

MIRROR

ISAF
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF ISAF

ANA Training
center opens at
Camp Marmal
Page 6

Panjsher paves way
for Afghanistan's
move to green power
Page 20

Command Sergeant
Major's holiday
message
Page 22



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.



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.

Gen. David D. McKiernan
Commander, ISAF

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 (FRA)

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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CONTENTS

Pages 4-5

Regional Command Capital



Pages 6-7

Regional Command North



Pages 8-9

Regional Command South



Pages 10

Refugee camp survivor works to save others

Pages 12

ISAF Visit to Indira Ghandi Children's Hospital



Page 14

Regional Command East

Page 16

Regional Command West



Page 18

Training camp prepares ANA troops



Pages 20

Nation in the spotlight: Turkey

Page 22

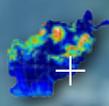
Eye on Afghanistan

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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To contact the editor, call DSN 318 686 2466 or e-mail richard.hecht@hq.isaf.nato.int



■ Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Army soldiers deployed to the International Security Assistance Force patrol around Kabul on Oct. 1. --photo by U.S. Marine Corps Corporal John Rafoss

Doing their part

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* troops help take control of ISAF headquarters force protection

*Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name

u.s. marine corps corporal john rafoss
ISAF HQ Public Affairs

Approximately 130 soldiers from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1st Mechanized Infantry Battalion, 1st Mechanized Infantry Coy, 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade, have been deployed to ISAF Headquarters since July 10.

The soldiers are helping ISAF in assisting the Afghan government in extending and exercising its authority and influence across the country, creating the conditions for stabilization and reconstruction.

The mission of the soldiers during their six-month deployment is to provide force protection and security to the ISAF headquarters 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

“The [citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia] are here because we joined the coalition forces and want to make a contribution in building democracy and peace in Afghanistan,” said Capt. Vasil Mitevski, an engineer officer.

“We are an infantry unit, but we are here for peace keeping operations and keeping the peace in Afghanistan,” said Mitevski, a native of Valandovo, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The soldiers conduct mechanized and foot patrols around the city of Kabul. They also provide a quick reaction force, a general security platoon, and security to the front and back gates of Camp ISAF.

“This is my first time in Afghanistan,” said Cpl. Ivan Mitrushev, a machine gunner. “I like being in Afghanistan. In the beginning, patrols were a

little bit scary, but now we are very used to them and they are normal thing. The work is hard here, it is not easy. We work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It’s hard work, but it is very responsible. We have to give 100 percent at all times.”

“We have good cooperation with the people of Kabul,” added Mitrushev, a native of St. Nicholas, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. “Some of the people know us and call us by name when we patrol in their neighborhoods.”

The citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia of today are just as brave and professional as the soldiers of their forebears who, for generations, had been trained in the hard school of danger and war.

But this time they are not here for glory, but for peace.

View from above

Members of the Geospatial Shop at ISAF headquarters work hard to show a map is more than just a map



■ Staff members of the Geospatial Shop at ISAF headquarters perform quality assurance on maps they had printed out for distribution to various sources on Oct. 27. --photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Monica Nelson

u.s. navy petty officer 1st class monica nelson
ISAF HQ Public Affairs

“You have to understand the terrain you are fighting on,” said German Army Master Sergeant Bjoern Ehlenberger, production manager in the Geospatial shop at International Security Assistance Force citing the importance of maps in the fight against the insurgency.

ISAF’s geospatial shop recently demonstrated its broad range of skills when part of the bridge for Bala Murghab, Afghanistan, recently came to an impass in its journey through Regional Command West.

“This was an ISAF project where they support the Afghan people with a bridge over a big river,” explained Sergeant Ehlenberger.

“They transported the parts of the bridge on the road, but they got stuck in RC West. They tried to get some information from us on how they could fly the parts from one town to another town. We did some

terrain analysis for them, and we made some 3D movies to help find out the best way for them to fly. They didn’t end up flying, they ended up taking the parts over the road, but we showed them what our shop, our team, was able to do.”

“Everybody needs maps for planning and operations,” said Spanish Army Major Miguel Cortes, ISAF Chief Geospatial Officer. Receiving about 10 to 15 requests a day, the geospatial shop uses from one to two plotter rolls of 30 meter paper to support ISAF employees in their missions.

The types of maps requested in a job order vary from terrain analysis, special, rescue, satellite imagery, and the standard map versions of the country as produced by the Afghan nation. Eighty percent of the satellite images used to make the maps have been updated within the last two years.

“We at ISAF are the top of the geospatial pyramid here,” explained

Cortes. “Then there are Regional Commands, then under the RC’s are the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the Task Forces, and special elements. We are also the liaison element with Afghanistan’s mapping agency. We have provided them some training and we try to coordinate their production for some needs we have, like understanding their city names.”

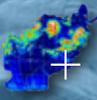
“In Afghanistan, you can call a village three different names,” continued Cortes, “and all of them are correct. But the problem is, you put one name on one map and a different name for the same place on another map, and we are going to have a problem, especially in the automatic system. If you try to create a database with the different names, for example using two u’s when you spell the city name, and then the next time you write the same city name you use two o’s, for the automatic system, they will be two different places.”

Romanian Army Lt. Col. Lawrenciu Mandocescu placed an order for maps Oct. 27 and plans on using one of the maps he receives from the geospatial shop in his preparation for a Presidential and Provincial Council Election 2009 brief with ISAF CJ-5 about the upcoming election.

Geospatial Operator German Master Sergeant Jenoe Heidrich produced the maps for Mandocescu.

“They want to have one map for the upcoming voting registration and one from the previous voting registration, 2005,” explained Heidrich. “They want to compare the sites, the stations, how many they had in the previous and how many they have now.”

“Also, we want to send the map to the Independent Electoral Commission in Kabul,” said Mandocescu. “This commission prepares the elections and deals with the voter registration process. We at ISAF want to help this commission have a secure election in 2009.”



northern expo

story and photos
submitted by
Regional Command North
Public Affairs

A German-led Police Training Center was opened following a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by German Ambassador Verner Lauk and Muhammed Atta, the Balkh Province Governor, in Mazar-e Shrif, Afghanistan Oct. 14.

