

Official Magazine of ISAF



# ISAF MIRROR

International Security Assistance Force

• Issue 49 July 2008 •



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stories from  
around  
Afghanistan  
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Special Forces  
physicians save  
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# 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 way as to demonstrate respect for the Afghan people and their culture in order to effect their direct support of our endeavor.



Gen. David D. McKiernan  
Commander, ISAF

## 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 5,900)

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

**Regional Command South** (approx strength 23,800)

- HQ RC-S in Kandahar (CAN)

**Regional Command West** (approx strength 2,500)

- HQ RC-W in Herat (ITA)

**Regional Command North** (approx strength 4,300)

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

**Regional Command East** (approx strength 16,400)

- HQ RC-E in Bagram (USA)

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#### **Front Page:**

Afghan girl smiles for the camera in Kandahar.

Photo by: PO1 John Collins



#### **Back Page:**

British soldier takes a break with an Afghan boy while on patrol.

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## 2nd and 9th Alpini Regiment of the Italian Contingents Handover in Kabul

**K**abul, Afghanistan - The 2nd Alpini regiment of the Italian Contingent, left Kabul mid June after five months of service.

Colonel Michele Risi, Commander of the 2nd Regiment was replaced by Colonel Andrea Mulciri, Commander of the 9th Regiment.

The ceremony of transfer of authority was attended by the Commander of the operative landing forces, General Armando Novelli.

The Italian Contingent in Kabul supported Afghan authorities in guaranteeing security in the Kabul area and in providing

reconstruction support of rural areas.

In the period from the 10th of January to the 10th of June, the Italian contingent provided 2017 patrols, 300 observation points, 400 escorts, 700 activities with Afghan security forces and discovered 11 hidden munition caches.

Italian troops also provided as-

sistance in the rebuilding and development sectors. They brought to fruition many projects with funds granted by the Italian Minister of Defence and some Italian donors.

Every project has had the active participation of local authorities and people, giving priority to undeveloped areas.

The “ Fiorito Polsinelli” medical clinic was the last CIMIC project realized by the 2nd Alpini Regiment in Musay valley.

The structure is dedicated in the memory of two Italian soldiers belonging to the 2nd Alpini Regiment who lost their lives in a terroristic attack in 2006. ■



## First Month of Activities Successful for New RC-Capital Italian Contingent in Kabul



**K**abul, Afghanistan - Regional Command Capital's new Contingent in Kabul, made up by the 9th Alpini regiment from L'Aquila, just ended the first month of its activities in Kabul.

In this period, the Italian Contingent made more than 800 patrols, many of them conducted with Kabul City Police.

Moreover, in the same period, RC - Capital Italian troops gave help to the local population. In particular they delivered food and water in rural areas, realized urban constructions and gave medical and veterinarian support in many small villages. ■



# RC-Capital Troops Find 100th Cache

**K**abul, Afghanistan - In mid June Regional Command Capital Troops found the 100th cache, located in the Kabul area since the 1st of January 2008.

This important goal was achieved thanks to ISAF troops' deep presence on the area of operations and to the good relationship between the local populace and soldiers.

Total items found in the whole Kabul area amounts to: 6598 bullets, 671 mortar rounds, 478 rockets, 693 fuses, 75 kg of explosives, 145 grenades, 117 mines, 3 guns, 2 counter air systems, 2 rifles and 1 mortar.

Task Force Surobi found 84 of the total 100 caches discovered by RC-Capital.

The others were found by Ital-

ian, French and Turkish Contingents operating in the RC-Capital area of operations. This is a very significant result compared to last year.

RC-Capital is also working hard for reconstruction and development.

The Task Force operating in eastern Kabul recently inaugurated a library, a clinic, three pedestrian bridges and about thirty wells in the rural district of Surobi.



The Italian Contingent operating in southern Kabul inaugurated a clinic in Musay Valley.

The French Civil Military Cooperation Team inaugurated 3 pedestrian bridges in Kalakan and water tank in Chesmeh Ye Karuti.

Turkish units installed wells in Khak-e Jabbar and built twelve classroom schools in Police District 12.

In all the rural areas of Kabul region, troops are also distributing food, clothes, scholar equipments, agricultural tools and medical and veterinary support too.

Since December 2007, RC-Capital national Contingents have spent 5.5 million dollars on reconstruction. ■

# RC-Capital Troops Support Agriculture in Rural Area

**K**abul, Afghanistan - Onward activities of Italian troops of Regional Command Capital encourage agriculture.

On the 30th of June, in the Jegdaleg valley, Italian troops of Task Force Surobi inaugurated four new wells. The opening ceremony was attended by Italian soldiers with the local population and its leaders.

In the same day, the Nawabad village celebrated the achievement

of another project: the construction of one wall which can contain rain and also help solve the problem of drought in this rural area.

Both projects had been realized with national funds totaling more than 29.000 euro.

These activities belong to the "Agriculture Project" which consists of delivering trees, agricultural equipments, foddors, and grain to Surobi's local population.

Agriculture is the main source of income within this area and the "Agriculture Project" is one of the many activities lead by Italian troops in the Kabul area.

RC-Capital achieves important results in the agriculture field, one of the most important focuses of it's reconstruction and development efforts. ■





## Kunar School Brings Skills to Workers

Shigal, Kunar province – Afghanistan still struggles with high unemployment rates, but the first graduating class of Kunar Construction Center has found 100% employment.

140 students, from all districts of Kunar, graduated the 3-month course at the newly-constructed facility in Shigal district. They learned different skills like painting, electrical work, plumbing, masonry, steel bending, and carpentry.

About 45 construction companies attended the ceremony to recruit the new graduates. Companies in Kunar have typically had to bring skilled laborers from Pakistan or Nangarhar to work on their projects because of the lack of skilled labor in Kunar.

