population in the valley to the south of Kabul and in the Italian area of operation in the capital.

Finland funds new school in Qabel Bai

RC - Capital Staff Reports

After six months of work, contractors using Finnish funds completed the Qabel Bai Middle School in Kabul on July 18 and a held a ceremony to celebrate the event.

Qabel Bai Middle School in Kabul took six months to build, but the design and vision were a collaborative effort between the Finnish CIMIC teams and key leaders in Qabel Bai months before the project began. Numerous meetings were held to discuss concerns for the educational facilities in the community.

ISAF and the Finnish CIMIC teams implemented and monitored the building process as local contractors did the actual work.

The new school consists of 16 classrooms, 4 toilets, furniture, latrine building and water reservoir. In addition, local contractors fixed the school yard by leveling the ground with gravel.

The total cost of the project was almost 170,000 USD. The Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded all expenses for the project.

Finland has now completed over 700 CIMIC projects within Afghanistan and is now concentrating efforts in other ways to help Afghan communities.



Crowds line up as Qabel Bai Middle School is dedicated for use in a ceremony



Turkey vows to educate the public with new skills

Story by 1st Lieutenant Serdar Eyller

Starting off the International Security Assistance Force mission with the motto "Don't give fish, teach how to fish!" The Turkish Republic has focused on public education since the first day of its international mission here.

As a concrete effort to put this principle into practice, Turkish Battle Group Civil-Military Cooperation teams signed protocols with municipalities on

"I hope the students graduating from these courses will acquire themselves useful jobs and assist the development of Afghanistan for a better future," said Brig. Gen. Erdem.

The products achieved as a result of the courses will be sold, with half of the income going to the students. The rest will be set apart for the improvement of course equipment.

"We are aware of what these courses mean for the people living here," said Capt. Baris Kilic, TBG CIMIC team member. "The courses mean a way of earning a living for their future."

At their graduation, the students received certificates, signed by the Brig. Gen. Erdem and approved by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Ministry of Education.

One graduate expressed her appreciation for the program.

"It's an opportunity for me to make my living by learning an occupation in this sewing course," said Rahima, a student in the program.



Brig. Gen. Kasim Erdem, RC(C) commander, visits a sewing course for Turkey's education campaign

Aug. 4 to organize skill courses in the Regional Command Capital area of responsibility.

TBG CIMIC teams organized a ceremony to inaugurate 12 skill course centers in Bagrami, Khak-e Jabbar, and Khud Hill. These courses will focus on sewing, embroidery, carpet weaving, computer and blacksmith skills.

Brig. Gen. Kasim Erdem, RC(C) commander, visited all course centers to observe the students in action. He wanted to make it clear that these programs should emphasize the importance for people taking the courses for social development within the community.

(ISAF and ANSF combine skills story continued from page 7)

mourners along the route that might have been hidden.

The ISAF improvised explosive device disposal specialist mingled amongst the mourners ready to act in mentorship support of ANSF IEDD command and if needed.

"The whole team was privileged to be asked to be a part of this event," said Spc. Thomas Kopietz, a quick response force unit member.

Building bridges in Afghanistan

*Story and Photo by Captain Ashley Dellavalle
Task Force Rugged Public Affairs Office*

The sweltering 100 degree heat beamed as the first 50 Afghan National Army Engineers learned to assemble a Bailey Bridge at Bagram Air Field, that will be used for future missions in Afghanistan.

The initial week-long training for the ANA Engineers of 4-3 Kandak, 201st Corps Command, began July 16 by their mentors and soldiers from the 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, 70th Engineer Battalion, of Fort Riley, Kan.

The Bailey Bridge is a portable, pre-fabricated bridge designed specifically for military use. The bridge can span up to 200-foot gaps and don't require special tools or heavy equipment for construction. Depending on the span and the number of trusses, Bailey Bridges can hold up to 100-ton loads.

One of the major advantages of this bridge is its easy constructability.

"The bridge is like putting together Lego parts," said Staff Sgt. John Joyner, bridge expert of the 36th Engineer Brigade, Task Force Rugged. "It's a fairly simple bridge to assemble once you set the base plates and rollers correctly. We are training the Afghan Engineer soldiers on the bridge system so that they can emplace the bridge themselves."

The finished Bailey Bridges will allow International Security Assistance Forces and Afghan National Security Forces, along with Afghans the ability to travel efficiently across water crossings and gaps in the land.

