



ISAF MIRROR

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A Work
in Progress**

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About ISAF

Mission: Conduct military operations in the assigned area of operations to assist the Government of Afghanistan in the establishment and maintenance of a safe and secure environment with full engagement of Afghan National Security Forces, in order to extend government authority and influence, thereby facilitating Afghanistan's reconstruction and contributing to regional stability.

Key Facts:

- Commander: General (USA) Dan K. McNeill
- Current HQ: HQ ISAF X (USA lead) from Feb, 4
- 39 Troop Contributing Nations
- ISAF Total Strength: approx 41,144 (Includes National Support Elements)
- Remaining USA Contingent: approximately 7,000 (Operation Enduring Freedom)
- ISAF AOR (Afghanistan land mass) 650,000 km²
- 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT)

Regional Command Capital (approx strength 4,800)

- HQ ISAF in Kabul (Composite)
- HQ RC-C in Kabul (TUR)

Regional Command South (approx strength 11,600)

- HQ RC-S in Kandahar (GBR)

Regional Command West (approx strength 2,500)

- HQ RC-W in Herat (ITA)

Regional Command North (approx strength 3,300)

- HQ RC-N in Mazar-e Sharif (DEU)

Regional Command East (approx strength 13,900)

- HQ RC-E in Bagram (USA)

National Support Elements (approximately strength 4,100)

(Information current as Dec 20)



Front Page: Stock photo of Afghan National Policeman leading international forces. Back Page: Major Gen. Bruno Kasdorf, ISAF Chief of Staff, visits with Santa Claus at HQ ISAF.



ISAF Mirror is a Headquarters International Security Assistance Force Public Affairs product intended for the information and entertainment of ISAF and associated personnel. Though articles have been edited, opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of NATO, Joint Forces Command Headquarters Brunssum, or ISAF. Submissions to The Mirror should be related to ISAF operations; however, other articles may be run based on their appeal to an international military audience. Articles should be sent in Microsoft Word format and photos should be at least 4.5 cm at 300 dpi resolution. Email submissions to reginal.woodruff@hq.isaf.nato.int (until April 2008) or pressoffice@hq.isaf.nato.int.

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RC-C gets new commander



Brig. Gen. Bonato speaks at RC-C change of command (RC-C)

By Turkish Army 1st Lt. Necmettin Berk
Media Operations Officer
Regional Command Capital Public Affairs
Office

Brigadier Gen. Federico Bonato, Italian Army, returned to familiar grounds when he assumed command of Regional Command Capital earlier this month for

the third time. He replaced Turkish Army Brig Gen. Kasim Erdem, who served as commander for eight months.

Headquartered in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, RC-C is apart of the International Security Assistance Force. The RC maintains a force of about 3,000 soldiers from 13 countries. Commanding

officers from France, Turkey and Italy lead the command on eight-month rotations.

Command international environment requires experience and commitment, making General Bonato a good fit to lead RC-C. In addition to his two previous tours as commander of RC-C, he also served in multinational operations in Kosvo from 2001 to 2002. The general pledged the men and women under his command would work closely with the people of Afghanistan to continue rebuilding their country. "Our teams will continue in reconstruction and support the local population and institutions," he said

Generals Bonato and Erdem expressed gratitude for the efforts of the troops serving in RC-C. General Edem credited their strong commitment for improving security and stability in Kabul. "The Afghan nation deserves everything and a bright future," he said. "I extend my deepest wishes for success and safety for the mission under command of General Bonato."

Officials from the Afghan National Army attended the ceremony, along with ambassadors, military attaches, representatives from Headquarters ISAF and Coalition Forces, and other guests.

Leadership of PRT Chaghcharan changes hands

By Capt. Tomas Balkus
Chaghcharan Provincial
Reconstruction Team
Public Information Office

Colonel Albertas Kondrotas has assumed command of the Lithuanian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Chaghcharan. He replaces former commander Colonel Dalius Polekauskas.

Commander of Regional Command West, Italian Brig. Gen. Fausto Macor, Herat PRT commander, Col. Roberto De Masi, and Ghowr Province Chief of police, Gen. Shah Jahan Noori, participated in change of command ceremony.

General Macor thanked the soldiers under Col. Polekauskas' leadership for



Brig. Gen. Macor greets soldiers (Chaghcharan PRT)

their honest service and work in Ghowr province. "Never forget, this mission is for the Afghanistan people," he said. "You can be proud for what you have done here."

in the province. "I have no doubt that we will stay in good relationship with the authority and people and will put all our efforts to help you to keep Ghowr safe and stable," he said.

General Noori praised the spirit of teamwork between international forces and the local authorities. "We were good equipped and have adopted very important experience in police work because of RC-W and PRT Chaghcharan close cooperation with us," he said.

As commander Col. Kondrotas said Ghowr's continued prosperity will depend on everyone



Leaders plan emergency responses

By U.S. Army Pfc. Daniel M. Rangel
22nd Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

International Security Assistance Force service members and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan met Nov. 24 to plan an emergency response for four different scenarios, which may threaten the population.

U.S. Army Col. Jeff Johnson, Regional Command East surgeon, assisted Dr. Jawad Mofleh, the Minister of Public Health's sub-director for Disease and Disease Prevention, in coordinating a comprehensive plan for IROA agencies.

"We've brought together all of the different [contributing nations] in Afghanistan who have a role and would want to respond to a disease outbreak," Johnson said.

The Minister of Public Health has taken the lead while the Minister of Transportation plans to facilitate movement within Afghanistan. The plans also call on the Minister of Agriculture to assess the relationship many of the

diseases have between animals and humans, while the Minister of Defense contributes with his office's very robust medical system, Johnson said.

The organizations assisting in the planning included ISAF's RC-E, the U.S. Agency for International Development and Command Security Transition Command—Afghanistan, who mentors the different ministers and provides national oversight for different types of responses.

"Without military nowadays, we feel that we're not able to enter and work in different areas," Mofleh said. "We have to work with the military to ensure the safety of our staff in the field."

