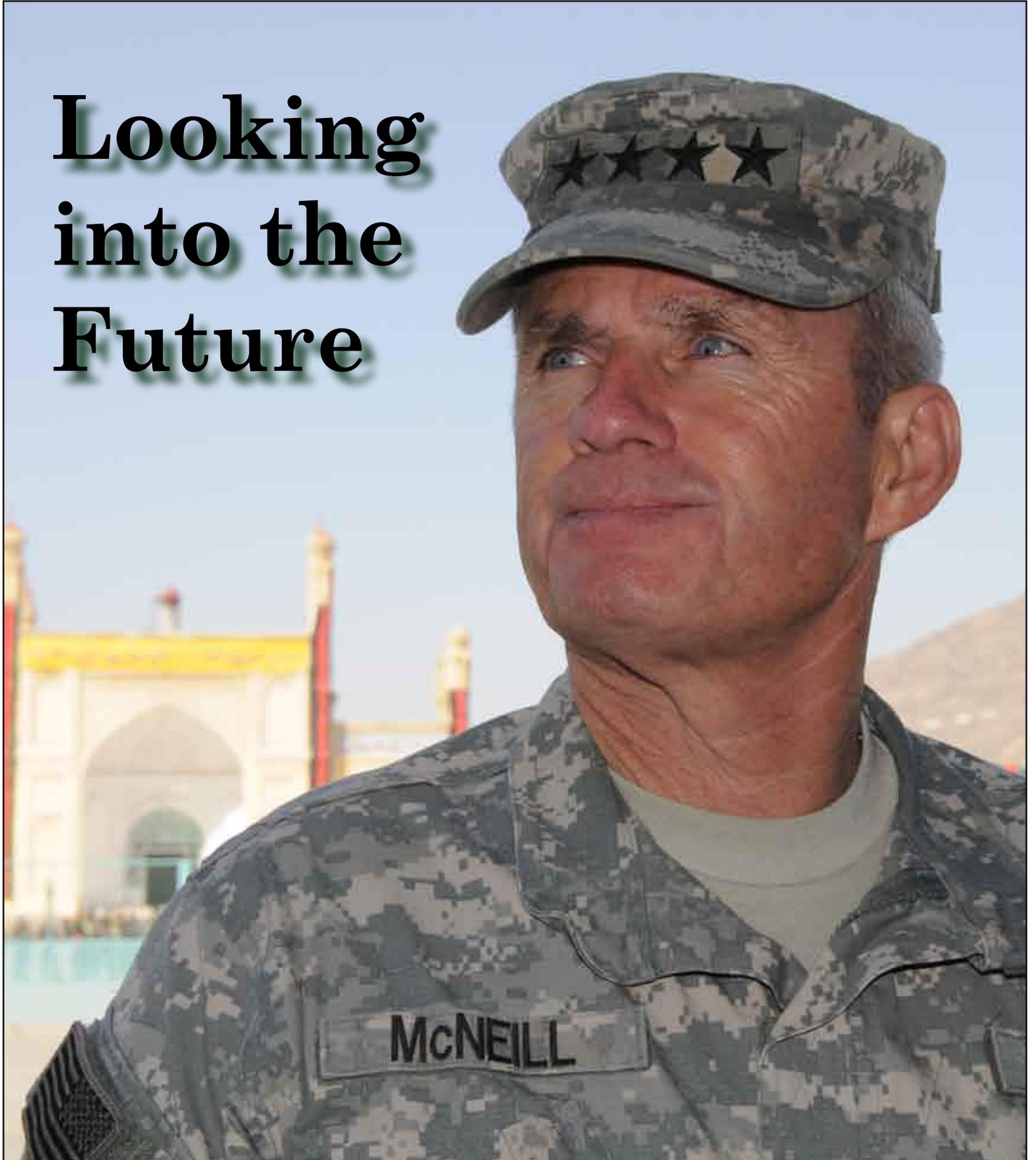




# ISAF MIRROR

Issue 48 May 2008

## Looking into the Future





**12-13 Gen. McNeill Photos:** Photographs of COMISAF throughout Afghanistan



**5 Kite**



**7 Marines**

**4-5 Kite Fighters:** A U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel's first hand experience of Kabul kite fighting.

**6 Flight Safety:** For the first time in Afghanistan's history, flight safety officers from throughout Afghanistan met.

**7 24 MEU arrives:** Marines with the 24 MEU (24th Marine Expeditionary Unit) and the British forces launch operations in Helmand.

**8 Goals of progress:** A new football field is opened in Regional Command Capital.

**9 Surobi Success:** A gateway to Kabul shows considerable signs of success.

**10-11 COMISAF interview:** A one-on-one interview with the ISAF commander.

**14 ANA attend IED course:** Counter IED techniques taught to ANA.

**15 ISAF reach Bedan:** A remote village in RCW is reached by ISAF.

**16 Gulestan governance:** Governance returns to Gulestan.

**17 Zabul connects with locals:** Zabul provincial government met with village elders in hopes of continued progress.

**18 Collection of Zabul stories:** A collection of small success stories from Zabul province.

**19 New roads:** Afghan workers build new roads in Panjwayi.

**20 Norwegian helicopters:** Norwegian forces begin helicopter operations in Afghanistan.

**21 Training the ANP:** Teams in Regional Command North train Afghan police.

**22 Purple Heart:** Wounded soldier earns Purple Heart.

**23 New COMISAF:** Meet the new ISAF commander.



**14 ANA**



**19 Road**

# COMISAF Intent

In full partnership with the growing institutions of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and within the means allocated by NATO and the many nations supporting the mission, ISAF demonstrates NATO's commitment to the **security, reconstruction** and the extension of **governance** in Afghanistan. Further, ISAF demonstrates both the will and capacity to apply irresistible force by, through, and in support of Afghan National Security Forces against the insurgents' strategy and others who forcibly oppose the progress of this campaign. We will assist in demonstrating the growing capacity of ANSF to meet the GIRoA's security challenges, and will operate in such a



**Gen. Dan K. McNeill**  
**Commander, ISAF**

way as to demonstrate respect for the Afghan people and their culture in order to effect their direct support of our endeavor.

## 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.

ISAF operations are divided among five regional commands:

**Regional Command Capital** (approx strength 5,800)

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

**Regional Command South** (approx strength 18,000)

- HQ RC-S in Kandahar (CAN)

**Regional Command West** (approx strength 2,600)

- HQ RC-W in Herat (ITA)

**Regional Command North** (approx strength 4,700)

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

**Regional Command East** (approx strength 16,000)

- HQ RC-E in Bagram (USA)



**Front Page:** General McNeill, prepares to observe the 16th Afghan Victory Day Parade, April 27, 2008.  
**Back Page:** General McNeill visits the Kajaki Dam in Helmand Province, Feb. 6, 2007.



## ISAF MIRROR

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.

