

Coalition Bulletin

A publication of the Coalition fighting the Global War on Terrorism

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A New Army - a Better Hope for Peace

Romanian Mobile Training Teams help Afghan National Army get ready for action

"Stone Platoon" Holds Steady

Estonian Defence Forces in one of the most dangerous missions

Help Your Neighbor

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Afghans Recognize Coalition Efforts

The Afghani people realize improvements made with help of Coalition













On the Threshold of Relief

The next rotation of the largest national contribution of Non-NATO member countries' contingents in Iraq is going on





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Editor's Note

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Cover photo: Soldiers from the Romanian Army's 280th Infantry Battalion conduct a live fire exercise at Tarnak Farms Range near Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. Soldiers are familiarizing themselves with their weapons in preparation for future operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"A Taliban campaign to disrupt the voter registration in Afghanistan largely failed. About 9.4 million people have registered, almost half of whom are women. The numbers exceeded U.N. expectations."

- "USA Today"



Brig.-Gen. Neville Reilly, NZ.

This month's Bulletin contains an article on the work of the Coalition Humanitarian Assistance Working Group (HAWG) at CENTCOM. The primary emphasis of the HAWG is on coordinating humanitarian assistance from Coalition countries to those in need within the CENTCOM AOR. Contributions have included funding, equipment, services and transport.

The Global War on Terrorism has highlighted once again the relationship between the military and humanitarian organizations. This relationship has been tested as the military and humanitarian organizations interact, although each has a very similar aim: to improve the lives of those people who are victims of the effects of conflict.

Following the Coalition victory in Afghanistan, the mission changed from combat to supporting stability. An important element of this strategy has been the establishment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), whose main role is to assist in extending the influence of the Afghan Transitional Government. The PRTs are also implementing many projects for the people of Afghanistan, utilizing funding from a number of government agencies. In addition, the PRTs are helping in providing improved security until the new Afghan National Army is able to play its part more effectively.

Many of the humanitarian agencies deserve credit for the work they have done for the people of Afghanistan for over 50 years, and from time to time, under adverse conditions. They have been able to operate because they have jealously guarded their independence, neutrality and impartiality. Some humanitarian agencies have expressed concern that the blurring of humanitarian assistance and military operations has led to humanitarian staff becoming targets for the terrorist. Unfortunately, they have become targets because the terrorist does not distinguish between military and humanitarian targets.

The changes brought about by terrorism make it even more important that there be greater coordination between the military and the humanitarians. Coordination will help in ensuring that the inherent differences between military and humanitarian organizations, and their respective methods of operation, are better understood. In the final analysis, this will help in ensuring that those in need receive the assistance that they require.

Neville Reilly
Brigadier-General, New Zealand
Chairman
Public Awareness Working Group

Georgia sends peacekeepers

An element of the 16th Mountain Battalion of the Defence Ministry of Georgia deployed to Afghanistan on August 29. Initially, Georgian peacekeepers went to Germany to undergo two weeks of primary training. In mid-September they departed to Afghanistan to serve in the German Peacekeeping Forces.

Captain Shavleg Tabatadze commands the Georgian peacekeeping platoon, which comprises 50 servicemen (6 officers and 44 soldiers and sergeants). Georgian peacekeepers will man checkpoints and patrol the internal territory of the military base. If necessary, they can be involved in other operations.

The term of their service in Afghanistan is fixed at 100 days. After that, they will be replaced by a new contingent. Thus, Georgia became the first CIS country that has sent its peacekeepers to Afghanistan.

CB

Dutch Support to the Coalition



by Brig.-Gen. Ruud B.G. Vermeulen, Netherlands AF

The Minister of Defense of the Netherlands decided to support Operation 'Enduring Freedom' and to continue support of ISAF. A letter to the Netherlands Parliament announced this decision publicly.