The four different emergency response plans pertain to food and water diseases, radiation exposure, avian influenza and a zoonotic disease outbreak originating from livestock.

"It's clear that we need to have better plans for how we respond to these kinds of events," Col. Johnson said. "What these teams are now doing is using all of those different [contributing nations] perspectives to come up with how

Afghanistan, as a country, would respond to one of those emergency scenarios."

The intent is to create a model at the national level that can be implemented at the regional and provincial levels.

"There might be a great plan in Kabul, but if the provincial health directors or the provincial directors of transportation don't know what to do or how they fit into the bigger plan, then we've lost the plan," said Col. Johnson.

Although the colonel doesn't mention any immediate need for the emergency plans, Dr. Frotan Azzizullah of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, who helped plan the response for an outbreak of H5N1, a subtype of avian influenza virus, is working vigorously to get the plans in place.

"We're working together to control any disease in Afghanistan. We're working very hard, very quickly," Azzizullah said.

Col. Johnson noted that planning for a possible outbreak at the national level is an achievement in itself and shows a greater emphasis will be placed on prevention rather than treatment.

Airman Murray stocks his medical bag before heading out on a convoy. (U.S. Army Spec. Daniel Richardson)



Medical Challenge

Police Mentor Team Linoma medical technician does what's needed to keep the good guys ready to fight

By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Mike Andriacco
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

For Senior Airman Neil Murray, a combat medic with Police Mentor Team Linoma at Forward Operating Base Maholic, a normal day at the office can include calling out enemy positions to a gunner or treating life-threatening injuries.

Airman Murray, an emergency room medical technician deployed from Travis Air Force Base, Calif., has spent the last several months as the sole medical provider for the team and sometimes others. "It's definitely been a challenge," Airman Murray said. "There are no physician assistants or doctors on Maholic to help me out."

He recently came to the aid of an 11-year-old Aghani boy who was injured during a suicide bombing. Airman Murray said he treated the boy, who received burns over 30 percent of his body, until medical evacuation arrived.

Airman Murray says the work has been rewarding because it allows him to help fellow service members and the

Afghan people.

Despite the rewards, Airman Murray said his job had its share of challenges. "The hardest part is being a normal medical technician and having to make decisions that more experienced people would usually have to make," he said. "I do a lot of research, but the most important part is knowing my limitations and being able to say 'I don't know.'"

Working alongside Soldiers has also been an educational experience for Airman Murray. He said he is grateful for the opportunity to see how tactical decisions are made and operations are conducted by his Army partners.

"I have been nothing but impressed with the Army members I work with on a daily basis," he said. "They make sound decisions and I know they would put their neck on the line for me, as I would for them."

The Soldiers are also impressed with the Airmen in their midst.

"We are lucky to have him," said team member U.S. Army Sgt. Jose Cruz. "He does a lot of good work, not just for the ANP but also for us and the local population."

Involvement

Local Aghans meet to discuss their concerns

By U.S. Air Force Capt. Bob Everdeen
Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat

International Security Assistance Force members constantly seek opportunities to make Afghans at the local level apart of the rebuilding process. One way officials do this is by encouraging locals to conduct shuras or meetings to voice their concerns in an open forum.

Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat believes strongly in the effectiveness of shuras. The PRT facilitated a shura in October that brought 125 locals together.

The major topics of were security of the area, the types of support and assistance from the Afghan government, and prioritizing reconstruction needs in the district.

As with many of the villages and districts in the southern province, top concerns include clean drinking water, protection from insurgents and improved healthcare.

"We had a woman die last winter due to complications with her pregnancy," said a local Aghani leader at the shura. "We had no doctor, the clinic was in bad shape and the roads were impassable." These are the types of tragedies the Afghan government works daily to avoid in this war-torn country. And with so many problems to address, it is important that ISAF knows what's most important to the citizens.

As commander of PRT Qalat, Army Lt. Col. James Bramble assures locals their concerns are the concerns of ISAF.

"Thank you for inviting us to this shura," he said to the meeting attendees. "We look forward to working with the people of Nawbahar in the future on security, governance and reconstruction issues."



MEDICAL TEAMWORK

International and Afghan medical personnel share their expertise and resources in a partnership to deal with hernia repair in Farah

By Gina Gillespie
Regional Command West

Afghan and American medical personnel in the Farah District recently combined resources to provide quality medical care to local people. When Maj. Elizabeth Lawrance, a surgeon at Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah, was faced with several hernia operations, she called on local urology expert Dr. Rabani, and Rahim, a nurse anesthetist from Farah Hospital to assist with the operations.

“The reason I wanted (Dr. Rabani) here is because he is trained in urology,” said Maj. Lawrance. “There are seven or eight different ways to repair a hernia. When we work together we can compare thoughts and ideas about issues in this patient population, which are a little bit different than in the United States.”

Over a two-day period Dr. Rabani, Dr. Lawrance and nurse anesthetists Capt. Eric Binder and Rahim worked side by

side, performing hernia operations on two village elders.

Capt. Binder said the Afghan-American medical partnership has worked well and been beneficial for him. “I’m interested in field medicine and Rahim lives that,” said the captain. “He does that every day. I’m going to show him some of the techniques we use for general anesthesia. I’m excited about (working with him).”

Rahim, who serves as head nurse in Farah Hospital, credits the partnership, Capt Binder especially, for helping him learn more about medicines. “I have learned many things from Capt Binder. We discussed the age of the drugs, the contraindication of the drugs and how to use them. That was helpful for me and all the people working in the department of anesthesiology,” said Rahim.

The forward surgical team at PRT Farah consists of an orthopedic surgeon, general surgeon, nurse anesthetist,

licensed practical nurses and surgical scrub technicians. While the team’s primary function is trauma support for International Security Assistance Force and Coalition forces, the staff also provides trauma support to the Afghan National Security Force and, in their spare time, offer elective surgery to the local populace.