Mujeeburrahman, who graduated in the electrical field, said, “I am very happy that after graduation I got a professional job. I will work in a construction company which will pay me a good salary.”

Dr. Jamaludeen heads the apprenticeship council that acts as a managing board for the school. He told Sada-e-Azadi, “There are many companies who are involved in construction work, and 45 of them came today to make job offers to the graduates.” Interested companies requested 157 skilled laborers – more than the 140 who graduated. He added, “After this no one will bring skilled laborers from Pakistan or other parts of Afghanistan, but will appoint these local men instead.”

The Governor of Kunar province, Said Fazlullah Wahidi, spoke at the ceremony about the need for opportunities for young men in Kunar. He said, “This center is not only to train the boys and proved them job opportunities, but there will also be a materials testing laboratory here; this will increase the quality of the projects.”

The school was established with support from USAID, the Kunar

Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the local government. Students are given a daily stipend during the 3-month course as well as housing on campus if they need it. Graduates receive a certificate of achievement and a starter toolkit.

PRT Commander Daniel W Dwyer spoke of the honor in providing for one’s family through skilled labor. He told the graduates, “Yesterday skilled labor came from Pakistan. Today it comes from Kunar. You represent the best hope for rebuilding this country.”

Hundreds of guests attended the graduation ceremony, including Provincial Governor Wahidi, delegates from USAID, district governors, the PRT commander, and the heads of ANP, NDS, and other offices.

The KCC allocates slots to students from all districts of Kunar. Anyone interested to apply to the school should consult their district governor. ■

# PRT Gardez Honor Fallen Soldiers

*Story courtesy of Gardez PRT*

Members of Provincial Reconstruction Team Gardez, along with 1/61 Calvary Soldiers and other members of various groups, gathered at the Raven Landing Zone, June 9, to honour the life and sacrifices of two fallen Soldiers: Army Maj. Scott Alan Hagerty and Spc. Derek David Holland.

Army Maj. Scott Alan Hagerty, age 41, a PRT Civil Affairs team leader, was killed June 3, 2008 in the line of duty when the armoured vehicle he was riding in hit an Improvised Explosive Device. Hagerty was in the process of completing village and school assessments in the Zormat district.

Spc. Derek David Holland, age 20, a PRT Security Force driver and gunner, was killed while driving Hagerty's vehicle.

During the ceremony, the Soldiers were remembered by the PRT commander and other team members as being a true professionals and friends.

"I, for one, will remember them as courageous professionals, bravely performing a difficult and challenging task," said Air Force Lt. Col. Brett Sharp, PRT Gardez commander.

Hagerty was born in Muskogee, Okla. and grew up in Stillwater, Okla. He entered the Army as an active duty infantryman in 1983 upon graduation from Stillwater High School and later became an Air Defence Artillery crewman. After 10 years of active duty service, he transferred to the Army Reserves, received a degree from Oklahoma State University and earned his commission.

In 2004, he transferred to civil affairs and was on his third deployment after serving in Iraq and Uganda, Africa. He was deployed from the 451st Civil Affairs Battal-



ion, based in Houston.

"Within just a few short days of his arrival he became an integral part of our team and one of my closest confidants," said Army Maj. Jesus Rodriguez, a PRT Gardez team leader. "His knowledge about civil affairs doctrine, as well as his tactical expertise and proficiency, made him an outstanding civil affairs operator. Yet, his warm, non-pretentious, easy-going, humorous personality made him someone who people could easily open up to."

Holland is remembered by his teammates for his positive attitude and sense of humour. He was a key part in keeping motivation high in his platoon. Although his time in the military was very short, he was a contributing member of his team. He drove an up-armored vehicle in over 50 convoys across Paktya and also supported the team as a gunner. He was a vital part of the mobility of the unit.

Born in Bethlehem, Penn., Holland graduated from Pen Argyl High School in June 2006 and enlisted in the Army as a generator repairman the following April. He was assigned to Bravo Company 3rd

Battalion, 103rd Armour Regiment of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Within his unit, he served as an Infantryman and was both a driver and gunner for the PRT's security force.

"In the few short months I knew Specialist Holland, there have been so many good times and so many moments I will never forget," said Army 1st Lt. Daniel Naylor, a PRT platoon leader. "While driving cautiously across a narrow bridge, he told me he was nervous not because he was scared, but because he didn't want to roll the vehicle and hurt anyone else. This is the type of selfless person he was."

Holland was at the beginning of a promising career, said Army Staff Sgt. Eric Mishanski, a squad leader.

"I took young Derek under my wing as I think we all did. We trained, developed, and led him into the man and soldier he was becoming," said Mishanski. "He was always the first person learning the language, engaging in conversation with the locals, or his favourite -- passing out candy to the children."

After the comments from friends and colleagues, 1st Sgt. Reginald Parham, PRT Gardez's first sergeant, called the formation to attention for a ceremonial roll call, emphasizing the loss of their teammates.

For the sacrifices Hagerty and Holland made for their country, they were posthumously awarded Bronze Stars and Purple Hearts.

"Today, our fallen heroes look upon us to take up the torch and complete the work which they have started," said Chaplain (Capt.) Jonathan Entekin, 1-61 Calvary Squadron's chaplain.

"May our resolve be strengthened and may we follow their lead in ushering in 'good' to the people of Afghanistan." ■

## First Joint Training Between Germans and Afghans

For the first time, joint training between soldiers of the German Quick Reaction Force (DEU QRF) and Afghan comrades of the 1 Kandak of 209 ANA Corps took place in Camp Shaheen.

