



ISAF MIRROR



COM ISAF visit to PRTs

Farewell to NL Apache

French Patrol

April 2005

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For more information please call the Editor on HQ ISAF Ext 1230. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions.

Editor: Maj Gavin Jones, Chief Internal Information HQ ISAF

**The deadline for the next edition is:
Monday 11 April 2005**

**Have you got a camera ?
Send your pictures to the Editor and they could be on the cover !**

Cover photograph:	A member of the PRT at Maimana out on patrol !
Back Cover photograph:	The start line of the Camp Souter 10km Fun Run

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PRT MAIMANA - A MULTINATIONAL OUTPOST

By Lieutenant Kristian Krohg-Sørensen, Norwegian PIO

A long way from the busy streets and crowded urban areas of Kabul, Maimana is a quiet, peaceful town located in the Faryab province in the north of Afghanistan. PRT Maimana is located in a former bank building in the middle of the town. The mission of this multinational outpost is similar in many ways to the mission of the ISAF forces in Kabul but as Lieutenant Colonel Jan Østbø, Deputy Commander of PRT Maimana, explains, "Our military observer teams don't patrol the streets like in Kabul, they patrol large areas. This makes our mission a bit different as they often have to stay outside the base for several days".

The main task for the multinational PRT is to provide security in the distant areas of the province thereby enabling the UN and NGOs to rebuild infrastructure and schools. Challenges are mainly related to the poor road conditions. "Our cars get a good beating when we drive these roads" says Lieutenant Kristian, one of the drivers of the Norwegian military observer team. "But the best thing about working like this is the freedom we are granted in how we solve our tasks and the opportunity to sleep under the stars at night". During their missions the military observer teams get closely connected to people of many different ethnic groups and social strata. The Faryab province consists mainly of Uzbeks and Turkmens with and small Pashtun minority. Travelling with interpreters, the teams gather information about the security situation in the areas. Lt Col Østbø is clear on the benefits of the work of his teams, "There is no doubt that this activity is helpful. People appreciate our presence. Our hope now is that more NGOs get involved in the work of helping the people of Faryab".

ALL IN A GOOD CAUSE !

By Lance Corporal Lunn Physical Training Instructor, Camp Souter

On Sunday 6 March 107 runners from across ISAF took part in a 10 km 'Fun Run' around Camp Souter. The aim of the event, apart from fitness training, was to raise money for a young boy in the UK named Drew Thomas who is suffering from Leukaemia. After registration everybody made their way to the start line where there was a lively atmosphere - helped in no small part by the large and very noisy band of Spanish supporters ! Many of the UK duty personnel had turned up to support the runners and help out with the administration. After 3 or 4 laps the leaders were already passing some of the more 'sedate' participants which made things more difficult for the lap counting team. They were recording the number of laps each runner had done although with Company Sergeant Major Kimberlin running around in a belly dancer's outfit, Captain Honan wrapped in black bin bags and Lance Corporal Kingsley running with his dog at least they were easy to spot ! As they started their final lap Sergeant Bell (UK) and Sergeant Ritchie (UK) remained neck and neck at the front of the field. Anticipation was high at the finish line as the spectators waited to see who would come around the final corner in the lead. That honour went to Sergeant Ritchie who crossed the line in a time of 42 minutes and 38 seconds with Sergeant Bell in second place and third going to Sergeant Ferendez Perez (SP). As the other runners finished the first lady across the line was Lance Corporal Ashmead (UK), in second place was WO1 Krista (NO) and in third place was Captain Suzanne (SP). Everybody that finished the run was handed a commemorative T-shirt. That evening COM BRITFOR presented the prizes, including for best Fancy Dress, before all of the runners gratefully received their free beer.

The day's events raised US\$1300 for Drew - a huge thank you to everyone involved.