The Netherlands will participate in OEF with one frigate (including a flight unit and a boarding team) scheduled from October 2004 until mid January 2005. The frigate will be deployed to the waters of the Middle East. For technical assistance and coordination in the theatre, a Dutch liaison element will be embedded in HQ-TF 150.

As a result of the highly appreciated US support of the Netherlands, air operations will be conducted in order to secure ISAF during the coming Afghan elections. Six F-16 and one KDC-10 are based in Kyrgyzstan (Manas) and will be operational. Mission extension is possible if necessary. By now an advance party is in the Afghan theatre to ensure that the Netherlands can de-conflict their OEF and ISAF missions.

The deployment of six Dutch Apache helicopters, embedded in ISAF, is an operational success and this mission has been extended for six months until 31 March next year. In addition to this, the Netherlands will deploy, for at least one year (three years for planning), a PRT in Baghlan. This team will reach interim operational capability as of 1st October and full operational capability in November 2004.

CB

A New Army - a Better Hope for Peace

Romanian Mobile Training Teams help Afghan National Army get ready for action



by Capt Ioan Florin Cloanca,
ROU ANA MTT Trainer



The Romanian unit and US Commanding General, BG Thomas P. Mancino.

On June 11th 2003, a 25-man Romanian Army Mobile Training Team (MTT) arrived in Afghanistan unsure of what to expect. Now, after 15 months experience in country, they are playing a critical role in the equipping and training of the new Afghan National Army (ANA).

Important to the success of the mission, the MTT members have developed mutual respect and lasting friendships with their Coalition partners and the ANA soldiers with whom they work on a daily basis. Their work is helping to accelerate the establishment of security within Afghanistan.

The MTT is comprised of volunteers from throughout the Romanian Army and includes 10 officers and 15 noncommissioned officers. They are organized into four sections to include a mechanized infantry section, an armor (tank) section, a maintenance and inspection section, and a training assistance section.

All of these sections have one goal in mind, and that is to prepare the mechanized infantry and tank

(T-62) battalions of the 3rd Brigade Central Corps to fight effectively as part of an ANA combined arms team.

The Romanian maintenance and inspection section trained Afghan maintenance personnel to ensure the tanks and APC scout vehicles are combat ready. The other two sections are responsible for driver training, and instruction on safety and basic crew drills. After the ANA crews mastered their basic drills, they started at the new crew-level tactics.

At a certain point, when the crew proficiency was at a satisfactory level, the Afghan soldiers were trained both by Romanian and US MTT or Romanian and German MTT. This effort required close coordination between the Romanian, US and German teams.

Romanian Army Major Mircea Gologan, the OIC for Romanian MTTs, comes from Bucharest where he is the operations chief at the 1st Mechanized Brigade. Although he misses his wife and cat, he is proud to serve alongside professional Coalition partners. He said that he has enormous re-

spect for the ANA soldiers he trains.

Also, he noted that his experience in Afghanistan will serve him well when he returns to Romania to help the brigade staff to understand multinational operations planning. Maj Gologan emphasized how much both the Romanian and the Afghans have learned from each other, and how eager ANA soldiers are to excel.

Captain Claudiu Mihalache, who comes from the 814th Armor Battalion located in Bistrita, oversees the ANA tank crew basic skills

Checking results of a practice shoot.



training. He mentioned that the biggest challenge is the language barrier. Translating from Romanian to English, and then from English to Dari or Pashto can be time consuming and poses difficulties when there is a need to communicate in a precise and rapid manner. Nevertheless, Capt Claudiu Mihalache feels ANA soldiers are quick to learn and will soon be ready to move on to higher level tactics, as long as they have the proper equipment.

Private Mohammad Sabir, a BMP driver from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, summed up his satisfaction by stating the drivers training was excellent and he appreciates the top-notch instruction offered by the Romanian instructors. He now feels confident of his abilities and looks forward to serving his country.