German Police at the new center will assist in the training of Afghan National Police, Afghan Border Police as well as officers in the Criminal Investigation Department, and the center can currently accommodate up to 200 ANP at one time.

“The objective of the training at the

center is to give more police knowledge where it is needed,” said Achim Schmitz, the detective superintendent of the German Police Project Team [GPPT] here.

The amount of time needed for training depends on the type of training that is needed for a certain team, he added.

There are currently ANP training as Quick Reaction Forces, which are learning anti-riot techniques to help with high riot areas that are near the borders, said Achim. In the two week QRF Training there are three teams with 35 students .

“We are trying to teach them basic police training skills,” said Lt. Kurosch



sure

Camp Marmal becomes the home of the new German-led training center for the Afghan National Army

Moayad, a training expert here and a police officer with the Niedersachsen police department in Germany. “We also want to teach them field style first aid so they will know what to do if they are ever in a situation where someone is shot or something.”

First we give them a training class then the rest of the time we practice hands on with them, he added.

“Another thing that is really key in breaking through to them is trying to build their self confidence,” said Moayad. “Some of them are very shy and need to learn how to speak up.”

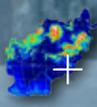
“In order to be a police officer you have to be able to speak to the people and communicate with confidence.” He said. “One technique we use is making them do a report on what they have learned the prior day every morning in front of the rest of the students, and also at the last part of the day.”

The German Police eventually want to give the training over to the Afghans, and allow them to train their own police.

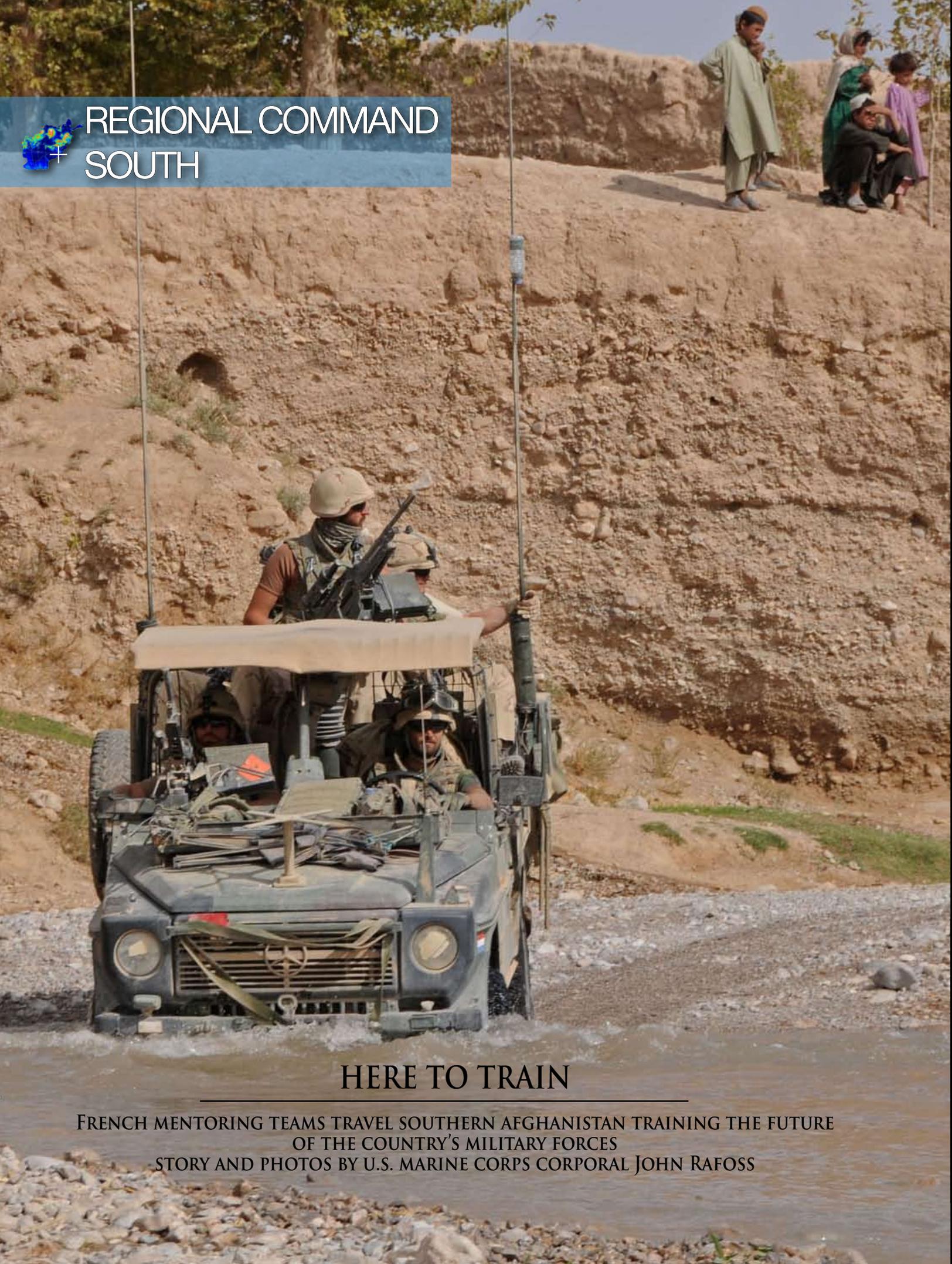
“Next year the plan is to expand the training center and actually make it an Academy,” said Achim. “This will make it

easier for the nationals here to train versus trying to get to Kabul where the main police training academy is located.”

“A lot of the students do not have a solid education and are very independent,” said 1st Lt. Thorsten Schwarz the ANP training expert team leader, and police officer with the Saarland police department in Saarland Germany. “We hope to aim the training toward teaching them to work as a team in their everyday life as well as in there police work and build the confidence that is needed to create a better, solid police force for Afghanistan.”