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Editor

# United States Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel's first-hand **KITE FIGHTERS OF KABUL**

Story and photos by:

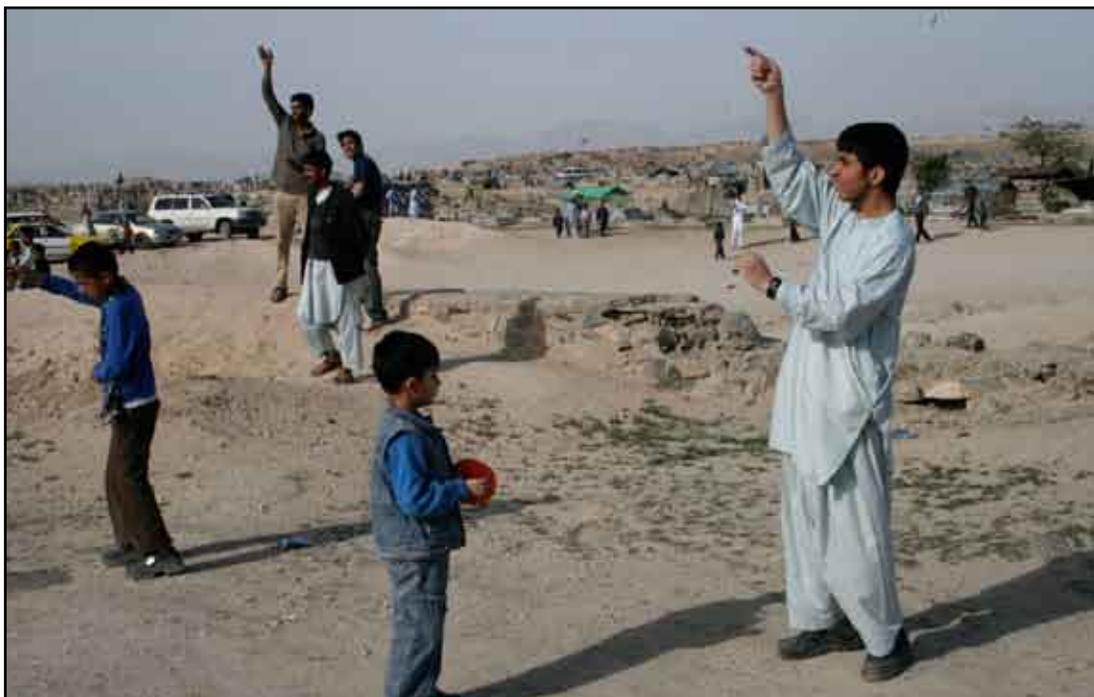
U.S. Marine Corps

Lt. Col. Damien Marsh

ISAF HQ Combined Joint Operations  
Centre Chief of Operations

By now, most family and friends of ISAF personnel who are stationed in Kabul have probably heard of Khaled Hosseini's first novel, *The Kite Runner*. This book has been described as "The most important book of the year for 2007" and was recently released as a feature length film. The main character of the book grows up in the city of Kabul, pre-Taliban, along with his best friend who is his servant and loyal Kite Runner. Many that have read the book and/or seen the film are left to wonder if the kites will ever again fly free over this ashen city. After a recent trip, I can now attest the fragile wings of paper soar as high as ever over Kabul.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to slip past the gate guards and escape the "Golden Prison" called HQ ISAF. I spent the afternoon with a member of the new Afghan Government who was anxious to show off the city of his youth. The highlight of the tour for me was almost an afterthought, to see



the Kite Fighters of Kabul. I honestly thought kite fighting was the hallmark of a bygone era in Afghan history. But high on a hill, overlooking the city we found the Kite Fighters of Kabul, hundreds of them...

We had to drive our 4x4 Land Cruiser up a serpentine road carved into the side of a rocky, barren hill ascending about 1000 feet. After a spine rattling climb, we arrived at the outskirts of a mosque spalled and pitted by decades of war. Behind the mosque, lay acres of graves of the Afghan dead. Amid the bone-dry mounds stood the Kite Fighters of Kabul. Beside them and ready to deploy were their able Kite Runners. After exiting our armored SUV, I stood speechless, there I was face to face with real Afghan Kite Fighters and Runners.

Capitalism flourished in the available support to the Kite Fighters. Consider, some fights can last for hours. Amongst the crowd you could find men and children peddling wares to assist the Kite Fighters. One man carried a large cardboard plank filled with sunglasses for sale. There were many children carrying heavy used oilcans filled with water trying to profit from others' thirst. There was even the occasional kid selling coconut Bounty candy bars.

Finally, there were the men selling the instruments of flight and fight.

On their backs, the Kite Sellers of Kabul walked with stacks of paper kites; on their front, they displayed the spindles of laser thin twine. The string came in different colors and the spindle's were crudely constructed from scrap plywood and siding.

The kites however, were truly works of art. Made from colored tissue paper, glue, and small wooded battens the kites were built with precision and care. Unlike western kites, these could not fold and would not likely last through the day. A spindle of string cost about \$5.00 and a Kite with a 3-4 foot wingspan costs about 60 cents. After a few minutes of bargaining, you could join the fight for about \$4.00. Then subsequent fights would only cost about 50 cents to launch a new kite.

The Kite Fighters were the older boys and often it was fathers standing with their sons. The Fighters stood firm clutching the fine string that led upwards to their kites. The string was very thin and almost brittle as it was encased by a layer of finely crushed glass. The Kite Fighters often wore simple gloves or wished they did.



# account of a trip to see the kite fighters of Afghanistan....

Beside the Kite Fighters stood their Runners who would hold the spindles of twine and would feed or retract the line on command. The Runners were all young boys and they were quick to obey the orders of their Fighters.

The mission of Kite Fighter is to keep his fragile kite aloft as long as possible. The Kite Fighters must battle the wind as well as the flurry of other kites in the sky. When two kites entangled the object was to sever the line of your challenger causing his kite to plummet towards the graves below.

The fights took place high above the shadows of the mosque. The Kite Fighters displayed great concentration and dedication to their skill, their eyes never left the sky. The Runners of the previously vanquished were much more easily distracted. I had the good fortune to speak with several kids and young adults about their families and all they had experienced in their short lives. I could fill pages with the stories from their childhood and their personal challenges. One young man admitted spending several months in a Taliban prison when he was 14 because his father had fled to Iran. Then above us, a string was cut.

As soon as the cry went out all the Kite Runners dispersed and the chase began. Over the barren graves they ran without obstacle of tree, shrub, or grass. Their feet dashing off the ground but their eyes never left the sky. My eyes took a few seconds to adjust to the sun, but soon I could see the falling kite as it floated to the ground. The Kite Runners were in a tight pack and their violent determination soon presented. As the falling kite reached about 10 feet above their heads, a long tree branch emerged from the scrum. The branch outreached the small sea of hands and speared the kite through its colorful wings. Then almost metaphorically, another branch emerged and ripped the fragile kite to ribbons. In seconds, the beauty and new found freedom of the fallen kite were destroyed.

**Photos by: Lt. Col. Damien Marsh**

**Bottom Left/Opposite page:** A lone Afghan girl was carrying a plastic jug filled with water and a plastic cup during the kite fighting event. She was trying to sell the water, but would not approach foreigners.

**Top Right/Opposite Page:** Teaching the next generation, a father and son team. The son holds the spindle and strips out the line, his father tugs and releases causing his kite to climb and dive. The fighter tries to under-fly his opponent and then uses the wind to pull his string taut and sever his opponent's line.

**Top Right:** Young Afghan boys spend the afternoon carefree and full of life. They represent the future of Afghanistan. Since the fall of the Taliban, they have grown in freedom and recognize its value and its costs.

**Bottom Right:** Afghan man sells colourful spindles of kite strings. The spindles contain hundreds of feet of laser thin, razor sharp string. The string feels similar to frosted glass and is extremely durable although it is coated with finely crushed glass and glue.