"The ANA love working and living side-by-side with American soldiers," said Abdul Ahad, deputy commander of the ANA Engineer Company.

The ANA continues to expand their capabilities in engineering. Training their soldiers on the bridging mission will allow them to train other ANA soldiers to also build bridges.

"Bridging is important to our mission," said Ahad. "The bridges that we build in the future throughout Afghanistan will allow the districts of the nation to be linked and will tie the country as

a whole together. It's the ANA's job to help provide these links to the people of Afghanistan."



Afghan National Army Engineers of 4-3 Kandak, 201st Corps Command, assemble a 40-foot Bailey Bridge in preparation for future missions in Afghanistan.

Afghans take ownership of Jalalabad District Communications Center

*Story and Photo by Spc. Henry Selzer
173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs*

The beginning of August marked another step forward for the citizens of Afghanistan as a new District Communications Center was opened in Jalalabad.

The construction of the DCC began more than nine months ago by Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, but was recently handed over to the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team to oversee completion.

"The people don't yet understand that they have a voice in their government, said U.S. Lt. Col. Gordon Phillips, ISAF Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team commander. "This facility will hopefully further the ability to get that word out."

"It's nice to have this tool and to be able to use it, but what is really important is the people who will be working here," Phillips said. "The [Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] needs to make sure that the right people with the right talents are placed to work here so they can get the most use out of this facility."



Afghan Minister of Communications Amirzi Sengi (left) and Air Force Lt. Col. Gordon Phillips (right), commander of the Nangarhar PRT, signs the paperwork handing over the new District Communications Center in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, Aug. 1.

"This facility is going to become a very important asset to the people of Jalalabad because it is going to help push important information and news to the population as well as be the people's voice," Phillips continued.

The crowd was enthusiastic as the new building was signed over from the Nangarhar PRT to Amirzi Sengi, Minister of Communications.

"I think the Afghan people are very happy that the PRT is here, and the locals are very cooperative," said U.S. Capt. Maurice Middleton, team leader of the ISAF Nangarhar PRT Civil Affairs.

"The biggest things we try to do are build capacity and get the government the tools they need so one day, they will have a government and economy that is self-sustained," Middleton said.

Mehtar Lam PRT trains ANP, ANAP

*Story and Photo by Air Force Captain Nora Eyle
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs*

Since their arrival in Afghanistan, one Air Force staff sergeant and his team have been training 10 to 20 Afghan National Police and Afghan National Auxiliary Police weekly developing their law-enforcement skills.

For almost four months, Staff Sgt. Daniel Smith, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Police Technical Advisory Team at the Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team has been training the Afghan police officers in community policing, use of force, hand-to-hand combat, searching and handcuffing, ethics, riot control, rifle fighting, offensive and defensive tactics, as well as other skills.

"This PTAT program will have touched virtually every ANAP and ANP in the Laghman province by the end of our tour," said Smith.

"The PTAT program is really important because it is a tool that refines and reshapes [their] way of thinking and makes the ANP and ANAP better police officers," said Senior Airman Zackary Osborne, a PTAT member.

"Training of the ANP and ANAP are critical to the long - term stability of Afghanistan," said Lt Col. Robert Ricci, Mehtar Lam PRT commander. "Nothing happens without security in this nation. The ANP and ANAP are the first - line defender against insurgents and general crimes to the public."

The training of the ANP and ANAP happens in several stages. First, individuals are trained at the Regional Training Center in Jalalabad for basic police duty. Then, their law-enforcement skills are broadened at the PTAT one-week course. There, they concentrate primarily on tactical level tasks and capabilities. Lastly, the individuals are placed back in their district units where the military police platoon assigned to the forward operating base can work with the personnel in the field to put into practice what the PTAT is teaching.

The students all work hard to perform their tasks and we are impressed with their efforts, said Osborne.

"They show a real understanding for all the subjects, but the ones that stand out the most are ethics and use of force. They all want to become better at their job," he said.

"Every day I see the ANP and ANAP getting better," said Ricci. "If I were to take a snapshot from when we first arrived and compare it to where we are now and where we're going, the pictures would look nothing alike. Everyday they're getting better ... and I have my PTAT to thank for a significant part of that."

The instructors know that they are making a difference with their program.