CHERI GHAR CRASH SITE

By Flight Lieutenant Richard Heffer, Media Ops Air HQ ISAF

When Kam Air Flight 904 Boeing 737 lost contact with the air traffic controllers at KAIA on Thursday 3rd February at 3.25 pm, this was the start point of a long and complex ISAF operation to help the Government of Afghanistan in dealing with this terrible tragedy.

The air staff at HQ ISAF became immediately involved in trying to locate the aircraft. This took two main avenues of approach. Firstly it was

imperative to follow up the reports of some outside agencies that the aircraft had diverted to Pakistan and safely landed at Peshawar. At the same time, having to assume the worst, rapid planning took place to identify a possible crash area and to organise the ISAF search and rescue helicopter assets.

The air planning was blended into the KMNb search and rescue operation, which tied together the air search with the stood up KMNb ground forces who were further tasked to scour the possible area of the crash. As the operational tempo increased the ISAF HQ Operations team quickly took overall command and control with a full overview to ensure that ISAF forces were effectively co-ordinated.

The search began immediately at daybreak on the 4th February, but the extreme weather conditions greatly hampered the search, making flying virtually impossible for the ISAF helicopters. Similarly the snow and bad visibility, poor roads and difficult terrain made the ground search very difficult for the German Battle Group infantry platoons, Fennek reconnaissance vehicles and the Canadian Recce Sqn troops.

The poor weather continued for the next day, but the initial planning for the possible crash location



proved to be sadly correct when the crash site was found by a ISAF Dutch Apache helicopter in the early afternoon on the 5th February. ISAF Dutch First Lieutenant Kootje (pictured left) was the pilot: "It was very lucky, we were in a valley and we were turning. The tops of the mountains were covered in cloud and this was moving around. I looked up and the spot with the tail was suddenly clear". The helicopter was in the right place at the right time to take advantage of the sudden break that revealed the tail of the crashed airliner.



The helicopter crew confirmed the wreckage site with the aircraft sensors and reported back their find. The crash site was on a high mountain ridge called Cheri Ghar at some 3000 metres (or 10 000 feet). The ridge was a daunting place; sheer on one side, steeply sloping on the other with deep snowfields and swept by high winds or covered in freezing fog. The snow hid any local tracks or paths and the approach roads from nearby villages were impassable to vehicles, despite several attempts by ISAF and ANA patrols to find a



way to the summit. The winter weather did not give another opportunity until 7th February when a window of clear weather allowed an ISAF Spanish Cougar helicopter to set down a 5 man team of Slovenian mountain rescue troops onto the ridge summit. Pushing on through the waist-deep snow and conscious of the possible mine threat, the team reached the site. Although the team found no human remains, the badly broken up debris scattered along the ridgeline and the extreme conditions made it very unlikely that anyone had survived the tragedy.

The ISAF role now moved to supporting the Afghan authorities in their rescue and recovery work. KNMB troops along with ISAF liaison teams worked closely with ANA and Kabul City Police to make sure that the approaches to the crash site were secure and to facilitate the ongoing ground attempts to reach the crashed aircraft. However, the only effective means to approach the crash site was by air, and the continued bad weather prevented the planned flying operations until 13th February when ISAF troops were able to land and clear a very basic LZ on the mountain. This allowed ISAF helicopters to land the aircraft crash investigation team to visit the site for the first time. Mr Robert Benzon, the head of the team



and a highly experienced investigator for the American National Transport Safety Board, explained the difficulties: "I have worked on aircraft crash investigations for over 22 years. This was the most challenging accident site that I have worked due to the terrain, the weather and the security situation. We could not have begun to assist the Afghan authorities in their investigation without the full support of ISAF at every level. I would particularly like to thank the aircrew who flew us to the location."

As the days continued, the Afghan authorities took on the bulk of the recovery work, using their army helicopter to transport ANA soldiers to the site to slowly clear the site and begin the sad task of recovering the bodies that they found. ISAF operations were confined to a supportive role, flying in the investigation team and beginning the clearance of a further LZ on the eastern side of the mountain with Hungarian Mountain troops and an Estonian EOD team to deal with the threat of mines.