Sgt Abdul Wahad, a tank commander, in the tank battalion, stated that he is very pleased with the close cooperation with Romanian trainers. He said he is looking forward to live tank gunnery, when they will shoot on the move, due to the stabilization system fixed by Romanian mechanics. When asked about the ANA, he replied that it is the biggest need of Afghanistan. "If there is no Afghan National Army, there will be no hope for peace."

The training assistance section was responsible for translating the most important part of some Romanian field manuals, those which described the weapons and firing tables or maintenance procedures. Now, the ANA has in place a Romanian standard for weapons qualification and zeroing.

The Romanian maintenance section developed a training program that enabled ANA 3rd Brigade mechanics to sustain their unit under battlefield conditions. Romanian trainers were a key contributor to the multinational maintenance effort that rehabilitated 85 T-62 tanks and BMPs, bringing them from derelict to operational status in less than six months. All of this was accomplished under extremely austere field conditions, using only rudimentary tools, salvaged parts and their expertise.

Maintenance Training on T-62.



maintenance and services to be conducted on the ANA's issued weapons, and also rehabilitated a large volume of captured small arms for re-use by ANA forces, thus allowing former enemy weapons to be used for the protection of Afghanistan rather than for its destruction.

Last, but not least, Romanian MTT's produced four training presentations in PowerPoint with Dari sound, which allows Afghan soldiers to learn by themselves what maintenance procedures they should perform daily, weekly and seasonally. Additionally, it allows them to learn what operations are to be performed by the crew in order to have the main battle tank ready to accomplish a mission.

The efforts to build an Army require dedication and expertise in many areas. The Romanian MTT is an excellent example of the quality the Coalition is bringing to the mission.

The efforts to build an Army

require dedication and expertise in many areas. The Romanian MTT is an excellent example of the quality the Coalition is bringing to the mission. **CB**



Romanian participation in OEF.

Another initiative of Romanian MTT's that has had a great impact for the ANA, was developing an inspection and maintenance program for small arms and crew served weapons. This highly effective program allowed

High Speed Driver Training.





"Stone Platoon" Holds Steady

Estonian Defence Forces in one of the most dangerous missions



On photos: Estonian light infantry platoon at camp in suburbs of Baghdad.

An Estonian light infantry platoon attached to a US Army unit since June 2003 is helping to establish peace and order in one of the troubled suburbs of Baghdad. The 32 man platoon, wearing the blue-black-white flag of their small North European nation on their shoulders, is referred to in Estonia as ESTPLA. In Baghdad however US troops have nicknamed the Estonian team, the *Stone Platoon*.

The calm and tenacious soldiers of the Stone Platoon are serving with 2-12 Cav of US 1st Cavalry Division. Although 2-12 Cav is a tank battalion, the Estonians are using armored trucks for patrolling. By using these trucks the Stone Platoon believes it can

observe the urban area more easily and identify suspicious activities more quickly. An added advantage is that the troops in the back of the truck have more immediate and personal contact with locals. Of course if the threat requires it, the battalion can provide heavy armor to support Stone Platoon's patrols.

The 2-12 Cav (and Stone Platoon) area of responsibility is Abu Ghurayb, a market suburb in West Baghdad. Normal tasking for the Estonians involves patrolling in the area, both by truck and by foot, and setting up traffic checkpoints. In addition, Stone Platoon may be required to conduct search and arrest operations, and support the operations of other US units including Special Forces. During their

missions, Estonian soldiers have detained a number of suspects, and have confiscated varying quantities of weapons, ammunition and IED components. One of the highlights for the Platoon was capturing a team of ACF that was preparing for a mortar attack.

Abu Ghurayb is a troubled neighborhood like much of the Baghdad area. The currently deployed Estonian platoon hasn't been subjected to direct attack since arriving in Baghdad in mid-June. Previous rotations of Estonian platoons however were subject to attacks by ACF using small arms, hand grenades, RPGs and/or IEDs. In the time of Estonia's contribution to MNF-I, 10 soldiers of the Stone Platoon have been wounded in action in the streets of Abu Ghurayb. In February 2004 Sgt Andres Nuiamae, was killed by an IED attack. Sgt Nuiamae was the first Estonian soldier killed in action since the re-establishing of Estonia's independence in 1991.