REGIONAL COMMAND
SOUTH



HERE TO TRAIN

FRENCH MENTORING TEAMS TRAVEL SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN TRAINING THE FUTURE
OF THE COUNTRY'S MILITARY FORCES
STORY AND PHOTOS BY U.S. MARINE CORPS CORPORAL JOHN RAFOSS



An International Security Assistance Force Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) has been operating out of Uruzgan Province since Aug. 16.

Approximately 60 members of the French Marine Corps and the French Foreign Legion have been training the Afghan National Army in weapons drills, mine detection, medical techniques, signal training and daily life duties.

“We are training the Afghan soldiers to be self-sufficient in operations and to help improve the security of this region,” said Lt. Col. Eric Berthiaux, French OMLT commanding officer. “It is a very interesting mission and it is a good challenge for us.”

The French are helping ISAF in assisting the Afghan government to extend and exercise its authority and influence across the country, creating the conditions for stabilization and reconstruction.

Part of the ISAF OMLT Program, which is aimed toward developing the ANA, OMLT’s are comprised of 12-19 people who embed with ANA battalions, brigades, garrisons and

corps headquarters. The teams deploy for at least six months in order to build enduring relationships with the ANA and maximize mentoring effect.

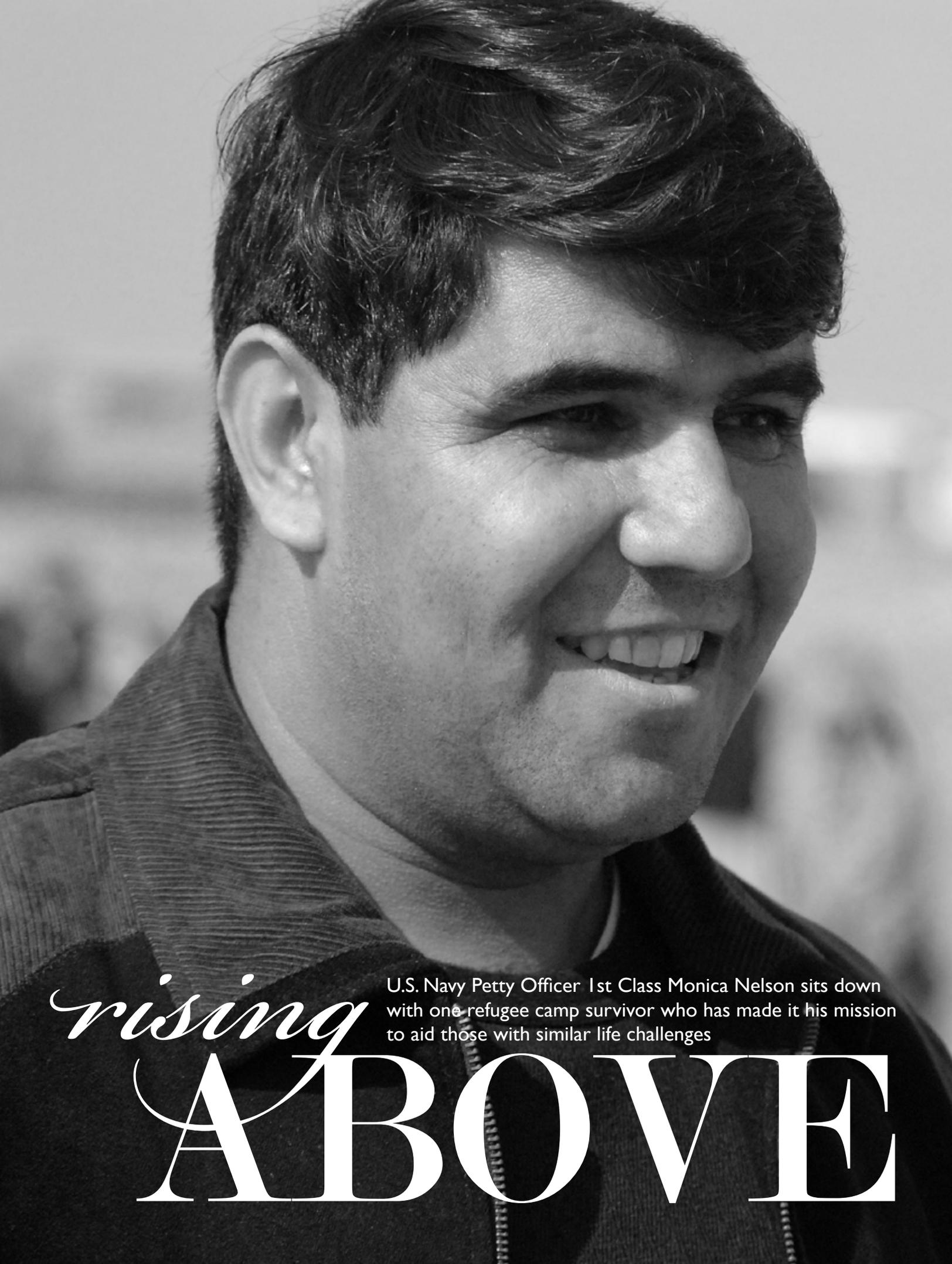
“We like to go into the villages and show ourselves to the people and show them we are present,” said an ANA soldier who is being trained by the French. “I enjoy it a lot. We are happy to work with the French. They are polite and nice people.”

Maj. Pierre Andre Poutout, a French Foreign Legion doctor, has been teaching medical technical skills to some of the ANA medics.

“My ANA medics are great guys and they want to learn a lot,” said Poutout. “They are very motivated and are very interested in our country and language. It is interesting to work with them. They listen to what we tell them.”

Besides training, the French have been living with the ANA and accompanying them on combat missions. Working together while conducting aggressive patrols and defensive work trying to root out the insurgents has led to a close and fruitful partnership.

“We are doing good mentoring and living close to the Afghan soldiers,” said Berthiaux. The level of the [Afghan soldiers training] is improving day by day, because they want to progress and improve themselves.”