Medical training of all forces was on the schedule. Recovery of wounded comrades from vehicles, recovery and transport procedures as well as application of dressing were part of this training.

Split in three trainings groups, about 70 Afghan soldiers were interested, motivated and eager as they accepted hints and tips of their German comrades.

“Demonstrate, explain, copy and practice,” this training principle again proved its worth, though now and then language problems emerged despite the fact that inter-



preters were present.

First Lieutenant Ajar Arsalam, platoon leader of the Afghan infantry platoon stated at the end of the

training, “I am very satisfied with today’s training. We should repeat such joint training in the future.” ■

## Counter-IED Training of QRF

During pre-deployment training, soldiers are trained to combat Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). This malicious weapon is increasingly employed by terrorists and opposing militant forces against patrols, vehicles and personnel of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). And these opposing forces constantly develop advanced, state-of-the-art techniques. In order to enable the military personnel to defend against IED attacks, they permanently undergo training. Experience and lessons learned are exchanged between the nations and are being included into the training.

Based at HQ ISAF in Kabul are Counter-IED specialists, who on request train military personnel of all nations.

Captain Remy R. of the French Army is one of these specialists. Together with two comrades he came

to Mazar-e Sharif in order to train the trainers of QRF.

Over several days, they transferred their extensive knowledge to QRF with their main effort being practice.

Close to Camp MAR-MAL, QRF together with Swedish ISAF soldiers had the chance to benefit from the mission-experienced comrades. In hands-on training they placed mock-up IEDs, extended their knowledge of the 5/25 procedure and scouted the terrain for suitable locations for the employment of IED.

Private First Class Daniel P, MF-4



gunner and trained EOD screener drew his personal conclusion at the end of the training, “I am happy that I attended this training. We got real-life tips – for reality. New to me was the training “from the enemy’s viewpoint.”

During the coming weeks all soldiers of the QRF will receive this important training. ■

# Change of Command in Mazar-e Sharif



The handover of command of Regional Command North (RC-N) and the 16th German Contingent to ISAF took place July 9, 2008 in Mazar-e Sharif.

Numerous guests from politics, the Afghan National Army, local police and media as well as the Commanders of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams attended the official ceremony.

After the marching in of the Guard of Honour, provided by personnel of the German Quick Reaction Force, the Commander RC-N, Brigadier General Dieter Dammjacob, reported the parade formation to the American Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), General David D. McKiernan.

Then the two generals together with the Deputy Commander of

German Operations command, Major General Rainr Glatz, passed the front to the sound of the niederländischen Prasentiermarsch (Dutch Inspection Tune).

After that the outgoing commander addressed his soldiers for the very last time, "Though the past months have been very demanding, partly difficult, but primarily busy I do not want to miss the experiences I made and the impressions I gained, especially our joint achievements."

At the end of his speech, BG Dammjacob once again thanked the soldiers of the 16th German Contingent. "With admiration and pride I look at what you performed during your tour of duty. You have been outstanding representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany in this country and in impressive manner contributed to the stabilization of Afghanistan. For that you deserve

my special gratitude."

And to you, comrades of the 17th German Contingent I wish all the best, the necessary soldier's luck and a successful time. Take the chance to make something special out of it."

After being awarded the NATO Medal and the Bundeswehr Service Medal, General McKiernan and Major General Glatz discharged the outgoing commander of the command of RC-North and of the 16th German Contingent to ISAF and transferred responsibility to Brigadier General Jürgen Weigt.

At home in Germany Brigadier General Weigt is Commander of Armoured Brigade 21 "Lipperland" in Augustdorf. He is married and has two children.

Immediately after the roll call a reception took place in the PAX area of Air wing Mazar-e Sharif. ■





**Background:**

ISAF personnel enjoy a Sunday with chai tea and pastries alongside local Afghan vendors.

**Lower Left:**

An ISAF soldier greets local Afghan village children while on patrol.

**Lower Right:**

An ISAF soldier “high-fives” children during a community relations visit.



# General David D. McKiernan Assumes Command of ISAF



Story by Tech. Sgt. Todd Wivell, U.S. Air Force  
ISAF HQ PAO

As the 40 national flags waved in the slight morning breeze, as the band played their tunes of Ruffles and Flourishes and the Star Spangled Banner, the ISAF change of command ceremony began. June 3 marked another significant event in the history of ISAF Headquarters as General David D. McKiernan, U.S. Army, assumed command from General Dan K. McNeill.

General McKiernan has been in the U.S. Army for 36 years and has served in every capacity from platoon leader to numbered Army commander in Europe, CONUS, Korea and Southwest Asia.

His deployment experiences include, but are not limited to, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo. In September 2002, he assumed command of the Third U.S. Army and U.S. Army Forces Central Command, 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.

In his most recent assignment, General McKiernan was the Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army.

"I am humble to join the ranks of the fine men and women of ISAF and I am honored to serve along

side our Afghan hosts and brothers to work toward a common comprehensive set of goals," said General McKiernan in his change of command speech.

"While today marks a transition in the commanders, the mission must continue without missing a beat. Support to the government of Afghan in bringing security, reconstruction and development and effective governments to the country of Afghanistan and its people deserve no less.

"Insurgents, foreign fighters, criminals and others who stand in the way of that mission will be dealt with. I come committed to leading ISAF in accomplishing our ranges of mission."

Those in attendance of today's change of command included the President of Afghanistan, Ahmad Karzai, the commander of the Joint Forces Command (JFC) Brunssum, General Egon Ramms and commander of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General John Craddock.

"General McKiernan, welcome to Afghanistan," said President Karzai. "Your tasks will not be easy, you tasks will be difficult and I am sure as good of a soldier you are, you will serve it well. Together with the Afghan officers, Ministry of Defense and the Chief of the Afghan Army you will work to promote the standards to the Afghan Army, you will equip them better and eventu-

ally enable them to serve and defend this country themselves."