"It is always a good feeling when people come back to the FOB and say the ANP are doing a great job out there, and they are showcasing their newly learned skills and are saying that they learned it from the PTAT teachers," said Smith. "It is a great feeling to know that the subjects you teach to these people could be the very item that helps them save a life."

The Mehtar Lam PTAT program has trained more than 200 ANP and ANAP students to date.

Afghan forces take mission lead in Ghazni province

*Story and Photo by Spc. Matthew Leary
Task Force Fury PAO*

Afghan National Security Forces, with the aid from International Security Assistance Forces, just completed Operation Spinax recently in Ghazni province.

The month-long mission that began in July aimed at pushing Taliban insurgents out of the southern portion of Ghazni province.

While there have been many ANSF and ISAF joint-missions conducted in Afghanistan, this one was slightly different due to the increasing capabilities of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police elements, which led the mission.

"We came in here with our own plan for a joint operation where we would be in the lead," said Army Lt. Col. David J. Woods, commander of the 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry, Task Force Fury. "Then I sat down with two ANP commanders and two ANA commanders and watched them develop their own plan, one in which we were in a supporting role."

The unexpected development was a welcome surprise to Task Force Fury soldiers who have been working hand-in-hand with the ANSF over the past six months.

"They came in the room and started planning it and everybody stood back," said Army Staff Sgt. Robert L. Proctor, an artilleryman with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery Regiment. As one of the mentors for the 203rd Corps of the ANA, Proctor said he was particular glad to see his brothers-in-arms take charge of the situation and lead the mission.

On the battlefield, the subtle shift in the command structure could be seen first hand. ISAF forces were able to step back and support the Afghan military as they organized and executed their own missions.

"The ANSF are the Afghan citizens own people, from their own towns who are now running the missions and coming into their villages," he said. "And that's exactly what the people want to see." The training was put to the test when groups from of ANA, ANP and ISAF soldiers traveled south to Gelan and broke off to conduct several smaller missions. Each mission focused on the separation of Taliban insurgents from the populous and their expulsion from the district.

The soldiers from Troop A were tasked to clear the roads of IEDs and ensure new ones were not set in their place after removal.

"One night we saw two guys, one digging and one guy watching, so we sent out on patrol to find them," said Army Sgt. Felix W. Bala, a cavalry scout and section sergeant with Troop A. "We saw him again after that, and every time he tried to dig we would go out and try to get him." Although the insurgent was able to flee before being captured, the presence of Troop A successfully prevented another IED from being emplaced in a route traveled by both civilians and military forces.

On the offensive side of the operation, paratroopers from Troop B were directly linked with the command and control element of the ANA and ANP, Army 1st Lieut. Patrick M. Thumm, Troop B Fire Support officer said. As ANA and ANP commanders moved about Gelan, these soldiers traveled with them and provided support when asked.

"The mission is to clear the area of the bad guys, search for weapons and meet the people," said ANP Capt. Ahmad Farid, the commander of the ANP team involved in Operation Spinax. "But when we were coming into the mission, we knew one of the most important things was to talk to the people and know their problems. Next time we will come back and our government will then try to help solve their problems."

"This operation was a success because the ANSF took the lead and maintained it" Farid said. "they gained the confidence of the local populous, and they did it through their actions and their deeds."

"It's all about the people of Afghanistan," Woods said. "This operation has been solely about the people of Afghanistan, not the ANA or ANP, and certainly not us. It's about the people wanting something else. They want a job, they want security, they want a life of freedom."



An Afghan National Army soldier questions a villager during a patrol of the Gelan district, Ghazni province.

Task Force Helmand OP Herrick 6





Military forces provide aid to Kandahar locals

*Story and photos by
Captain Vanessa R. Bowman
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

In a recent multi-nation, multi-service mission in Kandahar province, military forces joined to provide medical and humanitarian support, which assisted more than 300 local residents.

The joint endeavor achieved three objectives.

The first was to conduct a village medical outreach, which provided medical treatment, preventative medicine supplies and medications to more than 100 patients. The second was to distribute humanitarian aid, which brought much needed supplies to more than 40 families. Finally, the mission gave the Afghan National Army a chance to interact and help the local community.

The mission combined medical personnel and security forces from Kandahar Airfield, Camp Lindsey and Camp Shir Zai. Personnel from Camp Lindsey are part of the 1/205th Brigade ANA Embedded Training Team and Navy Garrison, which is in partnership with the ANA 1/205th 'Hero' Corps Garrison at Camp Shir Zai outside of Kandahar.