U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Monica Nelson sits down with one refugee camp survivor who has made it his mission to aid those with similar life challenges

rising

ABOVE



■ Air Force Chaplain Christian Biscotti meets with Wakil as they plan out the refugee camp mission that took place on Oct. 31 at the Destille Gardens of the ISAF headquarters in Kabul. --photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Monica Nelson

Born in Krialam in the Lowgar province, Afghan native Abdul Wakil, spent 15 years of his life in a Pakistan refugee camp. He knows about food rations, knows the struggles of a community of families to raise their children on impure water and hoping they do not catch malaria. He knows about the loss of family members.

“Since being in the refugee camp with many Afghans, I had a dream that I could see Afghans happy, see Afghan people going to school, Afghan girls going to school, families living in their own houses,” said Wakil. “This was the biggest encouragement for me to could come back and be able someday to help my people.”

Today Wakil serves as the Afghan National Director of the non-governmental organization Sozo International assisting the Afghan people in transformational development of health care, education and economic initiatives.

“Sozo International is all about partners, and no one can do the whole thing by themselves. We need partners. Some are an expert on one side, and some are an expert on another side. But when we work together, we become friends and are able to help a lot of people,” said Wakil.

Help for the Afghanistan people continues to come from generous contributors around the world, and some much closer to home.

Through a connection at Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan, Wakil and his team from Sozo International were introduced to Chaplain Christian Biscotti of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters in Kabul. Biscotti led ISAF’s Volunteer Community Relations and Resources (VCRR) group, and he and Wakil set up a meeting to discuss some of the country’s needs.

“We [were] in agreement that we would work together for Afghanistan,” said Wakil. “[Sozo International’s] agendas, objectives, goals and missions were very close and almost matching the mission statement of VCRR,” said Wakil.

Together – with Sozo International’s other worldwide partners – refugee camps, orphanages, schools and hospitals in Afghanistan have received supplies, equipment, basic necessities, and the per-

sonal touch that only a helping hand and a smile with genuine eyes can give.

As Wakil continues to serve refugees like the one he once was, he remembers his past in the Pakistan refugee camp.

“We were all depending on others,” said Wakil. “When they would come, we would get something. If not, that was it.”

Barek Aub, a land allocation camp of internally displaced people near Bagram, Afghanistan, represents a camp that has benefited directly from the cooperation between Afghan natives, like Wakil, and the country’s international partners. Since its foundation two years ago, refugees were living in tents. In the past year, though, funds came in for 350 houses at Barek Aub.

“The project is not finished yet because we are being careful in making sure the neediest families get their houses first,” Wakil noted. “We are careful because this project is for widows and the disabled, not for everybody.”

Funds also supported the building of a school which 2000 children share, a comprehensive health center where a daily medical clinic runs and a well that provides water to the camp. Each month Wakil organizes food distribution, too.

“I love the people of Afghanistan, and I love our partners,” he said. “I was born for this. I will do it because the people of Afghanistan are in need. We had 30 years of war. As Afghanistan is moving toward democracy and an independent government, and the people have a right to move around, I chose to help, with my freedom, to help my people, no matter which tribe – Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, etc. - I’m here to help. Everything I can, no matter day or night.”

As for the relationship Wakil has built with the volunteer group from ISAF: “I come every day almost three times a day here, and I do not get tired of it,” he said about ISAF Headquarters. “I see how many people really care about the Afghan people and how much people really want to see Afghanistan built faster and that grows my heart every day. I want to just live here. I wish this kind of understanding of our country and the feeling these people have towards us could go to every Afghan.”

“I chose to help, with my freedom,
to help my people, no matter which tribe...”

BLESSED ARE



THE CHILDREN

Members of the Volunteer Community Relations & Resources group spend a morning with the children of Afghanistan's only pediatric hospital

Although it was an early morning, members of Volunteer Community Relations & Resources (VCRR) appeared in high spirits as they geared up for a goods distribution mission at the Indira Ghandi Institute of Child, Afghanistan's only functioning pediatric hospital on Nov. 4.

The group is made up of servicemembers and civilians of the different nations that work out of the International Assistance Security Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul.

Among those who spearheaded the mis-

sion was Navy Lieutenant Jessica Gandy, one of the founding members of the VCRR who has completed 58 missions with the group in the six months she has been deployed to Afghanistan.

"The goal was for each servicemember to have personal interaction with a child who is in severe pain," she said. "I really wanted each person to look each child in their eyes and show them love and hope and that they were cared about. Missions like this always pulls on my heartstrings. I've been at this hospital quite a few times, and having seen two children die, it's nice



photos and story by u.s. navy petty officer 2nd class aramis x. ramirez
additional photos by u.s. navy petty officer 1st class monica nelson

to see the children light up; and we don't have to speak Dari or Pashtu because love is universal."

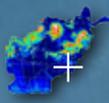
The mission also served as a learning experience for those members of the group who had yet to visit the hospital like U.S. Army Sergeant Carla Hockaday, who has been an active member of the VCRR since her arrival to ISAF in September.

"Knowing the country and knowing how the people live, I didn't expect much, but I was impressed by the facility and how they are able to work with what little they have," she said. "It was a joy playing with the kids and it really shows us

how blessed we are – speaking from an American point of view – and how much we take advantage of what we have."

Gandy said she plans to have a weekly mission with VCRR prior to her departure at the end of November to include more hospital visits as well as visits to different shools.

The children's hospital distribution followed an introductory visit to the hospital by Air Force Chaplain Eric Whitmore, who had a met with hospital director Dr. Al-haj Khalilullah only a week prior to the distribution.