The ailments treated are wide and varied, from a child with six fingers on each hand to a club-footed boy to a village elder with a hernia. Prospective patients come to the attention of surgeons through biweekly, free health clinic held at the local airfield. The clinic is jointly operated by medical personnel from the PRT, Italian forces, Coalition forces, and the Afghan National Army. Soldiers of the ANA provide security for the clinic. Patients found suitable for elective surgery are invited to the PRT medical center every Monday for a closer look and consultation.

Clinic Examination

The medical treatment facility at Tormay shows great progress is being made in Afghan health care.

By U.S. Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team medical personnel conducted a clinical assessment of the Tormay comprehensive health clinic in Kwaja Omarie, Ghazni Province, Nov. 25.

The Tormay clinic, a Ministry of Public Health clinic, is supported through the cooperative efforts of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, non-governmental organizations and military assets.

“This clinic captures a perfect picture of the developing health sector through current Commanders Emergency Relief Program funded projects,” said Navy Lt.

Keith Hoekman, Ghazni PRT medical officer. “The clinic is immaculately clean and is run by a physician who regularly attends the weekly medical-lecture series on the forward operating base, and has learned the value of infection control within the clinic setting.”

The impressiveness of the cleanliness is amplified by the large number of patients who visit the clinic.

“The female patients are evaluated by a female provider who recently attended the women’s health workshop, which was part of the recent PRT-sponsored women’s health month,” said Lt. Hoekman. “Prior to being seen by the provider, each woman receives a health-education class from a female nurse.”

On the male side of the clinic, the male nurse, a recent attendee of Bagram Airfield’s 14-day medical-training program, provides care to patients using documenting procedures and skills recently refined at BAF.

“Outside the clinic, a large billboard displays symptoms of tuberculosis and advertises the tuberculosis program offered at the clinic,” said Navy Lt. J.G. Joseph Duchesneau, Ghazni PRT information officer. “This billboard is one of 21 recently constructed around the province through coordination with the public-health director.”

Beneath the billboard, the new PRT-donated ambulance was parked, ready for use.

“We purchased ambulances to transport patients between care centers,” said Lt. Hoekman. “So far, we’ve bought 19 ambulances and we plan on purchasing 12 more to cover all of the comprehensive health clinics.”

Directly in front of the clinic, the road leading to Ghazni City and the provincial hospital has been widened and graded in preparation to be paved.

“This CERP-funded road-paving project, intended to open the Kwaja Omarie district to the provincial capital, will shorten the time that it takes to transfer a sick patient in the ambulance from about 75 minutes to about 20 minutes,” said Lt. Duchesneau.

Soon, a CERP-funded transport ventilator will be donated to the clinic. The clinic’s physician has already attended training at forward operating base Ghazni to operate the ventilator. The ventilator will allow patients to be incubated at the clinic’s emergency room in preparation for transport to the provincial hospital.

In preparation for a trial, CERP-funded, outpatient supplemental feeding program, the clinic doctor



An ISAF medical technician treats a patient. (ISAF Public Affairs)

has identified and trained one of the nurses as a nutritional specialist. The training focused on identifying common causes of malnutrition, treatments for malnutrition and means of identifying malnutrition.

“Every child that enters the clinic on their first visit gets weighed and measured to identify growth and nutritional abnormalities,” said Lt. Hoekman. “If the child is in the lower 10 percent, the family is entered into an outpatient monitoring and education program. As the funding arrives for the supplemental feeding program, these children will be entered into that program as well.”

The doctor has also agreed to hold English classes twice a week at the clinic for local middle-school girls who have asked to learn. He does this, in part, because he sees the need for girls to learn English if they are to graduate from high school and attend medical school.

The doctor said it is one of his desires is to see an increase in the number of professionally-trained, female medical providers and this is one small way he can help to accomplish this goal.

“With proactive medical personnel and CERP funding to open the doors for capacity building, this clinic in Kwaja Omarie is a model of what can take place in the development of the health sector of Afghanistan,” said Lt. Hoekman.

Operation Livestock

ISAF forces extend their assistance to helping animals in a village in western Afghanistan



- Sgt. 1st Class Barnett treats a donkey.
- An Afghan girl waits to get treatment for pet.

Story and photos by Chief Petty Officer Charles Wisard
ARSIC-W Public Affairs

A convoy recently departed Camp Stone going to the village of Baymohammad, north of the Koshan District in western Afghanistan on a unique mission.

Among others, the convoy carried Fernando Montesinos, a Spanish veterinarian attached to the Spanish contingent in Heart, on a mission to treat and protect village livestock and pets against parasites and disease.

This veterinary mission came about through the vision of U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class James Barnett, a medical corps embedded training team member with the Afghanistan National Army 4-1 Kandak on Camp Zafar. An active-duty Soldier with 17 years in the Army, Barnett no-

ticed the village's entire economy rested on its livestock. Armed with this insight, the idea of a veterinary engagement took shape. Sergeant Barnett located Dr. Montesinos and told him about his plan to protect the animals. After getting permission from the Spanish government and local officials, Sergeant Barnett and Dr. Montesinos worked together to make the mission happen.

Upon the convoy's arrival at Boymohammad, the villagers brought a small group of sheep into a holding pen for Dr. Montesinos to look at. After checking the sheep, he de-wormed and sprayed them, much to the delight of on-looking villagers. With the next group of sheep, Montesinos began teaching the village men how to de-worm and spray the animals. In little time the villagers were in high gear

treating their sheep and goats. U.S. Army Maj. Thayne Jolly and Capt. Paul MacDonald worked outside the pen teaching the young men of the village how to take care of their donkeys. "It is best to teach the villagers how to do the work themselves," Dr. Montesinos said, with a grin. "It is like the old adage: 'If you catch a fish for a man you feed him for a day, but if you teach him how to fish you feed him for a lifetime.'"

For the next step of the mission, Dr. Montesinos gave the dogs rabies shots and treated them for internal parasites, ticks and fleas.