COM ISAF VISIT TO THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS (PRTs)

By Major Joe Bowman, PIC Director HQ ISAF

COM ISAF recently completed a visit to Mazar-e- Sharif (MeS), Konduz and Feyzabad PRTs. The trip started with a 52-minute flight from KAIA to the MeS airport where Colonel Beattie, the commander of the MeS PRT, met us. The Afghan National Police (ANP) cordoned off the route from the airport and we were whisked through the city with sirens blazing whilst many of the local citizens stopped to watch the entourage pass. The main effort for the PRT in MeS is to promote the police force as the legitimate protector of the Afghan people. COM MeS sees this mission as the best way to extend the legitimacy of the Afghan government by daily interaction with a professional, competent Afghan police force.



Following a series of briefings and visits COM ISAF conducted a press conference with seven different media agencies including Radio Liberty, Iranian Radio, Voice of America, Free Europe, APTN, AINA and AFP. We rejoined our convoy and drove through the dusty, deep-rutted roads back to the airfield. Along the way we passed the Blue Mosque, an amazing spectacle in the middle of the city that gave a hint of what Afghanistan used to look like over thirty years ago and what the country could look like thirty years from now.

Our flight from Mazar-e-Sharif to Konduz took 25 minutes in very agreeable flying conditions. Upon our arrival we were met by Colonel Binder, the German commander of Konduz and Feyzabad PRTs. After a short briefing we drove to the Hotel Kunduz, a fairly new hotel in the city to have a meeting and a dinner with the local authorities. There actually was a red carpet rolled out for the party and a receiving line for the Command Group. It took about 20 minutes to get from the vehicle to the grand ballroom where the official welcome was made by the Governor of Takhar, Abdul Kabir Marsban, the Vice Governor of Konduz, Daud Hashemi, the Spokesman for the Elders, Hadschi Aman and Mullah Arbab Mir Garisudin.



After the lengthy, very sincere introductions from the elders present COM ISAF addressed the assembled group of leaders and elders. The spokesmen stood up one at a time and delivered their messages. They thanked ISAF,



the international community and the Konduz PRT for all they had done for the provinces and stated that they were looking forward to working with ISAF in the future. Then they thanked COM ISAF for coming and invited him back again and again. After a question and answer period the group went to an adjoining ballroom and ate a dinner that was laid out in traditional Afghan style with huge plates of meat, rice, big stacks of fresh bread and fruit. Before we left we found out that this was the first time that the Commander of ISAF forces had met with the elders in such a manner.

Some of the attendees had driven for eight or more hours over very poor roads just to get a chance to meet the new Commander of ISAF. It was very evident that they were honoured to host COM ISAF and they invited him to come back and visit again. COM ISAF said that upon his next visit he would call on them in their offices.



The next day after breakfast the party went on a walkabout in the centre of the city. Very soon we were surrounded by locals who wanted to see what it was that had broken up their normal routine. The party was surrounded by laughing children and curious adults and COM ISAF took the opportunity to speak with many of them. Our flight from Konduz to Feyzabad was very short but the drive to



the Governor's office took 45 minutes over some of the worst roads I have ever travelled. Along the way we drove on a 500-meter stretch that a Chinese road company had started work on - it was the best 12 seconds of the entire trip ! The deputy governor thanked us for coming to visit and spoke of the collapse of the Taliban, establishment of the ATA and the ISAF work in the provinces. He stated that the country is strengthened day by day thanks to the international community and he had high hopes for a strong country. He thanked ISAF for training the ANA and ANP and noted that without security there would be a huge problem in the region. Our last stop was at the new PRT location. The Feyzabad COM, Lieutenant Colonel Manhenke, gave us an overview of the construction site. After his briefing we returned to the airfield and flew back via Konduz to KAIA.