# Flight Safety Conference Huge Success

Story By: U.S. Air Force  
Tech. Sgt. Todd Wivell  
ISAF HQ Public Affairs Office

For the first time in Afghanistan's history, flight safety officers and various agency representatives met for a conference March 28 at headquarters to discuss theatre wide flight safety issues. Flight safety officers from Bagram, Kandahar, Mazar e-shariff, Herat and Kabul International Airport were in attendance along with commanders and flight safety representatives from each Regional Air Operations Coordination Centre. Major General Jouke Eikelboom hosted the conference which was organized by the Theater Flight Safety Officer, Lieutenant Colonel David Barker.

"As the flight safety officer for ISAF HQ, I set up the conference, coordinated the meetings and tours and briefed on most all of the topics," said Lt. Col. Barker.

The conference involved a round table discussion with the Ministry of Transportation and Civil Aviation (MoTCA), the equivalent of Afghanistan's Department of Transportation personnel chaired by Deputy Minister Alami (equivalent to the Director of the Federal Aviation Administration in the United States) which was attended by the Presidents of Operations, Safety and Security and other members of the MoTCA staff. The visit with MoTCA allowed participants to discuss flight safety and aviation issues, regulations and infrastructure related to flight safety and gave the military members a strong appreciation of capabilities and challenges.

It also included a tour of the Kabul Air Control Centre (ACC) and tour of Kabul International Airport with their safety officers to see the airfield environment and discuss how the safety programs are implemented at KAIA contrasted with different airfields.

Along with these tours, the conference attendees received a briefing from the Coalition Air Operations



Photo by: U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Andrew Lynch

## Pictured above:

Afghanistan Deputy Minister of Technical Affairs Alami shares safety concerns and discusses Afghanistan's civil aviation development to flight safety representatives from throughout Afghanistan. The flight safety conference was the first of its kind for Afghanistan and will be conducted twice yearly.

Command Centre (Headquarters for Coalition Forces Air Component Commander for Iraq and Afghanistan) representative on airspace structure, control capabilities and limitations. In essence, it was an overall brief on the "big picture" of the theatre air environment.

Lt. Col. Barker also briefed many other topics during the conference, including major theatre issues of air traffic incidents, such as near mid-air collisions, airspace violations, communications, navigations issues and wildlife strikes.

"This conference was an overall success, the flight safety officers mainly focus on their base and local problems and it is important for them to know about the theatre wide issues and hazards," said Lt. Col. Barker. "All of the flight safety officers left with a much better understanding of how the major issues in the theatre affect flight operations from their bases and will be better able to brief pilots on the hazards they will face in flight, especially the airspace issues.

"The ability to discuss local issues with the other flight safety officers gave them an opportunity to share solutions and effective safety programs with each other."

Several of the participants commented on the flight safety conference and listed this meeting as the highlight of their tour in theatre. One person mentioned that the tour of Kabul ACC was an eye-opening experience and gave them an immense appreciation for the professional job being done by the team.

Another said these tours will go a long way toward improving the understanding between aircrew and controllers and building a more cooperative and effective working relationship.

"The chance to meet with other safety officers in a collaborative environment was invaluable," said Lt. Col. Barker. "This conference was so successful that the group unanimously decided to hold this conference biannually."

# 24th MEU arrives in Helmand

Story and Photos by: U.S. Marine Corps  
Staff Sgt. Robert Piper  
24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Public Affairs Chief



Marines with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the British forces of Task Force Helmand launched an operation in Southern Helmand Province April 29, 2008.

The goal of this cooperative operation is to enhance the security for the Afghan citizens of Garmsir District, Helmand Province. This is being accomplished by engaging with the leaders of Garmsir to determine what is required to bring stability to their district – a district which has seen little International Security Assistance Force presence in the recent past.

Marines continue to clear areas in the Garmsir District. Through the capture of a series of identified enemy strong points and defensive positions south of Task Force Helmand forward operating bases, Marines opened previously denied routes through the Garmsir District to the economically vital Helmand green zone.

The insurgents have demonstrated a persistent and concerted effort to resist the advancement of troops and to hold ground in Garmsir. The Marines have consistently encountered disorganized resistance in the form of small arms, indirect fire, and rocket propelled grenades.

“The insurgents are finding that every time they engage with the Marines, they lose. The Marines gain ground every day and secure more of the routes through the district. The support we have received from our allied partners has contributed to our many successes thus far,” said Col Peter Petronzio, commanding officer, 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Afghan citizens have brought children to the Marines for medical treatment on several occasions. The Marines provided medical care for and evacuated two children: one was an 11 year-old boy with abdominal wounds, which the father said was inflicted by insurgents, and one was a child with third degree burns from boiling water.

“I think the most telling aspect is that, an Afghan citizen of Garmsir had no qualms about bringing his wounded child to a newly established Marine position where Marines were heavily armed,” said Petronzio. “Here is a man who has first-hand experience of life under the Taliban. He knows that with them there is no offer of hope, no plan and no future. He knows we are here to help.”

As of May 9, 2008 the Marines have discovered 9 caches. The caches contained variations of mines, rocket propelled grenades, mortars, and IED making materials. They also identified and control detonated 4 IEDs and discovered and destroyed several fortified enemy positions.



# Regional Command Capital

## Goals of progress scored in Kabul

Story and Photo by:  
French Lt. Olivier Bruneteau  
Regional Command Capital Public  
Affairs Office

It's a hot spring Saturday in northern Kabul and two Afghan football teams are fiercely struggling for victory on the inauguration match played on the football field made by the French Civil-Military Cooperation Team of Regional Command Capital.

Under a scorching sun and amidst the dust of the football field, a small crowd roars as the third goal, an equalizer, hits the back of the net (the final score will be 3-3). The young Afghan players wear bright new green and red jerseys, also donated (100 in total) by the French Troops to mark a sports day after years of ban under the Taliban rule.

"The French Military Engineers worked for 2 months to turn an old dump into a football pitch that will make the joy of the many young talented players who live in the district" explains Major Fayon, highlighting the number of initiatives taken in favour of the local youth like mine awareness and education programs.



**A local national from Kabul cuts the ribbon for the official grand opening of the football field made by the French Civil-Military Cooperation Team of Regional Command Capital.**

At the inauguration ceremony, attended by local authorities and the French Civilian Military Cooperation Team, deep satisfaction was expressed by the Malek before watching the match, likely the first of a long season of sports

and normality.

ISAF Regional Commands and Provincial Reconstruction Teams work together in the continuing effort to rebuild Afghanistan.

## Turkish forces teach craft courses

Story and Photo by:  
Turkish Lt. Necmettin Berk  
Regional Command Capital Public  
Affairs Office

One of the biggest concerns for many Afghans is unemployment. To tackle the issue, the Turkish Battle group of Regional Command Capital is sponsoring a broad number of craft courses in many areas of Kabul. To increase skills of unemployed people, training is provided to locals in many fields: Turkish Language, computer science, carpentry, tin plating, sewing and embroidery. 25 trainers – all Afghans - are currently working on the project, whose courses are generally hosted in municipal premises. Turkey is paying the teachers' wages and is providing education equipment.

Nearly 500 students are attending craft courses, many of which are girls. Sewing and embroidery are quite popular



among women, in Afghanistan, and women are learning skills that will prove useful at work but at home too.