In appreciation, the village elder invited the ISAF forces to lunch in his home. "Please pass on to the world the kindness, generosity, help and support the [ISAF] Forces have given to us in this village," said Ghafar. "This village appreciates the sacrifice that the families back home have to go through to allow their sons, daughters and husbands to come to Afghanistan to help us."

The District Governor, Haji Noor Aummad said, "The [ISAF] forces are helping Afghanistan to develop as a nation, build a national economy and help our industry to grow."

In all 900 sheep and goats, 60 donkeys and 50 dogs were treated. And with the training, supplies and equipment provided by Dr. Montesinos, the villagers can take care of their herds and pets, totaling 4,000 animals, now and in the future.

EMOTIONS CAN WAIT

Amid the chaos of combat emergency rooms, medical staffs work to fix wounds, save lives and deal with inevitable losses

Story and photos by
U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Dan Bellis
American Forces Network – Afghanistan

A Blackhawk helicopter screams down to the airfield blasting waves of dust and dirt. Medics turn to shield their faces from flying debris. Seconds later, they sprint to the helicopter door where a Soldier in a flight suit and helmet pounds chest compressions on a patient hidden from view. They grab the litter and sprint for the hospital doors. Life depends on their speed.

Inside, it's a frenzy. Chest compressions continue. Voices are loud and commanding, but no one is yelling. Medics dart around the room grabbing supplies and equipment: needles, machines, tubes. Doctors sweat and furrow their brows as they work to stabilize the patient. A nurse stands to the side mentally sifting the tumult, documenting the essentials. The scene appears wild and random, but

it isn't.

The team is focused; every move is deliberate.

"The best way to describe it is con-

trolled chaos," said U.S. Army Capt. Brian Shultz, one of two general surgeons here. "You try to remain detached, do your job effectively and to the best of



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

- The forward surgical team and 1st of the 503rd medics work to stabilize a critically wounded Soldier.
- Army Sgt. Gary Wert asks for assistance while changing a dressing on an Afghan boy's leg.
- Aid-station Soldiers transport a patient suffering from a gunshot wound.

(U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Dan Bellis)



your ability and maintain the efficiency of the team. Afterward, if we do lose people, we sit down and talk about it — if there are things we could've done better.”

Despite the team's best efforts, the patient flown in has passed away.

Some of the medics sit motionless around a table on the aid station's porch staring at the plywood floor. They only move to bring cigarettes to their lips. No

times, I think just being together is the part that helps the most. “

I've been doing this for about 20 years now; I see a lot of stuff. People that you wouldn't think would get up and walk out, get up and walk out. People you expect to get up and walk out, never leave. Some people, if you did everything right, are still not going to make it. It's obviously not in our control, but we'll do everything we can to give them

Once you're all done and they leave, you kind of sit out back and think about what you went through.”

Medical care here runs the gamut from IED blasts to gunshot wounds, shrapnel, burns and broken bones; intravenous lines, X-rays, splints, atropine and morphine.

“I think we do good things,” said Capt. Shultz. “I think we've made an impact on the field medical care availa-



one is ready to talk. One stands in the gravel and pours hydrogen peroxide on his boot ... to get the blood stains out. “Everybody deals with it a little differently,” said U.S. Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Junod, medical platoon sergeant. “Some-

“I sleep so well at night. I like knowing that what I do counts for something.” (Sgt 1st Class Stephen Junod)

the best chance,” he said.

“It does take an emotional toll,” said Capt. Shultz. “Everyone has their own way of dealing with the shock of losing someone and realizing the finality of it that they're not coming back. Some guys go to the gym, some run, some read.”

This team has done plenty. Some have been tasked with a nearly impossible chore: growing up facing loss, tough calls and suffering. U.S. Army Pfc. Joshua Ashford, just 20 years old, is the youngest on staff. Not old enough for alcohol in America, but old enough to have someone's life in his hands.

“When they come in, I kind of just ‘blank’ and I just work. You just do it,” said Pfc. Ashford. “All your training comes back; you know what has to get done. You don't really think about it.

ble, especially in the forward emergency resuscitative realm. All in all, everyone likes what they're doing here. This is what we've been trained to do, so everyone here is happy taking care of injured patients.”

“I sleep so well at night,” said Sergeant Junod. “I like knowing that what I do counts for something.”

The helicopters will still deliver every mother's bad dream. More often than not, her night disappears under the care of experts. The doctors, medics and nurses of the Orgun-E aid station remember the Soldiers who go home to long hugs and family dinners. They keep these memories handy, close to their hearts. It's just another tool in their medical bag of tricks. It fits snugly next to hope, chess and an overdose of reality.



British Maj. Gen. Jacko Page, Commander RC-S (left), and officials from the Afghan National Security Forces and Pakistan military greet each other prior a Border Security Sub-Committee meeting. (RC-S)



An Italian soldier on patrol in Regional Command West (RC-W)



Members of HQ ISAF make donations to an orphanage in Kabul. (Master Sgt Rodney Miranda)



Gen. Mohammad Zhair Azimi, Afghan Ministry of Defense, visits Afghan National Army soldiers in Musa Qala. (U.S. Air Force Maj. Charles Anthony)

Mentorship Works

With some guidance from international forces, Aghan soldiers are showing they have what it takes to defend their homeland



On site in Faryab Province (Courtesy CSTC-A)

Petty Officer 1st Class David Votroubek
Combined Security Transition
Command –Afghanistan
Public Affairs Office

When the Afghan National Army's 209th Corps recently deployed to Faryab Province for Operation Shaheen Sahara, their Operational Mentor Liaison Team members had to catch up with them.

Since the 209th Corps is stationed in the relatively quiet northern region of Afghanistan, this was a good opportunity for the OMLT to mentor them during an actual operation. As the OMLT's 10-vehicle convoy drove toward Forward Operating Base Freia on Highway One, they carefully traversed unpaved mountain passes, down wadis and over open stretches of ground.

There are currently 21 OMLTs embedded in ANA kandaks, brigades,

garrisons and corps headquarters across Afghanistan, with plans for more in the future. They train and mentor the ANA, and provide a liaison capability between the ANA and the International Security Assistance Force.