As part of ongoing ANA outreach missions to the local area, ANA doctors and security forces were an integral part of the mission. Capt. Shawn Noga, 205th Regional Security and Assistance command, from Camp Phoenix stressed the importance of having the ANA as part of these types of missions.

While patients at the village medical outreach received medical treatment, ANA soldiers distributed humanitarian assistance items. The items distributed were beans, rice, sugar, tea, salt, tomatoes, wheat and onion seeds; as well as baby formula and cereal. Other items distributed included: radios, hygiene kits,

backpacks, shoes, kites and stuffed animals for the children.

Missions like this are a regular part of operations at Camps Lindsey and Shir Zai.

The women were especially pleased with the shoes as the children showed off their new toys and kite flying skills.

"These missions are really to give the villagers hope and to show them that the ANA is here," said Noga.



Above & Below: Children fly kites and play with toys they received during a multi-nation, multi-service mission in Kandahar province.





The US hands control of southern skies to the Aussies

Story by Captain Dan O'Mara
Photo by MCpl Kenneth Fenner

A 75-strong Royal Australian Air Force detachment formally took over management of a portion of Afghanistan's operational airspace from the US Air Force on Aug. 5 during a ceremony at Camp Palomino, Kandahar.



Members of both the Australian and United States parade at Camp Palomino for the handover/takeover ceremony. The 73rd Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, USAF, passes air control authority to Task Group 633.12 from the Royal Australian Air Force for Southern Afghanistan.

The RAAF Control and Reporting Centre is an integral element of the International Security Assistance Force command and control architecture and undertakes 24/7 operations from Kandahar Airfield. RAAF personnel are responsible for air space management and air surveillance tasks over southern Afghanistan.

Air space management involves aircraft coordination in support of ISAF air operations protecting troops on the ground. CRC is also responsible for coordinating air to air refueling.

The air surveillance role involves RAAF personnel collecting information from various radars across Afghanistan and creating an air picture, which is used to view and conduct air operations. In essence, the RAAF provides ISAF and Coalition agencies important situational awareness, thereby demonstrating comprehensive air battle management and seamless interoperability between multi-national forces.

"Air Force personnel are using our advanced radar and networked capabilities to play a key role supporting air operations in Afghanistan," said Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd, Royal Australian Air Force chief.

"RAAF personnel have worked hard since April preparing for this deployment and establishing themselves in Kandahar," said Air Marshal Shepherd. "The RAAF has seamlessly taken over airspace management

from the US Air Force, and the cooperation we have received from the US operators has been outstanding."

The deployment was established by the 41st Wing from RAAF Base Williamtown, located north of Sydney, Australia, and primarily involves members of the Darwin based 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit, as well as personnel from the RAAF Combat Support Group.

This is an important milestone in 114 MCRU's long history. This Afghanistan task is the unit's first operational deployment since the 1960s.



Teachers get lesson to instruct future teachers

RC - West Staff Reports

The Teacher's Education Program workshop kicked off on Aug. 7 to begin instructing future teachers for Farah province.

The three-day workshop, which is supported by UNICEF, will train 42 teachers who will then train 450 female teachers throughout Farah province.

The education workshop will focus on modern methods of teaching, which are more interactive to enhance child development than compared to the traditional classroom lecture methods.

Following this advanced training session, 1,750 male teachers will also be trained throughout the province. In between the two sessions, over 700 third to sixth grade teachers will have their skills upgraded.

Mr. Atiqullah, Director of Education in Farah province, made opening ceremony remarks for the workshop.

"During three decades of war, our Ministry lost everything and was unable to provide training for our teachers," said Mr. Atiqullah.

After a short speech, Mr. Atiqullah thanks UNICEF for their help in funding the training and the PRT for their ongoing support of education within the community.

After the ceremony it was announced that a new Center for Excellence will be built in Farah City. While focusing on a high-quality, Islamic-based education, the Center will be part of a network of Madrassas being built throughout Afghanistan.

Donations made to ANP widows, family

RC - West Staff Reports

Donations of food, candy and money were passed to the widows and family of 11 ANP soldiers killed in an attack on July 7, 2007.

Five other soldiers were also injured in the attack, which took place in Shewan village, in the Bala Baluk district of Farah province.

Dyncorps, PRT Farah and the ANP themselves combined resources to gather the donations, which were distributed to the families by the ANP in a ceremony on July 17.