Most successful pupils of language courses are sent to Turkey to improve their abilities. General McNeill visited one of the premises where courses are held and expressed his satisfaction for the good job done by ISAF Turkish Troops in improving the socio-economic condition of Kabul's population.

# Regional Command Capital

## Signs of Success in Surobi



**Story and Photo by:**  
**Italian Capt. Mario Renna,**  
**Regional Command Capital Chief Public Affairs**

A gateway to Kabul, Surobi – a district located 60 km east of the Afghan capital - has often been considered a refurbishment area for insurgents.

In the last 6 months, developments in the district have portrayed a degree of success for ISAF and the Government of Afghanistan as well as an increasing cooperation by local population.

This was possible thanks to the comprehensive approach taken by the Italian Task-Force Surobi, a small but efficient unit mainly consisting of Alpine Paras and Reconnaissance and Target Acquisition Paratroopers (the 185<sup>th</sup> regiment) from Regional Command Capital.

A number of signs of success were witnessed, like the dramatic increase of weapons cache recoveries. In 2007, 22 caches were reported to have been discovered in the whole region of Kabul. In the first 4 months of 2008, the number related to Surobi alone is already over 60, with a huge quantity of ordnance collected and destroyed (*252 rockets, 366 bombs, 67 mines, 139 grenades, among other*). All recoveries were possible due to the support given by the local population, who spontaneously gave directions to the task force.

Moreover, in the last two to three months, over 12 tons of poppy plants were willingly handed over to the task force.

Cooperation by local leaders has also increased. Several Shuras were facilitated by the task force commander and agreements were signed to improve the security situation in the district.

Reconstruction projects are being developed after

consulting with the governor and the communities' leaders that include a new pavilion for the district hospital, the refurbishment of the local Police station, dozens of wells and two bridges. There are also plans for a library, a school, more wells, etc. The total expenditure is estimated to exceed two million dollars.

Drivers of those successes are essentially to be found in the comprehensive approach taken by Task-Force Surobi.

First of all, presence on the ground has been thorough and constant. With just a couple of well-trained and motivated platoons, the task force commander has achieved outstanding results, providing joint patrols and basic services to local leaders and population, which have been the main operational focuses.

Perseverance in conducting around the clock medical services and veterinarian assistance in all villages, even the most remote ones and intensive provision of aid especially in the harsh winter time has allowed extremely good relationships with the district's communities.

The Afghan Security Forces are involved in all operations in order to increase their acceptance by the locals. The Afghan National Army platoons operating in Surobi not only share the compound with the Task-Force and conduct joint training and patrols but also everyday life. Recently, the Afghan Army planned and conducted operations autonomously, with the mere supervision of the Italian troops.

With just one hundred and fifty men holding an area inhabited by 150,000 people in over 100 villages, most of which hardly accessible, progresses made by ISAF are important. These progresses are pointing the way to an optimal comprehensive approach in which security and reconstruction happen and are also properly perceived by locals.



# COMISAF offers thanks to



**Interview by: U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Todd Wivell  
ISAF HQ Public Affairs Office**

**Photo by: U.S. Army Lt. Col. Trevor Bredenkamp  
ISAF HQ COMISAF Office**

As General Dan K. McNeill prepares to depart Afghanistan after serving a 16 month tour of duty as Commander of the International Security Assistance Force, I was able to sit down with him and record some of his reflections on his tenure.

Gen. McNeill is no stranger to the complexities of Afghanistan. From 2002 through 2003 he served as the Commander of Coalition forces here. The general pointed out some unique differences from his first tour compared to his current tour.

“My first tour here was during an interim government. However, now there is a democratically elected government in place with duly elected personnel,” said Gen. McNeill.

“There was very little Afghan National Army or Afghan National Police capacity, very little ministerial capacity at the government level, and a smaller coalition force (roughly one quarter of what we have today), now we are in far better shape in terms of overall capacity both on the Afghan side and the international side,” said General McNeill. “All of this to help with the rebuilding of this war-battered state.”

On taking up his office as COMISAF in early 2007 he said, “Working in concert with the government’s humanitarian and non-governmental organizations and all who are party to this noble endeavour, we will enable the institutions of Afghanistan so that the Afghan people might enjoy self-determination,

education, health and peaceful realization of their hopes and dreams.” I asked him if he felt the Afghan people are able to do this now.

“I think that we have many signs of progress made for the Afghan people and that we are heading down the right road,” McNeill responded.

“The ANP is a prime example. Today, the ANP are now in uniform and have doubled in size as compared to when I first took command back in February 2007.

“Approximately one and a half million more kids are in school this year compared to last year, and indeed that is an issue in this country – the missed educational opportunities during the 30 odd years of war.

“We have helped in the security sector to bring about other things also. For example, the United Nations now shows that around 85 percent of Afghan citizens are within reasonable distance from health care facilities. This year alone about 87,000 Afghan infants will survive that would have died a year ago. All of this is due to the advances in medical care which certainly has an effect in mitigating infant mortality.”

He added, “Growing economy, 26 Provincial Reconstruction Teams working with Non-Governmental Organizations, and close coordination with a new and better enabled special representative sector - I believe we have made quite a bit of progress.”

I asked General McNeill if he had to pinpoint one significant accomplishment during his tenure, what it would be.

“It was predicted that when I took over, that the Alliance would fail, that it would fray and come apart.

# all serving in Afghanistan

I would simply like to point out that the alliance has in fact grown from about 36,000 to more than 50,000 today, grown by three countries, and has far more capability on the battlefield than it did 15 months ago. These factors, coupled with the increased capacity of the ANA, certainly make this an incredible force.”

On taking command, Gen. McNeill reaffirmed ISAF’s commitment to facilitate the reconstruction of Afghanistan; I asked him where the most emphasis has been placed during his command.

“The 26 PRTs that are part of ISAF and that oversee hundreds of millions of dollars (US equivalent) of reconstruction projects have brought about more roads than the Afghan people have ever known, and more schools and more electricity than during my first tour. There have also been better opportunities for licit livelihoods, he added.”

I asked COMISAF in what direction he saw the future of Headquarters ISAF going.

“Kabul continues to be a growing city and this camp is a valuable piece of real estate, it has some significant historical pieces to the Afghan people and I see that eventually we will need to move out of this place and move to some other location and return it to the control of the Afghan people.”

As General David D. McKiernan prepares to take over command of ISAF, I asked Gen. McNeill what advice he would

like to pass onto him.

“The Afghan security forces are gaining capacity daily and we are beginning to see forward movement in the police that we have not seen before. There is an excellent rate of progress in the ANA and I think Gen. McKiernan would be served well as would the objective here, which is to maintain the emphasis and focus on the Afghan security forces in the lead and ISAF is support.”

As Gen. McNeill is about to hit his 40th anniversary of commissioning in the armed forces, he told me he will officially retire on the last day of July this year.

“I look forward to a little fishing and trying to serve the people of America in another way. North Carolina has been home and continues to be; eventually it will be North Carolina where I settle. Whether it is right away depends on the opportunities presented.

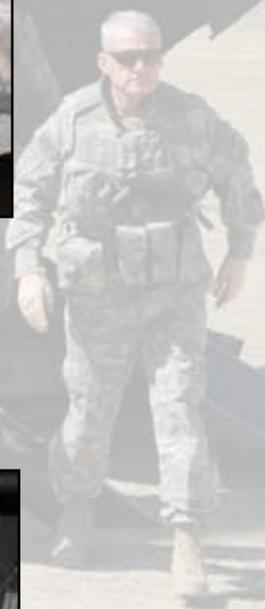
“I would like to offer my thanks to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and the civilian workforce that are in the alliance. I have great respect for their dedication and devotion to duty, they should be proud of their accomplishments over the last 15 months because they have indeed had many accomplishments.”