This particular OMLT is comprised of soldiers from Croatia, Germany, Norway and Sweden, with leadership that rotates between the last two. It is now led by Norwegian Col. Bjorn T. Bech.

Bech also mentors the brigade commander. His rapport with the commander helps him to know when to get involved or when to let the Afghans handle things on their own. If in doubt, his interpreter occasionally advises him about how to understand Afghans.

Over the course of his career, the Norwegian colonel has worked with

military forces from several NATO countries, which makes it easier for him to assess and work with different militaries. In his short time with the OMLT, Bech has learned something of the ANA's strengths and weaknesses. "No one should ever doubt the Afghan's fighting ability," he says.

Bech said this is especially true at the squad and company levels, which is why his OMLT is concentrating on improving the 209th Corps' higher brigade staff. Each section within the brigade has one officer and non-commissioned officer to advise the ANA leadership.

When the OMLT arrived at FOB Freia, the 209th Corps was already deployed out in the field. Getting out to the operation ahead of their mentors showed that they are in the lead, which is the OMLT's goal.

POLICE REFORM

International forces focus on training, equipment and ethics to help transform Afghanistan National Police into an effective unit

By U.S. Air Force
Capt. Bob Everdeen
Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat

As this year shapes up to be the bloodiest in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, Coalition military experts on the ground here are working to help reverse that trend through police reform.

Seven teams from the Combined Transition Command Afghanistan in Kabul make up the Focused District Development program, designed to transform the Afghan National Police into an independent, well-trained, ethnically-balanced, respectable and sustainable national security force. One of the teams visited the southern province of Zabul recently to assess local ANP units.

“In most places here the police don’t have enough training and don’t have enough equipment,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Scott Meeker, FDD district assessment and reform team leader. “There are corrupt leaders and some ANP are establishing unauthorized checkpoints along the main highway to extort money from civilians. These types of practices must stop.”

The FDD aims to make these changes through an eight-week training course.

“Currently, the ANP gets anywhere from two to six weeks of training,” Colonel Meeker said. “With FDD they’ll be taught policing, basic education, and ethics and leadership training.”

“Right now the ANP has very few leaders and lots of patrolmen; we need to bridge that gap and take off some of the pressure. For example, the districts of Shar-e-Safa and Shahjoy are authorized four officers and they have only one. Those individuals are the police chiefs and they’re busy taking care of administrative work that subordinates should be handling.”

After the eight-week training course, ANP officers will return to their



An Afghan National Policeman (ISAF Public Affairs)

respective districts where they’ll receive guidance and over-watch by Coalition police mentoring teams, who will monitor activities for at least a month. After that, the FDD will move on to other districts. With more than 400 police districts across the country, the process is expected to take five to seven years.

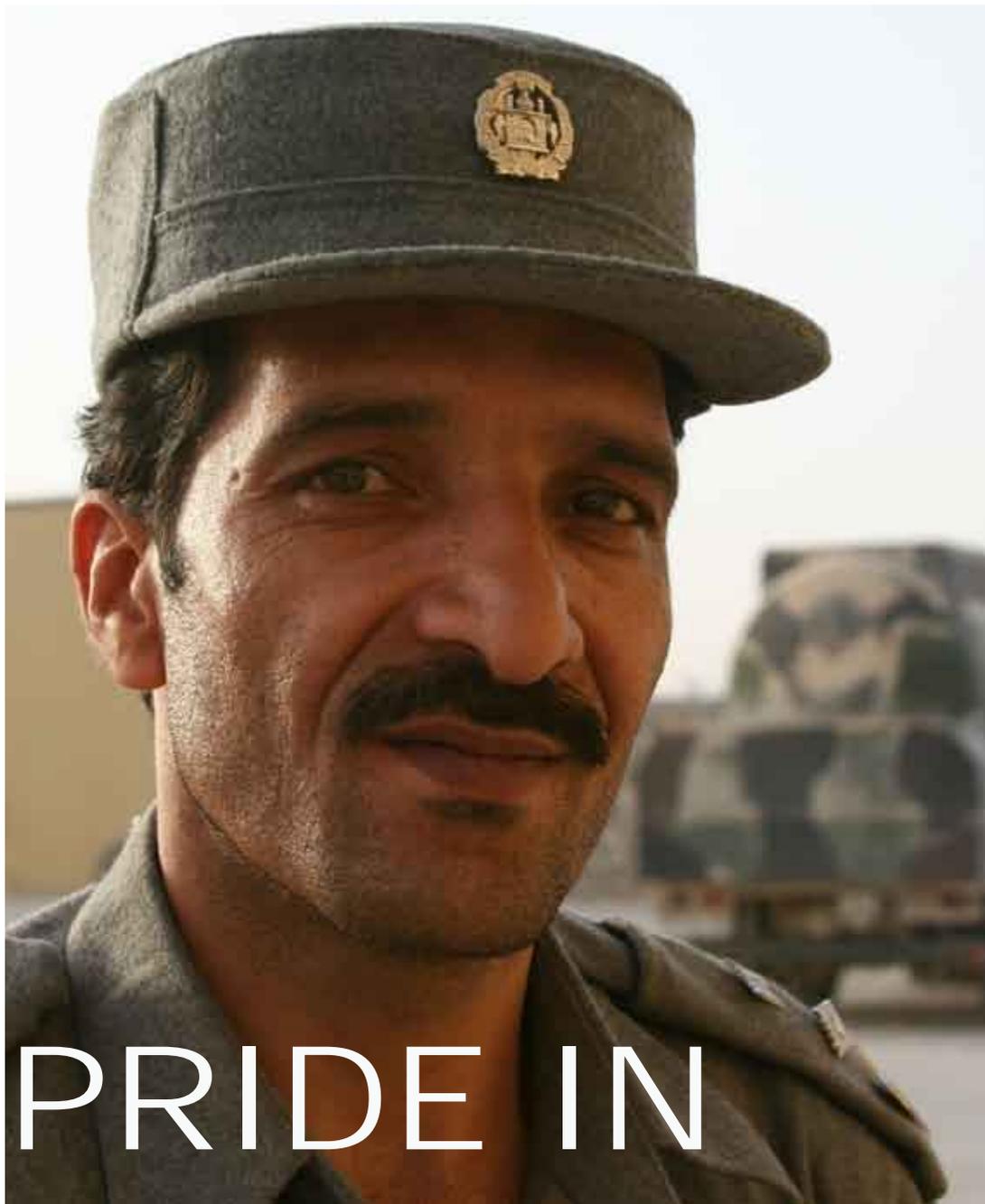
“FDD is all about getting the police force trained, equipped and sustainable by developing leaders,” Colonel Meeker said. “We also work hand-in-hand with governance, security, infrastructure and rule of law entities, too.”