KMNB COMMANDER VISITS CAMP JULIEN

By Captain Mark Gough, PAO Task Force Kabul
 Photography by Master Corporal Christopher Dupree



Colonel Walter Semianiw (right), Commander of Task Force Kabul (TFK), warmly greets Brigadier-General Ümit Dündar (left), Commander of the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB) during the General's first visit to Camp Julien, home of Canadian soldiers deployed in Afghanistan on *Operation ATHENA*.

Turkish Army Brigadier General Ümit Dündar, the Commander of the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB), hosted his weekly coordination meeting with KMNB senior staff on February 22 at Camp Julien, home of Canada's military forces in Afghanistan, also known as Task Force Kabul (TFK).

Regularly, a different unit hosts the meeting in their home camp, providing the Commander a chance to get out and visit each of his units individually. This meeting was the first held outside of KMNB Headquarters since BGen Dündar only recently took command of KMNB.

"B" Squadron of the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) organized the day's events. The squadron is currently deployed to Kabul as part of *Operation ATHENA*, and is attached to KMNB as the brigade's armoured reconnaissance squadron.

Upon arriving at Camp Julien, BGen Dündar inspected a quarter-guard of soldiers from "B" Squadron and visited with Colonel Walter Semianiw, the Commander of TFK. He then chaired his weekly meeting and attended a luncheon of Canadian fare hosted by Major Ross Ermel, Officer Commanding "B" Squadron.

After lunch, BGen Dündar returned to the Camp Julien parade square to view a number of static displays of the squadron's equipment. The General had a chance to look at all the displays and ask the soldiers questions about their kit. With its unique variety of surveillance and information-gathering capabilities, the Canadian recce squadron is the eyes and ears of KMNB.



Major Ross Ermel (left), Officer Commanding "B" Squadron, escorts Brigadier-General Ümit Dündar (right), Commander of the KMNB, across the Camp Julien parade square to view "B" Squadron static displays during the Commander's visit.



Warrant Officer Kevin Trainor (left), a Troop Warrant Officer with "B" Squadron, explains the capabilities of a Coyote Reconnaissance Vehicle to Brigadier-General Ümit Dünder (right), Commander of the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB).

"This was an excellent opportunity to show our expertise to the Commander and his staff," said Maj Ermel. "With the aim for better cooperation with the brigade."

The mission of *Op ATHENA*, Canada's contribution to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), is to help maintain security in Kabul and its surrounding areas so the Government of Afghanistan and UN agencies can rebuild the country.

While ISAF has operational command for the mission, KMNB actually commands the troops on the ground, including "B" Squadron.

By all accounts the visit was a success. "B" Squadron was able to showcase their capabilities and the Commander's meeting went off very smoothly. So much so that following lunch BGen Dünder thanked the Canadians for their hospitality and efficiency and said he hoped the other nations hosting future meetings would follow suit.



Master Corporal Sheryl Grant (centre), a Command Post (CP) Detachment Commander with "B" Squadron, explains the setup of a Bison CP vehicle to Brigadier-General Ümit Dünder (left), Commander of the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB), and Colonel Ernst Otto Berk, Deputy Commander of KMNB.

ON PATROL WITH THE FOREIGN LEGION

By Major Xavier de Maillard, Communication Advisor to the FR Contingent Commander



The French battalion organises foot patrols in three Police Districts (PD) 11, 15 and 17 in the north of Kabul. This presence by the French soldiers reassures the local population and contributes to the enhancement of security in the capital.

On one such patrol ten Legionnaires prepare to set off at 1400 hours. This patrol is taking place in the southern part of PD11. The first stage of the patrol takes the Legionnaires to the building housing the police chief for Pd11. The patrol meets up with the Afghan policemen but before they can set off they must first gain the agreement of the District Police Chief. It is the responsibility of the patrol commander to conduct these negotiations.