REGIONAL COMMAND EAST



The Power of **GREEN**

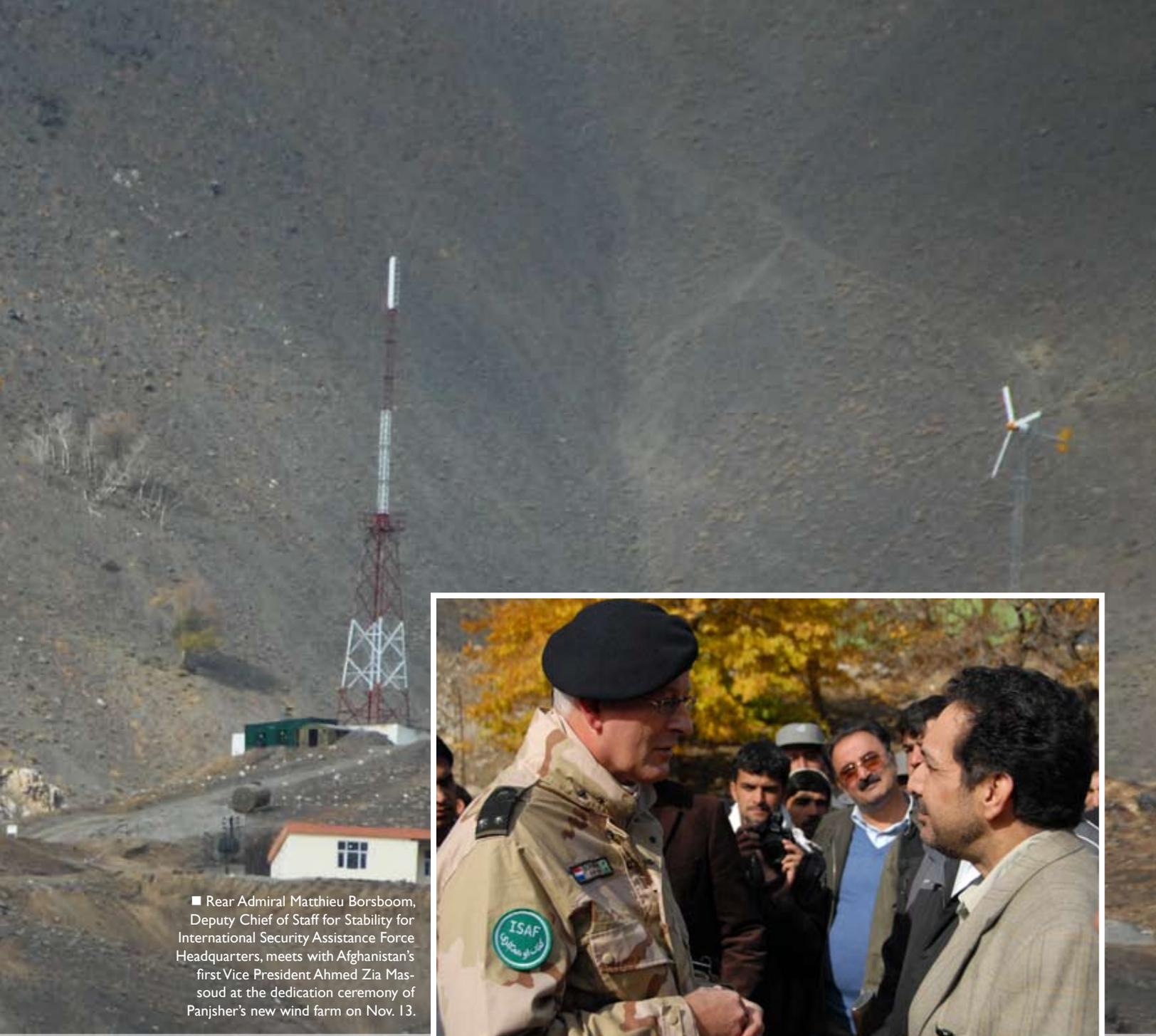
Panjsher province's new wind farm helps Afghanistan take its first steps into the green power initiative.

story and photos by
U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Aramis X. Ramirez

Afghanistan's first windmill farm began operations in the Panjsher province Nov. 13. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held outside the Panjsher governor's home to celebrate the event.

The ceremony was attended by high ranking Afghan officials, including the country's first Vice President Ahmed Zia Massoud, who spoke about the successes of the province, which is known for its untapped natural resources and was home to Afghan national hero Ahmad Shah Massoud, a prominent Mujahideen commander during the Afghan-Soviet war in Afghanistan.

"It is hoped this project will sig-



■ Rear Admiral Matthieu Borsboom, Deputy Chief of Staff for Stability for International Security Assistance Force Headquarters, meets with Afghanistan's first Vice President Ahmed Zia Masoud at the dedication ceremony of Panjsher's new wind farm on Nov. 13.



nify the start of big positive changes, not just for this area, but for all of Afghanistan,” Vice President Massoud said.

The wind farm, which is an eco-friendly hybrid power generation and distribution system, will generate the main source of power for the Panjsher Government Compound to which it is connected and the immediate surrounding areas.

The two-year project began in April 2007 and was constructed by local Panjsher residents under the supervision of contractors from Empower Consultants LTD based out of New Zealand and the assigned military members of the Provincial Re-

construction Team who operate as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) based in Kabul.

In his speech before the crowd, Vice President Massoud also further explained the location choice for Afghanistan’s first wind-farm.

“Security will always be a concern for anything we develop in this country,” Vice President Masood said. “But Panjsher’s geographical location and well-established security made this province a good choice to usher in the development we hope to bring to our country.”

Rear Adm. Matthieu Borsboom, ISAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Stability, attended the ceremony on behalf

of ISAF commander General David McKiernan. Immediately following the ceremony, Rear Adm. Borsboom joined the Honorable Haji Bahlol Bahij, provincial governor of Panjsher for an informal luncheon.

“Panjsher can be called an example,” Rear Adm. Borsboom said. “They have a vision, both short term and long term for development and there’s not enough recognition that goes out to the hard work of the governor, his staff and the people who reside in the province. They work together, as Governor Bahij explained, for the continued success of the province, and that shows signs of a promising future for all of Afghanistan.”