Gen. McNeill will relinquish command of ISAF to Gen. McKiernan during an official change of command ceremony scheduled for early June at ISAF Headquarters, Kabul.

## Afghanistan Progress Report

	Taliban Era	Afghanistan Today
<b>Road Network:</b>	21,000km; many damaged	34,782km; many upgraded/repaired
<b>Schools:</b>	1000	9000
In Attendance:	1 million boys/no girls	6 million total (2.2 million are girls)
Teachers:	20,000	160,000: 80% growth
Availability:	Few had access to schools	96% of boys; 68% of girls
<b>Access to Health Care:</b>	8% of people had access	78% of people have access
<b>Infant Mortality Rate:</b>	Highest in the world	25% reduction; 89,000 lives saved
<b>Banking System:</b>	No systems: 3 currencies	1 Globally recognized currency
<b>Licit Exports:</b>	\$80,000,000	\$471,000,000; 588% increase
<b>District Centers:</b>	No Centers for Government	35 DCs; 53 under constr.
<b>Telecommunications:</b>	1 mobile phone company	3 companies; 3.5 million subscribers
<b>Gov Comms Network:</b>	Non-existent	64% districts linked to Central Gov
<b>TV &amp; Radio Stations:</b>	Virtually non-existent	6 TV & 104 Radio Stations
<b>Electricity Production:</b>	430 Mega-Watts	754 Mega-Watts
<b>Irrigation Canals:</b>	60%-70% Destroyed	440km rebuilt; servicing 240,000 ac.





**Photos by: Lt. Col. Trevor Bredenkamp, US Army**

**Background photo:** Gen. McNeill and Brigadier General Federico Bonato, Commander Regional Command Capital, disembark an Italian CH-47 aircraft during a visit to the Italian Battle Group in Southern Kabul Province on March 11, 2008.

**Top Left:** Gen. McNeill and Mr. Abdullah Amini, Command Linguist, hand out clothing and school supplies to an excited Afghan boy during a visit to a small village in Southern Kabul Province on March 11, 2008.

**Top Middle:** Gen. McNeill surveys poppy fields from a United Kingdom CH-47 aircraft during a trip to Helmand Province on April 17, 2008

**Top Right:** Gen. McNeill and Brigadier General Dieter Blotz, Commander Regional Command North, take aim with the Finnish G3 assault rifle during a visit to the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Faryab Province on March 13, 2007.

**Middle Left:** Gen. McNeill shakes hands with Afghan President Hamid Karzai during the visit of United States Vice President Dick Cheney (far right) to the Presidential Palace in Kabul Afghanistan on March 20, 2008.

**Middle:** Gen. McNeill talks with US Soldiers in Ghazni Province while conducting battlefield circulation on March 3, 2008.

**Bottom Left:** Gen. McNeill receives an operational update from Major Taylor, Company Commander in the United Kingdom 2nd Grenadier Guards, following actions at the Sangin District Center, Helmand Province during Commander circulation on 14 April, 2007.

**Bottom Middle:** Gen. McNeill surveys the terrain during battlefield circulation in Regional Command South during Operation Achilles on March 16, 2007.

# Regional Command West

## ANA Attends Counter IED Awareness Course

Story and Photos by:  
Italian Capt. Frederico Collina  
Regional Command West  
Chief Public Affairs

Since October 2001, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs, or roadside bombs) have been responsible for most deaths in Afghanistan. IEDs are hidden behind signs and guardrails, under roadside debris, or inside animal carcasses, and encounters with these bombs began to increase and be lethal in the last years. The counter IED technologies being evaluated so far include electronic jammers, radars, X-ray equipment, robotic explosive ordnance disposal equipment, physical security equipment and armor for vehicles and personnel. However, experts warned on the effectiveness of the jammers which need to be set on the right frequency to stop an IED. This is one of the reasons why the training on the C-IED techniques becomes paramount in order to face this threat.

Regional Command West teams of assistants and instructors put in place a series of three day-long courses at the request of senior afghan Army leaders

who recognized the need to train soldiers on the dangers of IEDs. Since January 2008 they have trained more than 80 ANA soldiers on how to distinguish roadside bombs from innocuous trash, how to tell whether a driver is just in hurry or trying to deliver a car bomb and what to do when something doesn't look right.

While most training programs take a lot of time to develop and implement, RC W instructors take the Counter IED course from conception to the practice in a short time providing their students with a basic knowledge of the threat and passing them useful information for preventive actions. During the training, instructors create scenarios in which ANA soldiers encounter IED indicators. They also show them several types of IEDs, including remote controlled, pressure plate and stringed IEDs. Unfortunately, in the past many detections came with detonation. Using the techniques ISAF instructors are teaching them, ANA soldiers are now able to detect many more IEDs before they go off. Fewer detonations mean fewer casualties.

"What you learn here may some day save your life. This statement is definitely true for this course." said Mohamadan Gol, a combat engineer squad commander of the 207<sup>th</sup> ANA Corps in Camp Zafar (Herat). As he explains, "the more aware of the risks, the more helpful for the safety of Afghan people we will be." Afghan National Security Forces are being given a general Counter IED background for executing a full spectrum information campaign among local population thus



spreading a countrywide awareness about the risks to catch up with IED, UXO and mines. Along with these efforts, recently RC W Counter IED teams met regional Afghan National Police representatives and Governmental prosecutors to hold courses on Counter IED techniques and procedures, on scene evidence collection and exploitation activities.

Like all combat engineers, ANA soldiers must use tools and techniques of engineering under critical conditions, such as clearing landmine fields and dangerous areas. Currently ISAF instructors have started a mine detection course, explaining how to set and use the mine detectors ANA is already equipped with. The provision of mentoring, training and equipment to the ANA is one of ISAF's key military tasks.

RC West instructors are selecting the best students, some of whom will be posted to the ANA EOD Training Centre in Baghram, to get graduated as EOD troops. ISAF Counter IED teams are not in number to reach all the deployed ANA forces. Once graduated they will be able to go back to their respective units and to train their comrades. This is what the 207<sup>th</sup> ANA Corps expects from their engineers as they will graduate next June constituting the first EOD team of ANA deployed in Camp Zafar.



# Regional Command West

## ISAF reaches the remote Bedan village

**Story and Photos by:**  
**Italian Capt. Frederico Collina**  
**Regional Command West**  
**Chief Public Affairs**

ISAF Lithuanian troops deployed in Chagcharan succeeded to reach Bedan Village, one of the most out-of-reach places in Ghor Province. It is more than 110 km from Lithuanian barracks in Chagcharan. After a long travel through dusty narrow roads into deep mountain valleys, ISAF soldiers delivered a sensitive amount of foods for local nationals, comprising flour, rice and oil. Warm clothes were distributed and 70 school kits were given to the youths.

“It has been a month since we have tried to reach these people. Now we get it and will continue giving them our help, as long as they need it.” These are the words of the CHAG PRT CMDR to highlight the importance of this ISAF intervention in Bedan.

Within one month, massive winter relief actions were conducted in RC W Provinces and further actions are being planned.