These discussions can take time but on this occasion the patrol is quickly on its way accompanied by a translator and a local policeman. The patrol is scheduled to last for an hour and a half. The aim is to show the French presence, to reassure the population and to gain information from chatting to the Afghans. A lot of the local residents smile and joke with the soldiers as they pass. From time to time they pass women dressed in the traditional burka and the soldiers are careful to observe local customs and sensitivities.



Curious children accompany the patrol and, with beaming smiles, ask to be photographed with the soldiers.



As the snow melts the narrow streets become muddy and care is taken not to fall. The Patrol Commander stops to talk to a spice merchant but nothing of real value comes from the conversation.

The patrol continues on its route and the 2 hours amongst this proud and endearing people pass quickly.



On return to base the Legionnaires complete their patrol report and debriefing knowing that tomorrow they must set out again with the same sense of purpose and determination.

FINNISH AID IN THE CAMPS

By Second Lieutenant Sami Kovanen, FINCIMIC Team 3



Team Leader Senior Lieutenant Ari Kankare with one of the Camp Leaders

FINCIMIC Team 3 delivered humanitarian supplies to a refugee camp in PD 8 on the 1st and 2nd of February 2005. The purpose of the project was to give emergency aid to the refugees who were suffering from this year's exceptionally hard winter.

In the camp there are 420 families living in mud huts and tents. This camp is mainly inhabited by returnees from Pakistan and a smaller number of IDPs; many of whom have been living in the camp since it was established 3 years ago. Before the civil war they had their own houses in Kabul, which are now destroyed or occupied.



Camp Leaders, suppliers and FINCIMIC Team 3 personnel 2nd Lt Sami Kovanen and Miloff Ruusa Vanhanen

The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs provided funding for the supply of 420 blankets, 420 cans of 5 kg cooking oil and 13,440 kg of firewood. These supplies should keep the refugee families warm for about two weeks. The feedback the team received from this project was heart warming. Refugees were genuinely pleased and said that the aid and assistance provided by ISAF could help save lives in the camp.

Over the next few editions the ISAF Mirror will introduce a new and colourful character, Samet, who will attempt to lighten the atmosphere with some friendly humour. Samet is a typical local Afghan who is fascinated with the new liberties he now enjoys. Please peruse his comments in this and future editions.



A MILESTONE FOR THE FUTURE

By Major Xavier de Maillard, Communication Advisor to the FR Contingent Commander

On Tuesday 24 February the inauguration of the newly completed Katacha Primary School took place. The Education Advisor of Kabul Province, accompanied by Mr Abdul Gaffar Barriolay, Governor of Deh Sabz, Mr Mohammed Lal, Malek of Bandikhaneh, Katacha, Sangaw, Shurab, Seyyed Hassan and Gholamqader Qaleh, and other Maleks and school directors, attended the ceremony in the presence of Mr Yves Gauffriau, Educational Advisor for the French Embassy, Colonel Hubert de Reviers de Mauny, French Contingent Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Tefvik Esmek, Chief G9 KMNB and Commander Heiki Mahlamaki, Deputy Chief G9 KMNB. More than 40 representatives of the school and the local villages also attended the ceremony.



The Katacha Malek's son opened the ceremony with a Holy Koran prayer. In his speech the governor underlined the excellent cooperation between the French CIMIC team and the villagers and the very good relationship between Afghanistan and France. Lieutenant Colonel Esmek highlighted the job of the French Battle Group *"without whose action, this project could not be a success"* and going on to express his certainty that *"this close and successful cooperation will continue in the future"*. After

the speeches Colonel Hubert de Reviers de Mauny delivered the school's keys to the Education Advisor of Kabul Province. Then it was time to cut the ribbon before entering one of the new classrooms.



Built near the villages of Bandikhaneh, Sangaw, Shaykhu and Qal Eh Ye Miran the Katacha school will host more than a hundred children in seven classrooms for the next school year. Initiated by the French battlegroup and given 60 000 funding by the European Community delegation for Afghanistan this school has now become a reality for Afghan children.