■ Holfat, 5, was presented to ISAF Regional Command West soldiers after a full recovery from his cleft palate operation on Nov. 9, 2008. --submitted photo

Taking care of their own

Regional Command West soldiers coordinate facial operation for local ISAF employee's son

courtesy
ISAF Regional Command West Public Affairs

Holfat Qobatkhel, the five year old son of Shakur Qobatkhel, no longer suffers from a cleft palate thanks to two caring soldiers from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) deployed at Regional command West in Herat.

Italian Corporal Maggiore Scelto Gianluca Guzzo and ISAF Regional Command West chaplain Don Angelo saw the culmination of months of hard work as Dr. Bovar an Afghan doctor who lives in Canada performed the surgery on Holfat in September.

Guzzo and Angelo had worked closely with Holfat's father, a local worker for ISAF Regional Command

West in getting the attention of Dr. Bovar, who is a native of Herat and a long-time acquaintance of Chaplain Angelo. Upon his recovery, Shakur and Holfat formally thanked all ISAF soldiers currently deployed to ISAF Regional Command West at a presentation ceremony Nov. 9.

"I'm very happy now, because my son is healthy. This has been possible thanks to ISAF Italian soldiers", Schacur said to the crowd of Italian soldiers.

ISAF Regional Command West Commander, Brigade General Serra, offered his congratulations to Holfat and his family.

"It is ISAF's aim to help the Afghan people to improve their life standards," he said. "It is also to allow them to achieve basic needs in health, education and security."



■ Holfat stands with ISAF Regional Command West Chaplain Don Angelo at a thank you presentation on Nov. 9, 2008. --submitted photo



■ U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Yevsey Goldberg sits with a family at a refugee camp in the outskirts of Kabul on Oct. 9, 2008. --submitted photo

Gifts from the heart

ISAF doctor earns Bronze Star for humanitarian efforts

u.s. navy petty officer 2nd class aramis x. ramirez
ISAF HQ Public Affairs

It's high noon and the sun beats down on a relieved face. A face that looks down at the hands that fiddle with a box of Raffine pencils. U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Yevsey Goldberg explains the significance of a single pencil.

"It's funny how you can go to Wal-Mart and buy these without thinking," he said. "Take just this one pencil, and you go to a hospital here in Kabul, give it to a child and just look at their face as it completely lights up with joy. That's a feeling we never get when we go to the store to buy these [pencils]."

Goldberg, 44, said it was such a

feeling that kept him going during the 15 months he spent deployed to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Headquarters where he served as the a medical officer at Role One as well as a Joint Staff Officer in the Combined Joint Medical Advisors Office.

Goldberg, who was originally slated for a six-month deployment, extended his tour twice, this after serving a year in Iraq and promising himself to never deploy again. Because of his efforts, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

"I just realized the importance of the work we do out here," he explained. "So many people need help, and I see it in the faces of the chil-

dren at the hospital, the families [for which] we distribute thousands of dollars worth of supplies. It such a self-satisfying feeling to know, and hope, that I've made a difference, if only in one person's life."

Throughout his time at ISAF Headquarters, Goldberg filled his off time with charitable work, which included founding Volunteer Community Relations and Resources (VCRR) with four other ISAF personnel. Together, the group worked to distribute donated supplies and food to local schools, refugee camps and hospitals. Goldberg completed close to 60 missions with VCRR in less than seven months.

Goldberg will return to his home command at the naval hospital in Jacksonville, FL. He said that although he will be back home, he will still do as much work as he can to maintain the relationships he helped build between the people of Afghanistan and ISAF.

"I might take a little break," he joked. "But I want to help establish a non-profit organization that will continue to help the people of Afghanistan. Of all the things I love about this country, what I will miss most are the people. I have made some great friends and I will continue to work with them because these people and this place is something [one does] not forget."

"ISAF Profiles" features an individual or group for outstanding work in support of the International Security Assistance Force and NATO. To submit the names of a person or group for consideration, email the Mirror editor richard.hecht@hq.isaf.nato.int



■ U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Yevsey Goldberg meets with doctors of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child premature baby ward in central Kabul on Oct. 29, 2008. --photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Aramis X. Ramirez

Serving the people

Military training center prepares troops for ANA service

u.s. air force technical sergeant laura smith
ISAF HQ Public Affairs

Regular Afghan citizens are transformed into soldiers on a daily basis at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTTC).

KMTTC is the main training location for the Afghan National Army Training Command and the 'force provider' for Afghanistan's national defense. The center provides initial Basic Training to recruits and advanced training for Non-commissioned and Commissioned Officers.

KMTTC is located in 20,000 acres outside Kabul and has more than 8,000 recruits in training at any given time. The goal of the KMTTC is to provide Afghanistan with a skilled army capable of disarming and dismantling illegal factions, fighting terrorism and assuring the security and progress for the political process for Afghanistan.

"It is the duty and responsibility of the Army to serve the people and maintain the sovereignty, independence, and borders of our country," said Col. Sharif Ahmad, Chief of Staff Op-



■ Afghan National Army soldiers return after completing a field training exercise during the Non-commissioned Officer Academy at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTTC), Nov. 15. The KMTTC trains more than 30,000 soldiers per year and is the force provider for the Afghan National Army. --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith

erating Course at KMTTC. "That's why we train our soldiers. Our Army is in a basic state. If we had a good Army we wouldn't have aggression from Al Qaeda and our other enemies."

KMTTC is supported by the Combined Training Assistance Group, housed at Camp Alamo within the

training grounds, which provides 250 mentors from a multinational force. French, American, British, Romanian and Polish personnel assist Afghan instructors by providing feedback on lesson plans and operations but are only there to assist; all training is conducted by Afghan instructors.

"There is always an Afghan giving the class," said Captain Rob Simmons, Combined Training Assistance Group. "We provide mentors for the instructors. "If the Afghans are going to stand on their own two feet they need to be able to deliver the instruction without any kind of mentorship. Plus Afghans listen better to an Afghan. An Afghan instructor giving his own experience and relating those experiences to the lesson he's giving—students respond well to it."