As the commander of JFC Brunssum, General Ramms presided over the actual change of command between General McNeill and General McKiernan.

"General McKiernan now takes up the challenge of commanding the men and women of ISAF," said General Ramms. "I am confident that he will waste no time in searching out new opportunities to exploit, and build upon the impressive work of his predecessors.

"Although I recognize insecurity cannot be overcome by military means alone, I believe ISAF is now better placed than ever to facilitate the necessary stability for economic and social development and to cooperate with UNAMA and – more important – the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan with an integrated approach in the frame work of the Afghan compact to implement the Afghanistan National Development Strategy."

General McNeill relieves his command of the ISAF HQ after a 16 month tour of duty. Although this is not his first time in Afghanistan, he served as Commander of the Coalition forces from 2002 through 2003, this will be his last as he is due to retire in July after 40 years of commissioning in the U.S. Army.

"It has been indeed my privilege to have the honor to serve in this alliance and to serve the people of

*“While today marks a transition in the commanders, the mission must continue without missing a beat.”*

**- General David D. McKiernan**



Afghanistan,” said General McNeill in his outgoing speech.

“I offer the people of Afghanistan, many of whom are my friends, my gratitude for the generosity and hospitality that you have shown me. My gratitude goes to the allied soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and civilians for what they have done and what they will continue to do for the people of Afghanistan.”

Afghanistan today has made many progresses since the Taliban era and under General McNeill’s command during the past 16 months. More than six million children, to include two million girls, are now going to school. Seventy-eight percent of the Afghan people have access to health care compared to eight percent during the Taliban era. There are now 35 district centers and another 53 under construction when at one time there were no district centers at all. There are six television stations and 104 radio stations when just a

short time ago both were virtually non-existent. Progress is resounding throughout Afghanistan and will continue under the new regime of General McKiernan.

The ISAF mission is to 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 fa-

ilitating Afghanistan’s reconstruction and contributing to regional stability.

ISAF operations are divided among five regional commands (RC) comprising of approximately 52,900 troops. RC Capital’s approximate strength of 5,900, RC South’s approximate strength of 23,800, RC West’s approximate strength of 2,500, RC North’s approximate strength of 4,300 and RC East’s approximate strength of 16,400. ■



# Interview with General David D. McKiernan

**W**hat are some of the major changes/initiatives you plan to implement as the new COMISAF?

We are putting a renewed emphasis on the shape, clear, hold, and build strategy. Too often in the past our troops would go in, clear an area and then have to withdraw before follow on conditions were set. It would not take long for the insurgents to filter back into the area and eventually we would have to go back in to clear it out again which would cause more casualties and more damage to the local villages. What we need to do is maintain our presence after we have cleared the area and set the conditions that will allow for development and reconstruction to occur. This is vital to increase stability and give local governance a chance to take hold. That is truly the best way to protect against a resilient insurgency.

Building the capacity of the Afghan government and the Afghan security forces is the key to our long term success. I am often asked what winning is. My answer is winning is when Afghanistan has a government capable of providing for its people and a security force capable of protecting its people. That is when we will know we can begin to step back into a supporting role and, eventually, begin to leave. Until then, our role is to train the Afghan security forces and make them into the most capable force possible. And we will also support UNAMA and the rest of the international community in their roles of building governance at both the national and local level and expanding reconstruction and development.

*You commanded all coalition and US ground forces that attacked into Iraq and removed Saddam Hussein from power, What will be different from this deployment versus that deployment?*

Afghanistan is very different than Iraq. In Iraq you previously had a strong central government, a functioning bureaucracy at all levels, educated and experienced civil servants, and for the most part a literate populace. We have none of that in Afghanistan. We are literally starting almost from scratch. The lack of human capital in this country is one of the biggest challenges we face. The literacy rate in rural areas is about 5%. There is no one that knows how to administer local governments and provide necessary services, no one to create the power grids, and no one to be the police chief or the mayor. This is an issue that can only be solved by time and educational. There is no quick fix here, it is a generational problem.

Tribal loyalties here are centuries old and are considerably stronger than any loyalties to a central government in far off Kabul. The intricacies of the tribal traditions in this country are something that no westerner can understand, but it is at the core of their culture and drives so many their actions. That said, I find the Afghan people courageous, tough, values-based, and well worth our presence and sacrifices. The vast majority of Afghans do not favor the insurgency, and do not want a return of the Taliban to power.

You also cannot look at Afghanistan in isolation. This is a regional problem and there can be no solution in Afghanistan without solving the issue of the tribal areas in Pakistan. The FATA, the Northwest Frontier Province, and Baluchistan are areas where the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other insurgents are

using as a base of operations. They have safe refuge there and camps to train, equip, and launch cross border attacks against our forces. Until we can eliminate this refuge we cannot significantly reduce the violence in Afghanistan.

So while on the surface it may seem like we are facing insurgency problems similar to those in Iraq, it becomes very quickly apparent that it is a whole different world here and will require its own unique solution.

*The mission of ISAF is to support the government of Afghanistan in bringing security, reconstruction, development and effective governments to this country. How do you plan on accomplishing that mission?*

ISAF is in the lead for security. We play a supporting role in extending governance and development. This comprehensive approach must achieve complementary effects. The key to long term security is to enable the Afghans to provide it for themselves. We are putting a considerable effort into training the army and police forces. We do not just give them initial training in an academy, but we follow them out into the field. We embed trainers into the active units to continue the training and mentorship that will produce a coherent, professional fighting force. The Afghan Army is a true success story and it continues to make incredible progress. Unfortunately we have not had the same success with the police force, but we have made adjustments and we are continuing forward. But we need more trainers and more troops to embed with the field units.