Lieutenant Colonel Hydulphe, the French CIMIC Chief, referring to President Karzai's invitation to foreign investors to assist in the rebuilding of Afghanistan's infrastructure, explained that this new school is a milestone for the future because *"it is only with education that we can shape the future"*.

FAREWELL TO THE APACHES

By Adjt Marc Vandenhoudt, PIO HQ ISAF



At 0330 hrs LOCAL on Friday 1st April 2005 the Dutch Apaches of 301 Squadron, based at KAIA, will mark the end of a successful year in Afghanistan. Lieutenant Colonel Jan Koedijk, the Detachment Commander of the fourth and last rotation of approximately 115 all ranks, is justly proud of his team and says the Apaches definitely helped to create a safer situation in Kabul and the surrounding areas. In the last twelve months, in addition to their routine flying tasks, the Apaches provided considerable support to the Presidential elections but their discovery of the KAM Air wreckage is definitely one of their most memorable contributions. Throughout the Apaches have provided valuable air support to the ISAF ground forces as well as locating smugglers' routes and caves with their surveillance devices.

It would certainly make you think twice about causing trouble if you saw the Apaches (Model D) circling above your head. Each aircraft is equipped with Hellfire laser guided Air-to-Ground Missiles, an array of 2.75 inch rockets, a 30mm gun and 5 different day and night cameras for target acquisition. By the time the six Apaches are

dismantled, in preparation for transporting home to their home base at Gilze Rijen in a huge Antonov 124, Lieutenant Colonel Koedijk expects them to have reached a total of 2300 flying hours on ISAF missions. This will be equal to half of the flying hours, in a normal year, of all 24 Apaches of the Dutch Royal Air force. "Over here our pilots and mechanics gather more experience in one day than on any three week course".

"The only big difference in flying over here and in Western Europe is the fact that our machines need more maintenance because of the dust in the summer and more time spent on de-icing in the winter" explains Jeffrey, the head of the technical section. After having brought our attention, with pride, to the appropriately orange tulips that were specially prepared to survive in this climate he observes that the rough landscape and the unbelievable survival instinct of the locals will always be engraved in his mind.

"We certainly cannot complain about life in KAIA," says Nicole, the logistic specialist of the detachment. "Lodging, sanitation and the food are OK over here. The only down side was that, unlike previous tours, the Dutch personnel were not allowed any alcoholic drinks!" She went on to say that "there hasn't been such a hard winter in this country for many years but that just had to happen during my tour!" Because of the weather she experienced a lot of difficulties in shipping all kinds of equipment as, more than once, the weather lead to enormous delays.





Paul, a young but very experienced Apache pilot having already completed a tour here last summer as a pilot, rejoined the detachment this year as a Pilot in Command. Looking back on his tour he comments that "the 150 flying hours I will have by the end of March will have been very educational to my flying technique". In fact, Paul will have completed 6.5 times more flying hours in the cockpit than usual. "For us pilots the biggest challenge was not only the extreme weather conditions, but also the variation of different landscapes such as the mountain ranges, the valleys and the city of Kabul. To give you an idea, a city with a population of 2.5 million doesn't make it easy to use the Apache for urban warfare. Firstly, it is very hard to find your target.

Secondly, you have to make the right decision about what kind of weapon you're going to use against it to avoid collateral damage. ISAF certainly reaps the fruits of our aerial presence as the Afghans have experience with fighter choppers from previous wars. They are very familiar with the damage and destruction these helicopters are capable of delivering". Paul concludes by reflecting on the response to the Apaches from the other forces in theatre. "Thanks to the positive reactions we get from other ISAF troops I'm able to look back on this mission with a good feeling. This doesn't only count for me, but for the whole unit."



Farewell, Thank You and Good Luck !