**A Lithuanian soldier and a local boy from Bedan help distribute food and goods to the people of Bedan village.**

## Lithuania gives library to Chaghcharan

**Story by:**  
**Italian Capt. Tomas Balkus**  
**Regional Command West**  
**Public Affairs Officer**

There are many signs of continuing progress for the state of Afghanistan. Whether it is roads built to places that have never had roads before, schools being built for the Afghanistan children to attend or utilities given to villages that have never had electric before, there are progresses made every day.

One such progress was the recent completion of the library in Chaghcharan. The library, built by the Lithuanian soldiers in Regional Command West, was established in the culture and information building in Chaghcharan. The provincial government committed four rooms for the library – two for book storage and two for reading.

The Lithuanian special mission bought shelves, tables, chairs, computer

equipment and more than 2,600 books in the Dari and Pashtu languages for this new library. The books ranged from religious works to modern dictionaries and encyclopedias, from Persian poetry to literature for children, there was something for everyone.

“Lithuanian special missions achieved a record in buying books from book stores in Kabul,” said Najibullah Manalai, Deputy Minister of Culture and Information. “In Afghanistan, there were never so many books bought in a two day time period.”

With contributions from the Chaghcharan people and the 2,600 books purchased by the Lithuanians, the library now holds more than 4,000 books. This library is considered to be one of the biggest in all of the Afghanistan provinces.

“It is very important that now people of Chaghcharan can allow self enlightening,” said Colonel Albertas

Kondrotas, Provincial Reconstruction Team Commander. “We hope that education through reading will help to forget mutual misunderstandings and will assist in solving our barriers. I believe that these treasures in this new library will be cherished forever.”

“There is no school without books and there is no culture without having those books in our native languages,” Mr. Manalai said.

Lithuania commits a lot of attention to helping Afghanistan cherish its culture. During the past two months they have supported an archaeological expedition in the Ghwr province. Last year alone, Lithuanian archaeologists along with Afghanistan heritage and archaeology specialists found 14 unknown historical and cultural objects. Through these archaeological expeditions and through the opening of this new library, Lithuania hopes to continue to help Afghanistan with preserving its culture and history.

# Regional Command West

## Governance returned to Gulestan

Story and Photos by:

Gina Gillespie

Regional Command West

Governance returned to Gulestan as district manager Haji Qasim returned home, following a harrowing escape from the remote district last autumn.

Mr. Qasim fled from Gulestan last fall, when 400 Taliban overran the district centre, executing six civilians and one police officer, including his own relatives.

But recently security in Gulestan has improved to the point that the district manager was able to return to govern his people.

Villagers were overjoyed to see their old friend a light from an ISAF helicopter, accompanied by Farah provincial governor Mawlawi Mohideen Baluch, Provincial Council member and Gulestan native Abdul Qadir Daqiq, Farah Chief of Police Khalilullah Rahman and Commander Shoshana Chatfield, Commander of PRT Farah.

Azizullah, the temporary Chief of Police in Gulestan welcomed back the district manager, along with Governor Baluch, who was making his first visit to the remote district. The Governor held a Shura, attended by 40 elders and government officials.

“To improve security in this district, you must join together in solidarity. Do not allow the enemies of Afghanistan to stay in your homes, or in your villages. You must stand up to them.

Security forces cannot protect you without your assistance,” said Governor Baluch. In his speech to the Shura members the Governor displayed confidence that the security situation was improving in Gulestan. “Security is better now than in the past because the district has a new police chief and an experienced and respected district manager,” he said.

A Civil Affairs team from PRT Farah visited Gulestan during the same timeframe, on a separate, Civil Affairs mission. They checked on the building sites of the future District Communication Network and district centre, and assessed local schools and health clinics. Pens, pencils, personal hygiene kits, soccer balls and Frisbees were given to the school master. They also stopped in Detut village, where the PRT medical staff set up a temporary medical clinic. Approximately 75 villagers received medical care.

Lieutenant-Colonel James Campbell, director of the PRT Farah Civil Military Operations Centre, attended the Gulestan Shura. “There is a lot of potential in Gulestan, but they need the district governor and district police chief to guide the development and the people. The Shuras will need to cooperate with ISAF and cooperate with the reconstruction efforts that are taking place not just for the betterment of one individual, but for the betterment of the Gulestan area. Personally I thought it was a very inspiring mission to see how they welcomed the district governor back,” he said.

The mission to Gulestan proved to be so successful and productive that it was extended from two days to three days.



# Regional Command South

## Zabul PRT connects with locals

Story and photos by:

Valerie Ibaan, USAID, and Franz Seitz, U.S. Department of State,

Representatives from the Zabul provincial government met with village elders, district administrators, Afghan National Police and line ministry representatives from Shahr-e-Safa district March 30 and Shajoy April 1.

During both shuras, or community meetings, Zabul Deputy Governor Gulab Shah and Abdul Nabie Wadon, Zabul director of education, stated their purpose: To identify small projects in the districts that the villagers and the government can work on together.

"Today, we are here to give you ideas for small projects," said the deputy governor at the Shahr-e-Safa meeting. "Maybe in the future, you will have big projects, but today we will talk about small projects. We are here to introduce ourselves and know each other."

"First, we're going to start projects in three areas: Shajoy, Shahr-e-Safa, and Qalat," said Rahmuddin Resha, a non-governmental organization representative contracted by the U.S. Agency for International Development to facilitate implementation of micro projects. "These are projects for agriculture, water systems, and other small projects that will lead towards development in the districts. The importance of these projects is up to the people. They need to get together; the people need to be included in this process."

Resha handed out funding request forms to each attendee. The forms do not constitute a promise for funding; however, they serve to bring people together to identify the important projects that will most benefit an area or community.

"Think about this -- which projects are important," said Deputy Governor Shah. Not all villages were represented at the two shuras, and he added that villages need to send representatives to meetings like this so they can be included in the

planning.

Shahr-e-Safa's Afghan National Police chief told the group that when they start projects, his men would provide security. "If there are any problems with your projects in terms of enemy threats, let me know," said Aqa Mohammad. "I'll provide you security from the enemies who are trying to destroy our country, our homeland. We are not going to let them do that."

Before discussing the new funding process at Shajoy, the district administrator used the shura as an opportunity to discuss some significant issues in the district.

"All the elders should come together and figure out how we can bring security to Shajoy," said Abdul Qayoum. "I'm not district administrator just to have the title; I'm here to work for you. If the elders have problems, they can come to me and share their problems with me."

The Zabul director of education spoke briefly about plans to build schools and create a contract using labor from Shajoy.

At both meetings, government representatives walked the locals through the funds request process, which is new to Zabul districts. First, villagers fill out a form identifying the need for a project and the estimated cost. These forms flow from the villagers through the village elders to the district administrator and district development assembly chairman, who return them to Resha.

Resha and USAID representatives



**Zabul Deputy Governor Gulab Shah (right) and Rahmuddin Resha speak to village elders during shuras.**

review the forms and coordinate the projects with the Line Ministry Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

Once a project is approved, the labor comes from the requesting district.

The purpose of smaller projects is to get communities used to working with their district administrators and show that they can depend on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through a set process. The process presents a new aspect for both the community- and district-level representatives -- working together to identify and implement a project.

If villagers see they need a larger, more expensive project, they can go to their district administrator or a provincial council member, who will formally bring up the project to the Provincial Development Committee to discuss options.