We have also expanded the area where our own forces are operating. In areas that insurgents once roamed freely ISAF forces are now entering and securing. As expected this is

causing an increase in violence and casualties, but our hope is that this is a temporary increase and as we clear and hold these new areas, development will take root and local governance will grow and with it peace and stability.

Bottom line, there is no military solution to the problems here. It doesn't matter how many insurgents we confront, they will not run out of manpower. We need a political solution here. We will continue with our security operations, but we will also strongly support the international community's efforts to expand governance and development.

***It will be almost 2 months to the day of your change of command that this publication will hit the stands, in that period what are some changes you have implemented and why?***

The two biggest changes we have made are 1) the increased focus on having the Afghan Army lead in operations and 2) strategic communications.

Whenever possible our goal is to have Afghan forces lead our operations. They know the terrain, they know the people, and they understand how the insurgents will operate. And by leading I don't mean just on the battle field, I mean the entire operation right from the beginning of the planning stage.

That is the best way to increase their capabilities. And in cases where they are not yet ready to lead, we integrate them into the operation to the maximum extent possible. I am less interested in hearing reports from my field commanders about how ISAF forces performed, I want to hear what they did to integrate Afghan forces into the operation.

My other big concern is the information war. Strategic communications are one of the most important

weapons we have here. The Afghan people are the center of gravity in everything we do. Without their support and approval we cannot succeed. We must be able to effectively communicate to them our intentions and the true results of our actions.

The insurgents do not need to worry about the truth and have so far been more successful at spreading their lies. We cannot allow their misinformation to continue to degrade the local populace's support for us. We will be more aggressive and we will get the true story out so that the Afghan people see what the insurgents are really doing to their country.



***What advice would you like to pass on to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines of ISAF?***

The most important thing I would say is that I am here for the long haul and I am here to win. I am not going to ask anyone to do anything that I am not willing to do and I am not looking for the easy way out. We will not delude anyone; the task we have in front of us is going to be difficult and it is going to take a

long time. But if we work together, if we focus our efforts, if we speak with one voice, we can and we will be successful. Again, the future of the Afghan people and the regional effects of this campaign are worth our sacrifices.

***Where do you see the future of the ISAF camp Headquarters, will we continue to see it grow or can we expect to someday in the near future turn it back over to the Afghan people and move our camp elsewhere or collocate with another unit already out here?***

Progress here will be based on the ability of the Afghan government to increase its capacity and effectiveness and it will be dependent on the continuing support of the international community and the Afghan people's continued willingness to accept our mission. What happens to this camp will be a decision for the political leadership of NATO.

***Any closing comments?***

What we are doing here is important for the Afghan people but it is also important for our own national security, whatever country you are from. The terrorists who attacked the United States in 2001, Spain in 2004, London in 2005, and countless other plots around the world are operating training camps just across the border in Pakistan. No one here should have any doubt about the threat that exists or the willingness and desire of these people to cause more havoc, death, and destruction, not just here in Afghanistan, but in our homes. Although we are what seems like a world away, failure here will have devastating consequences back home. Simply put, failure here is not an option. ■

## Canadian Reconstruction Team Inspect Repairs to Sarpoza Prison

*Story by Petty Officer 1st Class John Collins, US Navy  
ISAF HQ PAO*

**K**andahar, Afghanistan - The Canadian Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar paid a visit to Sarpoza Prison in Kandahar City, Afghanistan to inspect the completed 50 meters of temporary blast resistant wall and 6 meter re-enforced steel gate. The repairs began shortly after the June 13 attack on the prison and finished on June 24.

According to a 26 June press release from the Embassy of Canada to Afghanistan, Canada is providing \$4 million in funding to the reconstruction effort. Up to \$2 million of this funding will directly support urgently needed repairs

resulting from the attack on the prison, including rebuilding of the facility's gates, walls, and towers.

"Canada is committed to working with local Afghan authorities to ensure that Sarpoza Prison is rebuilt as quickly as possible," The Honourable David Emerson, Minister of Foreign Affairs said. "Our support for emergency repairs, combined with longer-term infrastructure projects, equipment and ongoing mentoring and training initiatives, will build on the good work already begun." ■

## Twenty-Four Afghans Graduate First EOD Course

**K**abul, Afghanistan - Twenty-four Afghan students graduated from the first explosive ordnance disposal school class for Afghan National Security Forces at Camp Shaneen July 10.

The students from both Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army had successfully finished 26 weeks of training to learn how to safely disarm and dispose of explosives, to include IEDs.

"I am very proud today to serve for the security of Afghanistan. I hope civilian and authorities continue to support this course," said Mohammed Ahmadi, the top graduate of the class.

"Today we are very happy the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police are working in cooperation of this course to diffuse IEDs throughout our country to support our people," said Afghan

General Shir Mahammad Karimy, Director of Operations for the Ministry of Defence.

ISAF's liaison officer, French Army Captain Pascal Meynet, added, "The school is important because the students are learning to save lives, which is important to the freedom of Afghanistan." ■

## PRT Lowgar and the Ministry of Agriculture Train Farmers in Pol-E-Alam District

**T**he Ministry of Agriculture commenced training and materials for 20 new farmers to start honey production, and training for 20 additional farmers to improve their honey production.