The training center offers several courses including Basic Training, Advanced Combat Training, Officer Candidate School and Non-commissioned Officer Academy. The Basic Training course is 10 weeks long and is required for all new recruits. During Basic Training recruits are trained on various military topics with the goal being the production of soldiers who are all "infantry first." Advanced Combat

Long day's journey ISAF aids Afghans in annual pilgrimage

u.s. marine corps corporal john rafoss
ISAF HQ Public Affairs

Approximately 45,000 Afghans started their journey Nov. 12 to Mecca as part of the annual Hajj.

The Hajj is an annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia that each Muslim strives to complete at least once in a lifetime.

The Afghans began leaving for Mecca through Kabul International, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat and Kandahar International Airports.

"Hajj is the most important religious process that the Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has to organise," said Turkish Army Cap-

tain Senol Nazikkol, Hajj planner for ISAF.

ISAF is prepared to support the government in activities related to the Hajj to include monitoring, assisting and responding to requests within its capabilities, helping to ensure the event's success.

"One of ISAF's main aims is to increase the positive image of [the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] in the eyes of the Afghan people," Nazikkol said.

Helping ensure that pilgrims enjoy a smooth departure on their Hajj is one way that ISAF can do this.

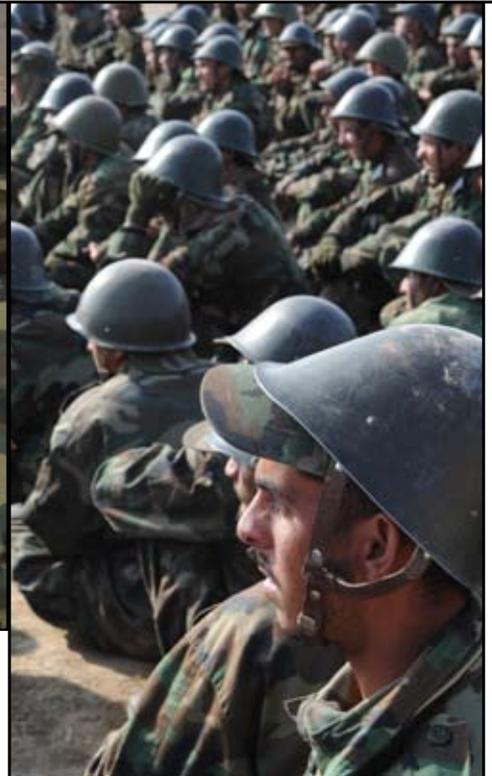
The Afghans will return from Mecca in January.



■ An Afghan National Army soldier prepares an 8-digit grid coordinate while attending the Squad and Platoon Leader course at the Kabul Military Training Center. --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith



■ A recruit looks over his shoulder during training on hand grenade throwing at the Kabul Military Training Center --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith



■ Afghan National Army recruits train on hand grenade throwing at the Kabul Military Training Center --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith

Training follows the initial course and focuses on the speciality the recruit will perform during service. The Officer Candidate School and NCO Academy concentrate on molding future leaders of the Afghan National Army. More than 30,000 service members train at KMTCC every year and another 8,000 train at satellite locations in Mazar-e

Sharif, Herat, Gardez, Kandahar and Darulaman.

On challenge the KMTCC faces is the literacy rate among new recruits.

The soldiers who can read and write are assigned positions in the areas of logistics, medical services and communications. The soldiers who cannot read and write attend training

three days per week to improve their abilities.

“We see 20 to 30 percent of recruits coming in that are literate” said U.S. Army Major Brian Foley, Combined Training Assistance Group. “It’s a struggle right now but that’s a result of 30 years of war.”



NATION IN THE SPOTLIGHT

TURKEY

Rebuilding a nation

BG Levent Colak leads talks on Operation TOLO, a plan to help shape the future of Afghanistan's security and reconstruction

*courtesy
ISAF HQ PAO Media Plans*

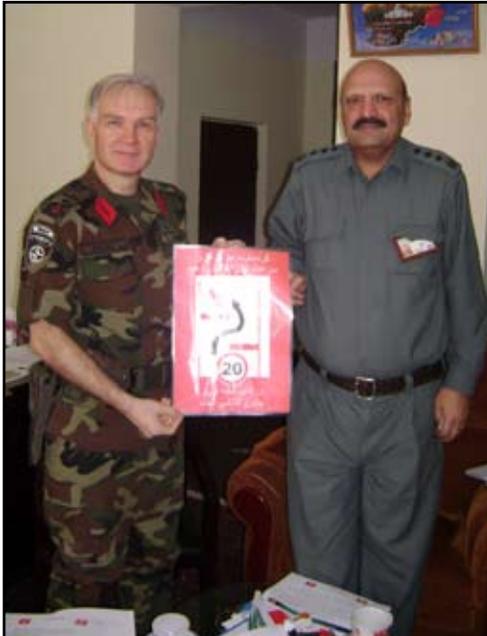
Over the past two months a small ISAF briefing team headed by the ISAF CJ-3, Brigadier General Levent Colak, has travelled around Kabul presenting the concept of operation for Operation TOLO ("sunrise" in Dari) to various critical Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministries.

The ISAF briefing team, on behalf of General McKiernan, the ISAF Commander, has briefed Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and their staffs from the Ministry of the Interior (MoI); the Ministry of Defence (MoD); the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG); the Ministry of Education (MoED); the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MoAIL); the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW); the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MoRRD); the Ministry of Hajj and Islamic Affairs (MoHIA); and the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

The intent of the briefings, to these important Ministries, is to provide an overview of Operation TOLO which is predicated on a comprehensive integrated approach designed to bring greater security, reconstruction, and development across Afghanistan. These Ministries will play a vital role in achieving the overall objectives of Operation TOLO.

The ISAF delegation has been led by Brigadier General Colak. He has been accompanied by Dr. Sherwood McGinnis (ISAF Political Advisor), COL Paul P. Cale (ISAF CJ-35) and LTC Egil Daltveit (ISAF J-2). ISAF CJ-9 and the LOC have also provided assistance in facilitating these briefings.

Nation in the Spotlight features an ISAF/NATO country's efforts in Afghanistan.