One of the slain soldiers, Jabar, was supporting his mother, younger brother and his three children.



"He died to protect others and died because he wanted to do good things," said Halima, mother of Jabar. "And if my second son was older, I would send him to fight our enemy too."

The eagles have landed in Herat

Story by Major Gezim Marku

Albania, a contender to join the NATO in the coming year, has contributed with troops on numerous missions such as Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan (Kabul), and Georgia. We share NATO's vision towards keeping the peace in countries with political instabilities and securing their integrity.

The personnel of the contingent have been trained specifically for this mission for approximately a year. Their training has enabled them to gain all the skills and understanding of the responsibilities that they will incur.

Three quarters of the contingent's personnel have a background in mission skills in the countries that have been mentioned above.

Moreover, they have proven their capabilities during previous missions, as they have finished successfully and returned home safely.

It's the first time in Herat, but not in Afghanistan, that an Albanian contingent is taking part in a mission in collaboration with other nations. The contingent's goal is to protect the base of Regional Command West in Herat under the supervision of the Italian Forces.

The Albanian contingent consists of enough personnel to sustain and provide solid security in duties that will be commanded by the Italian command of Force Protection.

The duration of the mission in Herat will be for six months; where throughout this period of time the main responsibility will be guarding the base as part of force protection alongside Italian and Slovenian forces.

As it has been mentioned through the agreement between the Italian and Albanian forces for the logistics, the contingent has the necessary equipment to do its job on guarding portions of the RC-West base.

Albanian forces depart a C-130 J Hercules after arriving in Herat for a support mission.

Photo by Captain Ettore Sarti





ISAF, ANA respond to flooding in North

RC-N Staff Reports

Soldiers from the International Security Assistance Force's Provincial Reconstruction Team Mazar-e Sharif and the Afghan National Army conducted a joint humanitarian relief operation in Khamyab and Qarqin in northern Afghanistan Aug. 4 to 6.

The operation involved 84 personnel and 15 vehicles from ANSF, ISAF and a United States police mentor team.

They helped approximately 200 local families by distributing food, tents, clothing and footwear. An ANA medical team provided local clinics with medicine and screened approximately 100 people in Dinar village.

The Jawzjan provincial governor and village elders requested help from the commander of the 209th ANA Corps to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghan families who have suffered losses due to a recent flooding in the border provinces.

Rising waters of the Amu Darya River, after heavy rainfall, caused the flooding within the region.



ISAF and Afghan National Army soldiers distribute humanitarian supplies in Khamyab and Qarqin.

ISAF and Afghan National Army soldiers distribute humanitarian supplies in Khamyab and Qarqin.

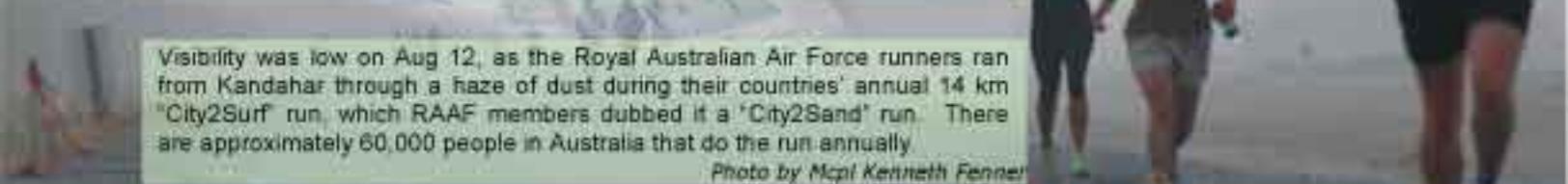


Around ISAF



Commanders at the Peace Jirga go over security details for ANA, ANP with support from ISAF

Photo by Staff Sgt. Ray Winstead



Visibility was low on Aug 12, as the Royal Australian Air Force runners ran from Kandahar through a haze of dust during their countries' annual 14 km "City2Surf" run, which RAAF members dubbed it a "City2Sand" run. There are approximately 60,000 people in Australia that do the run annually.

Photo by Mpl Kenneth Fenner



The Afghan National Army Football team plays against the ISAF team on Aug 9.

The ANA team won 8-1.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Ray Winstead

An Afghan National Police member practices searching techniques with British Forces at ISAF Headquarters on July 28.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Ray Winstead