The three-month training started in the middle of June. Students are paid a monthly stipend of \$25 for regularly attending the training. The training consists of theory and practical training on the bee farm. Upon graduation,

students will receive a starter kit which they are allowed to keep. Under ideal circumstances, each hive can produce up to 100kg of honey per year selling for \$5 per kg. The honey business has a long tradition in Afghanistan, with the first honey bees thought to have originated in the region. Lowgar province is especially well known for honey production all over Afghanistan. ■

# Royal Canadian Mounted Police Train Afghan Security Forces

Story & Photo by  
Petty Officer 1st Class  
John Collins, US Navy  
ISAF HQ PAO



**K**andahar, Afghanistan -Afghanistan's security depends on an effective police force. Police tend to spend more time with people in their communities and are more familiar with the region than other national security forces.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is helping the Afghan people to achieve a peaceful and secure country through the training of the Afghan National Police and official government security details.

"The police are key to a stable government," said Joe McAllister, the RCMP's acting contingent commander. "If the police are a trustworthy force then the people will trust their security to the government and not turn to the Taliban. If the police can improve their image in the community then it will help improve the government's image."

More than three hundred police and other government forces have gone through training at the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team since the start of the program in the spring of 2007. At the PRT, Canadian police give to the Afghan

National Police training that they don't get at their academy. "What we're trying to do is supplement the existing training they are getting at the regional training centers," McAllister said.

The Canadian police spend about a week training the ANP and cover such topics such as combat shooting, advanced first aid and IED awareness.

"We are here to train a professional police force," McAllister explains. "Not everyone is a bad guy here, and the police have to engage their community on all levels, not just to fight the Taliban but also to get to know their community through foot patrols, which gets them to interact with people on a daily bases and not just when bad things happen." It's hard work, but the commitment to help extends through the ranks of the program's training staff.

"I love doing this," an undercover RCMP officer said. "I am passionate about training the Afghans in advanced tactics so they can go out and defeat terrorism. The police are at the pointy end of the spear here in Afghanistan as they are out in the

rural areas doing jobs that are normally done by light infantry."

The ANP is not the only force benefiting from the expertise of the Canadian police, members of the Afghan Security Detail June 25 completed a four-day course designed to improve their tactics in protective services.

"Providing close protection training to select members of the ANP increases the level of personal security for many government leaders and commanders," Royal Canadian Mounted Police Constable Jeff Hirsch said. "The intense training sessions bond the close protection teams together and give them basic skill sets to properly plan routes and site visits which will hopefully enhance their mobility throughout Kandahar province. The police selected for this training are highly motivated and often show up early, stay late."

"We learned a lot of things this week," government body guard Mohammed Shaker said. "I wish we had more time to train with the Canadian police and hope to train more with them in the future." ■

# Afghan National Army Air Corps Conduct Successful Missions



**K**abul, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC) completed another ISAF mission late June, transporting 2,390 kilograms of ISAF supplies between Kandahar and Kabul.

The ANAAC supports the ISAF intra-theatre air support system, known as ITAS, which manages the movement of freight and people by aircraft throughout Afghanistan for ISAF.

“Recently ITAS has added some ANAAC flights to our schedule. We are proud to have added these flights

and will endeavour to offer ANAAC flights on a more regular basis in the future,” said, Lieutenant Colonel Hal Brandenburg, Chief of ITAS.

Four Antonov AN-32 “Cline” aircraft were acquired by the ANAAC to complement its fleets of AN-26 fixed-wing cargo aircraft, MI-17 and MI-35 helicopters, and L-39 jet aircraft. The AN-32 is an all-weather transport aircraft that is suited to flying missions in Afghanistan’s tough environment.

The ANAAC is currently being trained and mentored by the Air Corps Advisory Group (ACAG),

part of the Combined Airpower Transition Force Afghanistan (CAPTF-A).

“These missions represent a significant milestone in which the ANAAC is helping ISAF conduct missions in support of rebuilding their nation, achieving another step towards self-sufficiency,” said U.S. Air Force pilot Christopher Lyons, a mentor to the fixed-wing squadron commander.

Re-establishment of an effective Army Air Corps is a national priority for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. ■

# Special Forces Physicians Save Afghan Girl

*Story & Photo by Sgt. Daniel Love, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, Public Affairs*

On a warm morning in early June, a worried Abdullah Haqim walked with his daughter into the weekly Coalition medical clinic in Farah, Afghanistan. 6 year-old Gulzana was sick and local Afghan doctors could not diagnose or treat the painful swelling that had engulfed her left eye.

The loving father watched with a worried expression as a U.S. Special Forces doctor examined the tumor that covered her eye. He was worried because insurgents in the area had warned him that Coalition doctors would not help his daughter, and may even hurt her.

“This wasn’t the type of thing we could treat at the weekly clinic,” a Special Forces doctor said. “Most of our patients here require more basic assistance. Her case required advanced medical care as quickly as we could provide it, so we had to start making plans right away if we were to have a chance of saving her.”

Gulzana had an orbital tumor growing from her eye which was expanding to her cheek and eye brow. In a developing country such as Afghanistan, a child with such an affliction has an extremely low chance of survival. Soon after the American doctor looked at her, he began coordinating a plan to save her.

“We saw this as a case where we could make a difference in a child’s life, so we had to act,” said a Special Forces doctor. “It took some effort, but we arranged for Gulzana and her father to arrive here around the

same time as Col. David Holck, one of the Air Force’s two best optical surgeons.”

On the morning of July 7, Dr. Holck began his trek from Baghdad to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan via military resupply flights. Dr. Holck is chairman of ophthalmology at Wilford Hall, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Throughout the same



day, Gulzana and her father travelled 14 hours on a bus to Bagram to meet with the doctor. Haqim, carrying a makeshift travel bag made from a bed sheet, finally met the doctor that would save his daughter’s life. Medics changed Gulzana’s bandages and she received a teddy bear from adoring U.S. troops but she shied away from the attention.