That’s good news for units like Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat,

a joint U.S. Air Force and Army unit stationed here.

“We’ve seen an increase in violence and attacks here since we arrived in late March,” said U.S. Army Capt. Jack Bierce, PRT Qalat civil affairs team member. “A stronger police force will allow us more freedom of movement to conduct our mission of working with local officials in strengthening governance, reconstruction and development.”

“This was a tremendous eye-opening experience,” Colonel Meeker said of the province, “and at the end of the day, it’s the right thing for Afghanistan.”



PRIDE IN SERVICE

Four decades ago Kabul flourished during an era remembered as the “Golden Sixties”: a time before wars with the Soviets and Taliban, before suicide bombers and opium trade. Though Afghanistan wasn’t a perfect democracy during this time, it was safe and stable enough for young children to live

without fear ... and to dream.

Like many young boys growing up in Kabul during the sixties, Mohammad Mahdi dreamed of becoming a police officer. He wanted to walk around in the uniform of Afghan National Police inspiring the same pride that he had for the ANP and Kabul.

To wear the uniform was considered a decoration of honor. “The respect towards the Afghan police was great. Even ordinary policeman in the villages had only a wooden stick as ‘weapon,’” he said.

Today, Mohammad Mahdi Kabuli lives his dream. He is a lieutenant colonel, Chief of Operations, Afghan

National Police, Northern Region. He walks around in a dark grey uniform with silver stars on the shoulders. But now his challenge is more than inspiring pride in the citizens of Kabul. And his dream can be quite frightening.

Being a policeman in Afghanistan today means carrying a gun instead of only a wooden stick. It means living daily with the threat of attack and death. It means being portrayed by media around the world as corrupt, involved in bribery and nepotism.

During and after the Taliban reign, the police force lost its identity and prestige. Citizens watched as their new government, of only rudimentary existing institutions, and a police force, prone to power abuse, struggle to make Afghanistan better by restoring pride in its institutions. “This process continues until today,” says Lt. Col. Kabuli.

Four years ago, the Ministry of the Interior began to reform the ANP. Colonel Kabuli belongs to a cadre of young police officers who wanted to help build a new Afghanistan and transform the ANP.

Although an experienced police officer, Lt. Col. Kabuli willingly proved his proficiency. To join the reestablished ANP he took and passed exams, confirming that he was more than qualified to be a policeman.

He moved to Balkh province in Northern Afghanistan where he could have a greater influence in the stabilization process. There he works long, dangerous hours for little pay.

He earns 3,900 Afghani (80 U.S. dollars) per month. For more than eight months, he has been waiting for a pay raise ... not knowing when it will come.

According to Lt. Col. Kabuli, his income limits his family to one serving of meat per month with meals. However, he has sworn to himself never to take a bribe or to make illegal profit from his position.

The usually calm and polite police officer gets a very serious expression when he says: “Never ever I will do something like this. A corrupt police never can regain the respect of the people.”

(Note: Article was submitted without identifying the author)

FREEDOM IN KITES

After fleeing Afghanistan during Taliban rule, Kabul's legendary kite maker returns home and sees his kites soar to even greater heights.

By MSgt Reginal Woodruff
Chief, Command Information
ISAF Public Affairs

By Western standards Noor Agha doesn't appear to be a celebrity or successful businessman. Rough, weathered hands extend from the sleeves of his traditional Afghani clothing. He speaks in a gentle, gravelled tone. And he conducts most of his business from a small home he shares with his large family in Kabul. Yet, his kites have earned him an ample income and worldwide renown.

In his 45 years of kite making, Agha has become widely regarded as the best kite maker in Kabul, maybe in all of Afghanistan. This designation earns him high esteem, since, according to him, kite flying, fighting and running are cherished parts of Afghanistan culture.

It's common to see brightly colored kites climb through the dust-filled air of Kabul, seemingly higher than mountain peaks in the background. (Many of these Kites bear Agha's scorpion symbol.) Afghans, young and old, send their flying machines soaring, then diving – in a competition of attack and survival. However, this activity was among many banned during Taliban rule. “Unfortunately, the Taliban didn't allow kites. We were forbidden to make them but I didn't close up shop,” said Agha.

The Taliban's strict control turned honest, hardworking citizens, like Agha, into black marketers and refugees. For nearly a year, he continued to make kites at the risk of unknown punishment, until fear and decreased demand for his “illegal” kites forced him to flee his homeland. “The Taliban see our shop open and come and harass us, but we pretend to be tailors,” he said. “Soon, I could not operate under conditions of the Taliban. I could not survive, so I take my

family to Pakistan as refugees.”

In Pakistan Agha was able to freely make his kites. It wasn't long before his kite making technique, involving thousands of cuts to form the wooden frame and precise application of his specially mixed glue, began to earn him a large following. “People of Pakistan liked us more than in Afghanistan. They say ‘Stay here; we will pay for you a house and everything,’” he said. Yet, no amount of fame or fortune could keep Agha from his beloved homeland. So when the Taliban was removed from power and President Hamid Karzi sworn in as president of the newly formed government, Agha returned to Afghanistan the “next day.”