# Regional Command South

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## Small efforts make big differences *A collection of success stories from the Zabul province*

### Children in Shajoy District receive new backpacks and books

Afghan elders and government representatives coordinated efforts on a variety of projects to benefit hundreds of Afghans in Zabul province recently.

One event was to provide children in Shajoy District new backpacks and school books April 5, 2008.

The PRT handed out 94 school bags containing a toy, notebooks, a writing utensil, water bucket, flashlight and coloring book; 60 teacher kits with pencils, pencil sharpener, chalk, notebooks, and teacher lesson books; 30 hygiene kits, 26 bags of flour, 25 bags of rice, 17 containers of cooking oil and 180 student textbooks.

“I’m thankful for you,” said Abdul Qayoum, Shajoy district administrator, about the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team. “I will make sure these items get to the right people.”

During a separate humanitarian assistance drop, Shahr-e-Safa district representatives organized the handout of more than 100 school bags, 180 text books, 40 radios, 35 bags of rice, 25 bags of beans, 25 bags of flour, 60 teacher kits, 18 bottles of oil and 20 hygiene kits, Apr. 9.

### Afghans graduate mechanics course

Ten young men from Qalat graduated from a four-month basic automobile mechanics course, Apr. 14, hosted at the PRT.

“We learned these skills to help our people,” said Akmal, the top performer in the class. “I will take these skills to start my mechanic shop in Qalat. I took this course in order to learn something else, and the training was good.”

Akmal plans to open a shop with the second and third top performers from the course. Abraham, the instructor, has trained nearly 300 students in his four years teaching the course.

### PRT provides humanitarian aid to Moghuliz Kalay

A village elder from Moghuliz Kalay organized the distribution of humanitarian assistance Apr. 15.

Haji Wali Mohammed supervised while villagers sorted through 30 bags of rice, 30 bags of beans, 30 bags of flour, 20 bottles of cooking oil, 40 boxes of tea, 100 pairs of boots, 40 radios, 20 bags of sugar and 20 bags of salt.

### PRT medics conduct medical outreach

A Zabul PRT doctor and medics conducted a village medical outreach in Kala Apr. 19. Medical personnel provided vital medication to about 30 villagers with back pain, arthritis pain and children with fevers.

### Afghans Coalition forces reinforce damaged bridge

Finally, Apr. 23, Qalat Public Works representatives set up barriers on Bridge 30 in Qalat as the Afghan National Police provided security; the bridge was partially destroyed by an IED, Apr. 9.

According to 1st Lt. Adam Lazar, Zabul PRT civil engineer, public works representatives are using the barriers to divert traffic around the damage.

“The bridge has two beams that are structurally unsound due to the blast,” he said. “A local contractor will come by to assess the damage and repair and replace parts of the bridge. They’re just keeping the traffic off of it in the mean time so it doesn’t deteriorate faster.”

The mission of the Zabul PRT is to conduct civil-military operations in Zabul province to extend the reach and legitimacy of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan by promoting good governance and justice, enabling an effective Afghan security force through training and mentorship, and facilitating reconstruction, development and economic growth by developing projects on the leading edge of the Afghan National Development Strategy.

# Regional Command South



Construction laborers laying gravel in Panjwayi District. The new road construction project employs 475 Afghans from Panjwayi who take pride in rebuilding the country. The road extends for 6.5 kilometers.

## Afghan workers build new roads

**Story and photo by: Canadian Lt. Cmdr. Pierre Babinsky Senior Public Affairs Advisor Joint Task Force Afghanistan**

On Monday, April 7, 2008, Governor Assadullah Khalid, District Leader Hajji Baran and Brigadier General Guy Laroche, Canadian Commander of Joint Task Force Afghanistan, broke new ground when they officially opened the road construction project in Panjwayi.

“This project represents a new beginning for the residents of Panjwayi” said Brigadier General Laroche. “This is a road that is being built by Afghans for Afghans and will bring prosperity to you and your families for many years to come.”

The project, employing 475 Afghan workers from Panjwayi District, will stretch for 6.5 kilometers and marks a new beginning for the district which has witnessed significant unemployment over the last several years.

This particular road construction project was guided by discussions with community members, including the Governor and district leaders, and with Canadian government development workers. ISAF engineers in conjunction with Afghan technologists collaborated to design the road.

Construction work commenced on February 16, 2008 and is expected to continue through October of this year.

Once completed, the paved portion of the road will be eight meters wide;

however, with the inclusion of gravel shoulders, this will extend the width to 16 meters, allowing for plenty of traffic maneuverability in and out of Panjwayi.

“Currently, the workers are progressing at about 500 meters per month” said Captain Pascal Blanchette, a Canadian construction engineer supervising the project. “And the mood of the workers is awesome. They have assumed the responsibility of the road and it’s great to see their enthusiasm.”

According to Blanchette, negotiations with local Afghan leaders are already underway to extend the road beyond its current limit. Blanchette didn’t go into details but stated that construction will continue well into 2009.

# Regional Command North

## Norwegian helicopters mission ready

**Story by:**  
**Norwegian Capt. Rune Thomas Ege**  
**Press and information officer for the**  
**Norwegian forces in Afghanistan**

This is a picture you have never seen before: Norwegian helicopters operating in Afghanistan.

After two weeks of training and testing, three Norwegian Bell 412 helicopters landed in the Norwegian Camp Meymaneh at the beginning of April. This will be their base for the next 18 months, providing the coalition forces with a much anticipated medevac capacity.

### **Much needed detachment**

“Up until now, we have relied on German helicopters stationed one and a half hours away for medical evacuation. Now that we have our own helicopters here in Meymaneh, we will be able to conduct safer operations, says Lieutenant Colonel Espen Arntzen, commander of

the Norwegian Provincial Reconstruction Team in Meymaneh.

The helicopter detachment has been named the Norwegian Aeromedical Detachment (NAD), and will be a part of PRT Meymaneh. Arntzen underlines the need for such a contribution to the PRT.

“The helicopters will also support our allies if necessary, both ISAF forces and Afghan security forces. We often operate with smaller independent groups far away from the camp. If something was to happen, the helicopters will greatly aid quick transportation of injured soldiers back for treatment,” Arntzen explains.

### **Challenging conditions**

ISAF’s commander for Northern Afghanistan, the German Brigadier Dieter Dammjacob, was present as the Norwegian helicopters were welcomed to Meymaneh.

“The Norwegian detachment will have an immediate and positive effect on ISAF’s operations in Northern

Afghanistan -- operations meant to help the Afghan people to restore their country back to a state of peace,” says Dammjacob.

The helicopter mission is split in half between the 137 Air Wing at Rygge Air Station and the 139 Air Wing at Bardufoss Air Station.

The commander of the detachment, Lieutenant Colonel Tom Snedal, highlights the differences between flying in Norway and in Afghanistan.

“The greatest challenge is the heat and the sand. The conditions here are very different from what we are used to,” says Snedal.

“We have well-motivated and trained people with us with drive and good initiative. Our focus is on doing everything we can to support the Norwegian forces and our allies in Afghanistan,” Snedal says.

## Focusing on Afghan women and education

**Story by:**  
**Regional Command North**  
**Public Affairs Office**

International and local civilian organizations are improving the situation of Afghan women and education in the Baghlan province.

Women employed at the Provincial Headquarters are responsible for women’s affairs. Nooriyah Hamidi, one of the members of the Provincial Council, personally asked the Hungarian Provincial Restructuring Team (PRT) to donate sewing machines, that are to facilitate the work of women and widows.