The next day, Holck and other coalition doctors performed a computerized axial tomography (CAT)

scan of Gulzana’s head to gauge the size and location of the tumor. Like most children, she didn’t seem to like being in the hospital, but she was patient and allowed the medical staff at Bagram’s hospital to examine her and plan the required surgery. The tumor had spread from her retina to other parts of her eye, but had not yet affected her skull or brain.

“Based on her scan, we could see that the situation was a little better than we had hoped for,” said Holck. “You can’t beat the positive outcome of something like this; all we have to do is our job, but we also get the opportunity to make a difference in a child’s life.”

The following day, Gulzana was on an operating table, surrounded by Air Force and Army doctors. The operation lasted 2 hours, but when it was finished, she looked like a new kid. The tumor that had spread from her eye was gone, and her eyelid could close. She woke up with bandages on her face and with her happy father holding her hand.

Gulzana and her father will temporarily live at Bagram Air Field as she recovers. Her smile warms the hearts of the Special Forces Soldiers who monitor her recovery, and the worried look on her father’s face is gone.

“Her mother is gone and she has had enough pain in her life,” said Haqim. “I’m happy that the Americans showed so much care for her and that she is getting better. Before, we were so worried but now everything has changed and she will have a chance to grow up and be happy.” ■

# Zabul Governor Holds Districts Accountable for Security

Qalat, Afghanistan – The Zabul provincial governor and his chief of police met late May with district administrators and village elders from Shamulzay, Shinkay and Nawbahar districts to discuss security, reconstruction and development in the province.

Also present were Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police district representatives.

As each district administrator stood to discuss their respective issues, a common theme developed: The districts need projects to improve security. Each district administrator was quick to ensure Governor Delbar Jan Arman and provincial chief of police Col. Mohammed Yaqoub said that the districts would provide security for contractors who come to work on projects. However, one shura member pointed out, if the contractors want a good salary, they need to accept the risks that come with working in an unsecured environment.

The problem, they said, is several incomplete projects, overcrowded schools and no place for the police; if they could get projects started to include district centers and police headquarter buildings, they could fight the enemy more effectively.

Zabul governor Delbar Jan Arman put his concerns bluntly. “Our enemy has no mercy on us,” he said. “We have to fight against them. We need to go after the enemy and



not wait for them to attack us. This is how we will improve security in Zabul. You are responsible to care for your children. If you don’t fight for your children, what are you thinking? Parents need to think about the future of their children.”

“We know that Zabul has a rich and deep culture and heritage,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Bryce Brakman, Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team commander. “There’s a strong tradition here of hard work and self-reliance. However, security continues to be a major issue, one that limits your projects and your development.

“A wise man once said that even big, strong doors swing on small hinges; security is that small hinge that impacts everything,” he added. “I ask you to continue your tradition of self-reliance and help by assisting in establishing security in your area.

I will do my part by bringing in the projects.”

Governor Arman closed the meeting with some simple guidance. “One thing is very important,” he said. “Every week in each district, the police chief, the district administrator, the ANA commander and the embedded training team commander must meet to discuss security in their district. After that, they need to sit with the elders in their district. Without coordinating together, we can’t do anything to improve security. I’m proud of the ANA and all they’ve done for the government; I ask that they work with the police to improve security.”

The shura was held on Forward Operating Base Sweeney and hosted by Army Lt. Col. Darrell Wilson, senior mentor to the 2nd Brigade, 205th Corps. ■

# Opium Farming Hard Habit to Break Here

Story by Nick Allen

**T**arin Kowt, Afghanistan – A cartoon skeleton dangles by the neck from a noose of opium poppy stem and passers-by are warned in the Pashtu language that the drug flower is killing Afghanistan.

While the billboard brings a splash of colour to a dusty street in the central Uruzgan province, it's unlikely to keep farmers from the cash crop that sustains their families and, according to the United Nations, provided Taliban insurgents with 100 million US dollars in 2007 through unofficial taxation of the industry.

"Last year Afghanistan produced about 8,000 tonnes of opium," Antonio Maria Costa, head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, said in a confirmation of the broad failure of efforts to curb poppy farming since the Taliban's ouster from power in 2001.

Worth an estimated 1 billion dollars, the yield is one third more than in 2006 and nearly double the level of 2005. The Afghan opium crop now accounts for 93 percent of the world's total heroin production.

Further filling the coffers of the Islamic militia's in its fight against the 40-country International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the Taliban find ready work protecting opium refining laboratories and escorting cargos across the border, Costa told the BBC.

But in Uruzgan as in other provinces, earlier moves to destroy the poppies – led mainly by the United States – only alienated farmers and pushed them to the militants as economic refugees.

"If you are trying to win the hearts and minds of people but instead condemn them to famine and poverty,

you shouldn't be surprised if they turn against you," said Major Piet, a Dutch army reservist who is tasked with providing alternative livelihoods to farmers.

"They don't grow poppy as a statement that they are for the Taliban and against ISAF, they just need the money," said Piet, who like all

*"The drug trade is undercutting efforts to establish a stable democracy..."*

**- US State Department**

members of the Dutch contingent uses only his first name for security reasons.

So far, efforts to promote other crops failed because farmers could only secure essential micro-credits from local creditors by growing more opium.

Far removed from the debate about the drug trade and its consequences, farmers in key production areas across the country are pragmatic about which seeds they sow.

Until now high opium prices made wheat less attractive. This year, however, there is a chance to turn things around amid a sharp fall in opium prices, thought to be due to oversupply and a rise in domestic wheat prices owing to an international shortage.

In Uruzgan, opium fell from 80 to 50 dollars a kilo, and for the first time in years, farmers would profit more from a field of swaying yellow instead of the blue, white and mauve flowers they have cultivated as their main crop.

Many working the fields say they

will plant accordingly for next season, while both sides in the opium struggle are trying to pull the farmers in their direction.