In the years since his

return Agha's business and popularity flourished. He has been interviewed by numerous local and national news agencies from several countries. The attention has brought him customers from around the world,

which brings more reporters, which brings more customers. Agha says the reason they all come is simply pride in his product. “Every year more people come to buy kites,” he said. “They love my kites. It makes me work hard, not to make many kites, but make the best, most beautiful kites.”

It's hard to argue Agha's methods. The media attention and customers even brought Hollywood calling. Producers for the Hollywood film *The Kite Runner*, based on the book by Khaled Hosseini, hired Agha to make hundreds of kites for the movie. Yet, not even the fame of Hollywood or business success has changed him. He has his same shop, same employees (his family), and same commitment he's had for 45 years: “Each customer gets best kite I can make,” he says. “That is my promise.”



Illustration of Noor Agha (Master Sgt. Reginal Woodruff)

Constructing the future

Officials educate Aghans on the process for bidding on reconstruction projects and explain building standards

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

Construction project bidder's conferences, like the one held this month at Mehtar Lam, Afghanistan, provide a forum to bid on projects and learn standards required of

make you remove and redo your work.”

The PRT and Afghan Engineer District are both engaged in construction projects to improve quality of life. AED is currently focused on two large projects. The first is a 47-kilometer asphalt surface road that will connect Mehtar Lam with Nangerej in Nuristan Province. The second is a nine structure,

Brennan. “We just signed a contract for an agriculture facility that has areas for tractor maintenance, storage of seed and a trial cool storage area. The solar powered cooling plant extends the shelf life of produce like potatoes and onions by over two months.”

Contractors at the bidding conference competing for projects, like



Aghan construction workers at a site near Mehtar Lam.

companies who want to participate in the rebuilding of the country.

Rebuilding Afghanistan, after years of neglect and destruction during Taliban rule, requires finding the right people for each specific project.

Before project locations and scope were described, the provincial head of technical engineering, the director of irrigation, the director of economics and the PRT lead engineer explained the bidding process, deadlines and construction expectations to the contractors.

“Materials are very important to the projects,” explained Air Force Capt. Mat Brennan, Mehtar Lam PRT lead engineer. “If you use poor material we will have to

\$4.2 million Provincial Uniformed Police headquarters complex.

“In the province, peace and security are important so government and development can happen,” said the AED Deputy Resident Engineer. “Roads are important to this because [they] let people, security forces and [the] government, go everywhere so the people have better lives and the enemy can be apprehended.”

The PRT currently has 23 projects worth more than \$11.4 million. Most of the effort is focused on road building like the \$8 million design and construction of a 23-kilometer road from Mehtar Lam to Alishay.

“The PRT is investing in development to build capacity,” said

the ones already in progress, will submit bids based on their own site surveys, plans and estimated bill of materials to a bid review committee. Once the contractor is chosen, the initial plan will be reviewed and refined with engineers at the PRT.

“We give them the basic requirements about site designs, drainage, material quality,” said Bill Stratton, USACE AED engineer, who works with the PRT. “After the contractor is selected, we have them come in often to go over design and progress to ensure they continue to use quality materials and methods.

It is important to set a good foundation, especially with larger contracts, which will continue through several PRT rotations,” said Stratton.

MORE PROGRESS

Ghanzi PRT officials report successes at construction site, orphanage and hospital, but additional oversight, funds and efforts needed to ensure progress continues

By U.S. Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

International Security Assistance Force's Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team service members visited the remote Hazaran community of Jaghuri in late October to conduct an engineer assessment, visit orphanage administrators and tour the hospital facilities.

Engineers conducted an assessment of the new district center construction project, which started in mid-April, and found things progressing well.

"The Jaghuri District Center is a \$750,000-design-and-build project," said U.S. Navy Lt. Jeff Ammon, ISAF's Ghazni PRT project payment and engineer officer. "When complete there will be five buildings, which include the main district center, a judicial building and National Directorate of Security facility. This district center is about five times as big as the other district centers in the province."

Jaghuri's relative isolation has limited the usual ability to keep a close watch on construction practices and methods as well as the character of the site itself. For example, the contractor's use of inferior building materials wasn't detected until one of the scheduled site visits. Despite challenges construction at the site is successfully being accomplished. "We estimate the project will be completed in early summer," said Ammon.

While the engineers finished their assessment U.S. Navy Lt. Keith Hoekman, ISAF Ghazni PRT medical officer met with the director of the nearby orphanage. He found conditions there as being better than normal.

"A lot of the time we find that the facilities are run down or dirty. Here it is a lot different," said Lt. Hoekman. "It is obvious that the people take pride in keeping the facilities clean and organized."

During his discussion with the orphanage director, Lt. Hoekman



Children play at the district orphanage. (U.S. Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman)

learned that there were two orphanages one for boys and one for girls. The orphanages were opened in 2003. The girl's orphanage houses 22 children and two mothers, while the boy's orphanage counts 40 children and four mothers. Lt. Hoekman explained the presence of the mothers at the orphanage.

"The children who come to the orphanage are not always there because both parents are dead, most often they just don't have a father," he explained. "Children also get schooling and basic medical care [here]. Many times mothers will come to live at the orphanage and help with the children."

The children at the orphanage attend grade school and high school. The orphanage director explained that after high school the children could take tests to get into the universities in Herat and Kabul.

"[Ghazni] is the place we want to build a university as it has the highest percentage of high school students," said Lt. Hoekman.

After touring the facility, the lieutenant and the orphanage director discussed repairs and things the orphanage needs, and possible future construction projects. The director indicated that the orphanage needed a water tower so there could be running water to the buildings, a septic tank, concertina wire for the perimeter wall, a storage building near the entry gate and family health medicine for basic illnesses, like colds.

As the PRT delegation's final stop of the day, Lt. Hoekman toured the Jaghuri Hospital facility, devoted primarily to female patients receiving pregnancy related care.

The hospital library highlighted the visit. It was stocked with numerous books, in good condition. The hospital director said the staff uses the library's resources to hold classes as reference material.