The PRT agreed and donated thirty sewing machines to support the initiative of the Provincial Council. The handover ceremony took place in Sorkh Khotal village, not far from Pol-e-Khumri, the capital of the Baghlan province. Major

András Bodnár, chief of S9 (CIMIC, PSYOPS, Liaison Team) said: “These machines were not a big investment if we compare how many women and families are able to make living. I am sure that these machines are at the best place here”.

The Provincial County tries to improve their situation by organizing sewing courses for women so they can use that skill to gain employment.

The Hungarian PRT also supports the educational institutions by regularly donating tents, benches, school equipment, school bags and soccer balls.

During a recent visit to a girl’s school in Nahrin, the PRT met with local leaders and school representatives. Capt. Zlatko Sudic, a member of the PRT team, met with the director and teachers of an all girls school, where he agreed that the PRT would support the school with tents, drinking water and school equipment.

“Lack of drinking water and school equipment are our two main issues at the school,” said Rahema, a teacher with the girls school. “There is no well in the nearby village and the adult people can hardly endure the hot summer without water.

“Stationary items also are not available in the shops, so most teachers instruct shorthanded. In addition, we need to provide security for children by constructing a wall around the school, which will protect the girls from thieves and other criminal elements. The construction of a wall will limit the noise of the street and allow students to concentrate on their classes.”

The Hungarian PRT has four main focuses: increase legitimacy of governmental organizations, improve security, support reconstruction and cooperate in all projects.

# Regional Command North

## Training the Afghan National Police



**Story and photos by:**  
**Regional Command North**  
**Public Affairs Office**

Staff Sergeant Daniel F. and his team of eight personnel are travelling throughout the area of RC North in order to train Afghan Police. Their objective is to have all Afghan police personnel attend at least the military police basic training course.

The sun is burning relentlessly on the field camp, which is located at 1,200m above sea level in the utmost Northeast of Afghanistan. Temperatures are considerably exceeding 30 degrees centigrade. Those who have the chance are working in air-conditioned containers or look for a shady spot. So do Daniel and his training platoon: they are staying in a shady building of the PRT.

The training team is part of three MP platoons based in Mazar-e Sharif, 350 km away. Now they are in Feyzabad, waiting for the 30 personnel of the Afghan National Police (ANP). "That's typical," says Daniel with an impish smile, "we Germans have the watches, but the Afghans have the time."

After half-an-hour the group of trainees finally appear. The group is led by Major Sultan Shah, Chief of Police Training in Badakhshan Province. He is followed by 22 men and 11 women, participants of today's basic police training.

Initially they are standing a bit unsure in front of their trainers, appearing as if they cannot cope with the situation. But the German MP rapidly break the ice. With professionalism and intuitive understanding they manage to get the training groups, which are divided according to gender, interested in the subject matter of the Basic Module of Police Training.

On the schedule are not only service weapon handling, but also patrolling, unarmed self-defence, vehicle and personal checks, basic first aid training, orientation with map and com-

pass and mine and/or counter-IED training. There is quite a bit to be learned within four or five days. Nevertheless the trainees attend the training with great enthusiasm. "I am always surprised of the high motivation among police here in Badakhshan," Daniel enthuses about his training group.

At the end of the training the Afghan police will participate in a final exercise including two stations to prove the newly acquired skills.

The highlight of the training is the hand over of certificates, which are highly appreciated by police in Badakhshan. In addition, trainees are given warning vests and signalling disks.

With pride and joy the trainers say goodbye to their "pupils," but it is not forever. Hopefully, they will meet again for an advanced or specialized course. Maybe then there is a chance to conduct joint patrols in Feyzabad area. This would be a good opportunity "to strengthen the people's confidence in ANP and ISAF," states Daniel.

So far the German MP trained a total of almost 2,600 Afghan police in the area of RC North.



# Wounded soldier earns Purple Heart



Story and photo by:  
Regional Command East  
Public Affairs Office

An ISAF soldier from the Sharana Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Paktika province was presented the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantryman Badge April 21, 2008 at Craig Joint Theater Hospital, Bagram Air Field.

Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force-101, presented Specialist Michael C. Trowbridge the awards for wounds suffered during an enemy ambush April 20.

Spc. Trowbridge, a security forces member for the Sharana PRT, was travelling back to Forward Operating Base Sharana when insurgents ambushed his convoy.

The vehicle ahead struck an improvised explosive device and the convoy began taking small-arms fire. Spc. Trowbridge suffered minor burns and shrapnel wounds when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his vehicle near the gunner's turret.

He was airlifted to the hospital at Bagram Air Field, where he was evaluated, treated and released back to duty after a few days.

Specialist Michael Trowbridge, a Sharana provincial reconstruction team member, recovers from shrapnel and burn wounds at Craig Joint Theater Hospital, Bagram Air Field. Trowbridge was presented the Purple Heart Apr. 21.

# Breaking new ground at KAIA



Photo by:  
U.S. Air Force  
Tech. Sgt. Shirley  
Henderson

Major General Jorke Eikelboom, Director Air Coordination Element, along with representatives from NATO Maintenance Supply Agency and Ministers from the Afghanistan Transport and Civil Aviation Division break ground for a new runway at Kabul International Airport May 4. The core business of ACE is to run and coordinate all ISAF air operations in Afghanistan and the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan's entire civil aviation sector.

# Meet the New COMISAF

## General David D. McKiernan



General David D. McKiernan entered the Army in 1972, receiving an ROTC commission from the College of William and Mary. He has served from platoon leader to numbered Army commander in Europe, CONUS, Korea and Southwest Asia. His assignments have included tours of duty in 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Infantry Division, 1st Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division, 1st Cavalry Division, VII Corps and 3rd US Army.

General McKiernan commanded 1st Battalion, 35th Armor (Iron Knights), 1st Armored Division, 1988-1990, 1st Brigade (Iron Horse) 1st Cavalry Division, 1993-1995 and 3rd U.S. Army/Combined Forces Land Component Command, 2002-2004.

He has also served as the Operations Officer at every level of command from battalion to HQDA DCSOPS, as a Senior Task Force Observer/Controller at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), Hohenfels, Germany, and as Executive Officer to the Commander, United States Army Forces Command.

In July 1996, General McKiernan joined the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff G-2/G-3 both forward deployed in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and also in Rheindahlen, Germany. General McKiernan was next assigned to the 1st Infantry Division in November 1997 where he served as the Assistant Division Commander (Maneuver) until August 1998.

From August 1998 until September 1999, he served as Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Headquarters, United States Army, Europe and Seventh Army during a period of simultaneous operations in Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo. Returning to Fort Hood, Texas, General McKiernan commanded the 1st Cavalry Division from October 1999 through October 2001. He was then assigned as G-3, Headquarters, Department of the Army. In September 2002, General McKiernan assumed command of the Third U.S. Army and U.S. Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT), and became the Coalition Forces Land Component Commander for COMCENT in preparation for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

In March 2003, General McKiernan commanded all coalition and U.S. conventional ground forces that attacked into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

From October 2004 until November 2005, General David D. McKiernan was the Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff for United States Army Forces Command the largest major command in the United States Army.

In his most recent assignment, General David D. McKiernan was the Commanding General, United States Army Europe and Seventh Army.

General McKiernan holds an MPA from Shippensburg University, and received an honorary doctorate in Public Service from his alma mater, the College of William and Mary.