A Day of Celebration

October 29, 2008

■ Brigadier General Levent Colak serves a plate of authentic Turkish food during the Turkish Independence Day celebration in the Dettle Gardens of ISAF Headquarters on Oct. 30. --submitted photo

A time for peace

Command Sergeant Major offers holiday message for ISAF troops

iuniasolua t. savusa

ISAF HQ Command Sergeant Major

As we enter the holiday season from our posts across Afghanistan, we can easily remember the holidays back home – times of joy, camaraderie and the celebration of time honored traditions. Because we serve our countries, we know that sometimes we do not always get to enjoy those wonderful privileges but we are comforted knowing that our family and friends are safe back at home. Here in Kabul and all over Afghanistan, I know that the work our service members are doing is the greatest gift that we can give – the gift of bringing freedom and democracy to those who would otherwise suffer under tyranny and terror.

Everyone serving in this theater knows that we are in a struggle against violent, determined extremists. Yet each and every day our service members fearlessly stand in harm's way to assist the Afghan people in their quest for security, economic stability, and a viable and stable government. At times, these may seem lofty and far-removed goals, but when I look at the countries that form this coalition, I am heartened by the unity of our effort. Among the coalition, you see countries that were formerly divided by war who today stand united as strong partners helping to bring safety and security to the Afghan people.

ISAF service members -- be proud of your achievements this past year. You have fought hard alongside the Afghan National Security Forces to make life better and more secure for the Afghan people. There is still much work still to be done. We are in Afghanistan to win a lasting peace, and we will not stop short of this mission. Our success depends on the contributions of you all: the 70,000 men and women from all 40 representative nations. We may come from different countries and



■ Command Sergeant Major Iuniasolua T. Savusa addresses a group of recipients of the NATO Service medal in front of the main building of the International Security Assistance Force Headquarters on Nov. 16, 2008. --photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Aramis X. Ramirez

a diverse set of cultures, but we all share common values -- our unparalleled courage, skill, and commitment to victory.

We labor to succeed at a difficult mission, far from family and friends, under difficult living conditions, and facing uncertain dangers. We do have the advantage of seeing the results of our labors -- Afghan men, women and children who are able to go about their daily routines freely and without fear. Because of the security you enable, these men, women, and children are able to work to build a peaceful, prosperous Afghanistan.

I read an anonymous quote recently that stuck with me because of its particular resonance. It read, "Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world, but the soldiers don't have that problem." I share this quote with you because I know that we share the pride and satisfaction of service to our countries and the people of Afghanistan, even if it means being away from our loved ones during the holidays.

This is not the first holiday season I have spent away from my family, and I know from experience it never gets any

easier. Our families are our greatest treasures. Indeed, without their support, we could never be successful in our endeavors. I urge you to take advantage of all the lines of communication that we have here in Afghanistan to communicate with your loved ones regularly. Remember, that they are facing struggles and hardships too because of the extended separation. So please take a moment to thank them for their continued love and support.

I also encourage you to take a moment to thank your comrades-in-arms who are serving beside you. You should all be able to depend on each other, just as your home country depends on you.

As Command Sergeant Major, I thank you, as do your respective nations, for the hard work and endless sacrifices you continue to make on behalf of the ISAF mission and the Afghan people. We may follow different traditions, different beliefs and different religions, but we are all united in a cause that is greater than each of us individually – and for this reason we will succeed in this vital mission. God bless you and your families.

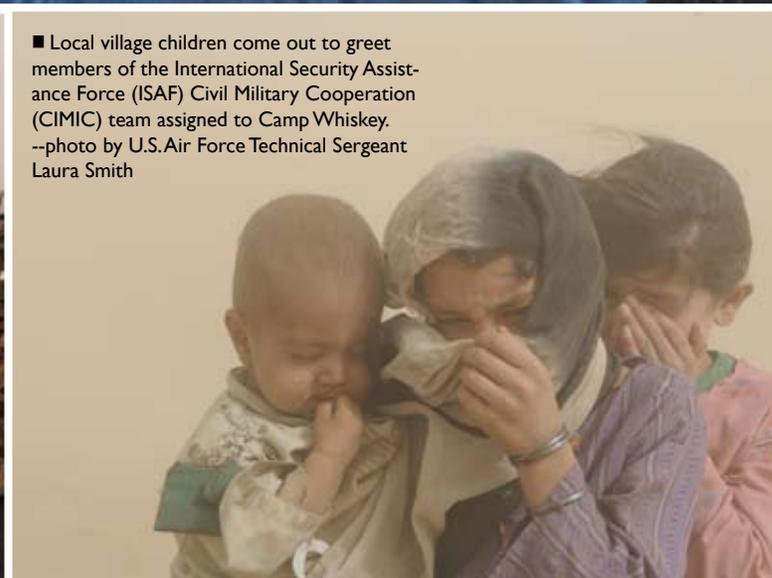
Happy Holidays!



■ A child peers over his mother's shoulders as residents of a refugee camp line up for a distribution of winter supplies by the Volunteer Community Relations and Resources group on Oct. 31, 2008. --photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Aramis X. Ramirez



■ Spanish Army Captain Santiago Rubio, CH-47 Chinook Helicopter pilot briefs passengers on Camp Arena's flight line prior to an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, Sept. 27, 2008. --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith



■ Local village children come out to greet members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) team assigned to Camp Whiskey. --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith



■ U.S. Navy Cmdr. Gregory Harris colors with an Afghan boy in the Indira Ghandi Institute of Child Burn Ward while other service members and civilians assigned to International Security Assistance Force Headquarters in Kabul pass out stuffed animals and crayons to other burn victims on Nov. 20, 2008. --photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Monica Nelson



■ Local village members gather to meet with members of the International Security Assistance Force during a humanitarian mission near Forward Operating Base (FOB) Bala Murghab, Oct. 3, 2008. --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith



■ Italian Army Corporal Paolo Faraone, Task Force Diavoli, performs security at International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Forward Operating Base Delaram, Oct. 6, 2008. --photo by U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Laura Smith