Yet like many places, the hospital needs essential items such as new beds and a better well for fresh water, said the director.

Blasts from the Past

Members of ISAF hope to reduce the number of land mine incidents among Afghan children



RC-C personnel educate Afghani students on landmines (RC-C)

By Turkish Army 1st Lt Serdar Eyiler
Regional Command Capital

Regional Command Capital, with the cooperation of Turkish, French and Italian Battle Groups, conducted a Mine Awareness Program in Afghan schools Oct. 30 to Dec. 15.

With an estimated 10 million explosive weaponry and land mines remaining throughout Afghanistan, the program was aimed at educating children about the dangers of these devices.

Under the coordination of the RC-C Explosive Ordnance Chief, Col. Mustafa Gundogdu, three battle groups identified 10 schools in the Kabul area to hold training. Turkish Battle Group organized the YUNUS (Dolphin) program in two schools in its area of expertise, including mine awareness education, medical assistance and International Security Assistance Force Combine Joint Psychological Operations Task Force items delivery.

The introductory part of the program was implemented to three student groups successively, and afterwards, children were asked to find the hidden explosives in the school garden. During the program, scheduled at both Khurt Kabul and Ahmet Popel High Schools, the Turkish battle group EOD team made a presentation about various mines; the procedures to be

Each month, 60 people – half of them children – are victims of mines in Afghanistan ...

showed the students real mines and how to avoid minefields. “Don’t play near a mine, don’t touch the mine, call someone if you see a mine!” said the EOD chief. A little boy who lost his arm a few years ago said “This course was very useful for all of us and now, I know what to do if I find a mine.”

Consistent with the whole project, the Italian battle group also conducted a series of lessons in primary schools in Kabul. The lessons, scheduled at the Bolzano School in Kabul and Olia High School in Musahi Valley, were a success thanks to the use of excellent teaching aids, including posters in English and Dari and images of each type of mine found in Afghanistan.

It’s the first time such a program was organized by RC-C EOD branch. The EOD branch is composed of three teams of four people and is responsible for all intervention on explosive devices in RC-C. Their primary job is recovery and destruction of munitions, UXO and unexploded bombs. They provide immediate response teams of 15 minutes and back up one hour every two weeks alternatively.

Each month, 60 people – half of them children – are victims of mines in Afghanistan, one of the most polluted countries in the world. About 70,000 Afghans have been either killed or disabled by land-mine explosions in the last 20 years.

followed in case one finds an unexploded ordnance; and the results of touching such explosives instead of reporting.

In addition to this, the Turkish battle group medical unit also took the opportunity to perform medical check-ups on students who may have otherwise never gotten one. Approximately 200 students involved in the Mine Awareness Program also received medical care during the program.

French EOD gave four courses in four different Afghan schools in the French area in Kabul. In total, 400 children from 10 to 18 years old were taught about YUNUS program in their classrooms, which covered the different kinds of mines.

During an initiation, the French EOD team

Volunteers support local school

By U.S. Army Pfc. Daniel M. Rangel
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The community outside International Security Assistance Force's Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team compound in Jalalabad renewed its efforts to raise money and supplies for its English school.

U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Garry L. Murdock, the PRT senior enlisted leader, has helped lead the effort to provide for the school since its inception this summer.

At a cost of about 1,000 Afghani, only a few U.S. dollars, the school for more than 400 Afghan children will have a heater its classroom. Other needed supplies included pens, pencils, books, desks and chairs.

Only a few months ago the school teacher and Jalalabad native, Saifu Rahman, was conducting classes under a tree. With the help of Sergeant Murdock and the PRT, classes are now conducted in a building, which was previously used to store bicycles for Afghan security guards.

"I was walking out to the [entry control point] one day and Khalid (Rahman's 12-year-old brother) stopped me and said his brother wanted to speak to me about getting him a classroom," said Sergeant Murdock, who is from Decatur, Ind.

Rahman refers to himself as a simple man and a student of English himself. Even so, Sergeant Murdock saw great potential in what he was doing for the villagers.

"I'm a student," Rahman said. "[But] I have been teaching for three years. Before this class I was teaching under



An Afghan child student recites the English alphabet (U.S. Army Pfc. Daniel M. Rangel)

a tree. But when we came here, 'First Sergeant Garry' helped us so that we can teach here in a class."

Sergeant Murdock was able to make the old bicycle-storage room available at no cost to the local government or ISAF and now the parents' demand for an English education has multiplied exponentially.

Rahman began with 30 students when he moved into the classroom. He now teaches more than 400 students daily, during several short class rotations. Instruction levels range from pre-kindergarten to second-grade-level English.

"The village elders and the parents of the three villages around the PRT are very adamant that their children go to this class," Sergeant Murdock said. "Saifu does this out of his own time and

his own heart because he knows the children are the future of Afghanistan."

Rahman teaches on a voluntary basis and will not accept money for himself.

"This job is a kind of help to the people," Rahman said. "I teach free and I have been teaching for years free, and I want to help the students as much as I can. I want to get a job too from night side (part-time) because if I get a job in the morning I can't teach the students."

Rahman currently has the financial and emotional support of his family. And although they struggle, it's a struggle for their family's future and the future of their country.

"I have a brother. He's an operations sergeant major in Farah Province. We do okay, but we only have a little," said Rahman.

Rahman's younger brother Khalid wants to become a translator when he grows up, but he knows

his country and his class need help.

"I want to be a good translator," Khalid said. "I want Soldiers to come here and see this class and help."

The Soldiers and service members, such as Sergeant Murdock, have been a great help in kindling the community's enthusiasm to learn and so have the efforts of generous people back in the States.

Murdock keeps in contact with Latt McInnis, who served as a Richland, Miss. police lieutenant. They met while working together during the humanitarian aid effort after Hurricane Katrina. Now McInnis has collected school supplies in Mississippi for Afghanistan.

The service members, the people back in the States and a dedicated teacher have been invaluable in helping these children learn English.