"This is a very opportune moment for us to lure people from poppy to wheat," the major said. "But it's also a good opportunity for opponents in the poppy camp to loan them money to tide them over."

But increasing wheat production alone isn't enough, experts say, stressing the need for an array of alternative options.

Last year Dutch developers brought 100,000 almond trees to Uruzgan and set up seed distribution and cultivation programmes for cultivation of cucumbers, cauliflower, paprika,

saffron and other viable crops.

Demonstration farms must prove to farmers that it's worth risking a determined shift away from poppy and that will take a few years of successive yields of other crops, not just one good show harvest.

But the final choice of national strategy must come from Kabul and soon, says Washington.

"The Afghan government must take decisive action against poppy cultivation soon to turn back the drug threat before its further growth and consolidation make it even more difficult to defeat," the US State Department said in a report released in March.

"The drug trade is undercutting efforts to establish a stable democracy with a licit economic free market," it stressed, acknowledging that the problem was exacerbated by drug related corruption and criminal involvement among state officials. ■

# Farah City Library Breaks Ground

Story by Gina Gillespie

**F**arah's new Governor, Ruhullamin, recently planted the seeds of learning as he laid the ground stone for a new library in Farah City.

"A library is the most important thing in a community, because information about our history is contained inside books. It is very important for communities to safeguard their culture," he said. Joining the Governor at the groundbreaking ceremony was Farid Ayoubi Ahmad, Director of Culture, Information and Youth, Provincial Council Members, Director of Women's Affairs, Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Farah representatives and various government officials.

"Education and learning are for the young generation what water and oxygen are for plants in terms of nurturing and growth," says Farid Ayoubi Ahmad.

The infrastructure and furnishings for the library will be funded by PRT Farah, through the Commander's Emergency Response Program. Additional funding will be sought through NGOs and other interested parties to provide books and computers. There are currently 3,000 books being stored in Herat, waiting for space to become available in Farah City.

A cobblestone path will guide the reader into the two-storey building. The ground floor will house a conference room, in addition to offices for Sistan Newspaper, Farah magazine, the Youth Empowerment Program, the Information, Culture and Youth Director, and a secretary.



The second floor will have male and female reading rooms, a reference room, a staff room, a foyer, a librarian's office, and 20 to 25 book stacks. The facility will also include men's and women's public latrines and an outdoor courtyard filled with flowers and plants, where people can sit and read.

Chief Petty Officer James Brown of the United States Navy, was the motivating force behind the new library. He read about the free libraries built by Andrew Carnegie 100 years ago in America, and thought that the concept could work in Afghanistan as well. "He went a long way towards promoting literacy in America with those libraries. We weren't far ahead of where the Afghans are now in the big scheme of things. You wouldn't have to go too far back to see a situation where our literacy rate was just as low as theirs is now," he says. Chief Brown researched the project, visiting the Director of Information and Culture in Herat to learn about their library,

as well as meeting several times with Mr. Ahmad in Farah City to learn their needs and desires.

"Since my arrival in Afghanistan, I wondered what we could do to make the biggest impact. The idea of education was always logical because it's something that you're paying for now, but you may not see the benefits from it for generations. You definitely need an educated electorate for a democracy to work, so a library goes along with the whole educational push that I've been making since I got here, along with the PRT," says Chief Brown. The library will be managed by a librarian, under the direction of the Director of Education and the Director of Information, Culture and Youth. The project is expected to be self-sustaining based on income generated from pre-existing adjoining shop rental income, as well as fees paid for specialty book rentals. The year-long project will employ 30 men. ■

# Afghanistan National Taekwondo Federation Visit



*Story & Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class John Collins, U.S Navy ISAF HQ PAO*

The Afghanistan National Taekwondo Federation (ANTF) visited ISAF in June to meet and exercise with students of French Lieutenant and Taekwondo master J-Christophe Damaisin D'Ares. The Afghan team consisted of junior and senior members and included 2007 world silver medalist and Olympic hopeful Nesar Ahmad Bahawi. The Olympic hopeful greeted the ISAF students with a warm smile and a friendly handshake.

"I like ISAF because they are helping Afghanistan to recover from the war," ANTF Olympic hopeful Nesar Ahmad Bahawi said. "I am here to help ISAF members with their Taekwondo. They are new, so we taught some small things like kicking and small techniques."

The ANTF spent a couple of hours running the multinational students through a series of drills followed by one on one mentoring to help

with technique. Many of the ISAF students are at a much lower level of Taekwondo and seemed to benefit from the training.

"It felt great working out with them and it made me realize how much more I need to work on my form," U.S. Air Force Major Eric Cook said. "It was great to get the chance to work out with athletes of Olympic caliber who are going to China and have a chance to win a medal."

The mentoring lasted for about thirty minutes and was given by both the senior and junior ANTF athletes. Even though some of the junior athletes were a bit younger than the ISAF students, the age difference didn't seem to lessen the experience.

"It was a great experience," German Captain Michael Hellerforth said. "The chance to meet real champions and train with them was a humbling and learning experience.

I think martial arts are about getting to know and improve yourself. I felt so awkward and slow today," continued Hellerforth. "The Afghanistan National Taekwondo student was so helpful and patient. He showed me the moves again and again and again. It showed being a teacher is no question of age."

The success of the ANTF is a sign that Afghanistan is moving away from their history of war and suffering and moving toward a life of peace and prosperity.

"I think today was an interesting experience because in Afghanistan there isn't a lot for the people to be proud of on an international level and they have a real chance at a medal at the Beijing Olympics," Damaisin D'Ares said. "If they win, the Afghanistan people will be known all over the world not only because of the war, but for once they will be known for a positive event." ■