US commanding officers have praised and recognized Estonians as some of the best soldiers they've seen. The CG of CENTCOM has decorated Master Sergeant Enn Adoson with the award of the Bronze Star, and Sergeant Erki Õim with the Army Commendation Medal. The 1st Cavalry Division

has given the Stone Platoon permission to wear 1Cav battle badges.

In addition to the Stone Platoon, Estonia supports OIF with a Cargo Team at Tallil Air Base and with two staff officers attached to HQ within MNF-I.

The deployment to Iraq may be the most dangerous mission for the Estonian Defense Force (that was re-established only 12 years ago); however it is not the first or only foreign mission. Estonia has sent troops to Lebanon, former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan over the last ten years. Currently, Estonia (a newly joined member of the European Union and NATO) has an infantry company and a MP platoon in Kosovo, and various technical and staff officers in both the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

CB





Help Your Neighbor



by Lt.-Col. Jean Michel Naal,
France AF

HAWG succeeds in aid to war-stricken people

The Hellenic Force officer distributes school supplies between Afghani pupils.



HAWG plans, prepares and executes delivery operations, and then monitors the process to ensure that the organization receiving assistance is able to distribute it in the most efficient and effective manner to the people in need.

A PERMANENT EVOLUTION

The primary emphasis of the HAWG was providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. On request of CINC/USCENTCOM, humanitarian assistance responsibilities were enlarged to include countries within the Horn of Africa (HOA) region. Since then there has been a general drive to amalgamate activities conducted under the auspices of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), HOA and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The Plans & Policy SWG has revised the HAWG Standard Operating Procedures to cover OEF, OIF and HOA AORs. The HAWG is now composed of representatives from all Coalition Partners represented in Eagle Village I and II. As a consequence of these changes, the previously standing SWG HOA has been changed to a special interest Ad Hoc SWG within the HAWG.

The revised SOP is now being passed up the chain of command for approval.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

To date, the HAWG has generated and delivered the following:

- 515 metric tons of food items;
- 171 metric tons of medical supplies;
- 80 metric tons of school supplies;
- 22 metric tons of clothing.

Along with huge amounts of others material such as beds, heaters, cooking supply, generators, tents, blankets and even diapers or detergent.

ONGOING OPERATIONS

IRAQ

There are two active donations to Iraq. Bulgaria will donate 42 tons of clothing, blankets and medical supplies. Uruguay will donate two Water Purification sets. Details of transportation, destination in Iraq and distribution are still in the planning process.

AFGHANISTAN

Civil and military personnel of CJTF-76 have issued the following requests to help Afghan people to prepare themselves for the coming winter: 10,000 wool blankets, 6,000 overcoats, 2,000 wool gloves, 2,000 wood burning stoves, 6,000 tarps, 50 generators, 300 folding tables, 150 tents and medical supplies.

As a response to these requests, Greece will donate a large quantity of clothing, blankets and medical supplies to Afghanistan. The Hellenic Force in Kabul as a part of ISAF will distribute the donation. Norway will also donate tents, stoves, folding furniture and medical supplies. This donation will be distributed by CJTF-76. Slovak Republic will contribute by offering power units ranging from 1 to 60kVA. Details of transportation and distribution are in the planning process.

The other HAWG members are still waiting for an official answer from their respective countries.

All the members are keen enough to make the HAWG a very effective tool in winning the hearts and minds of people. The current HAWG chairman, Lieutenant Colonel Iskandar Dadabaev from Tajikistan is hoping for more good news from the coalition partner countries.

CB

An important element of the Coalition's collective efforts in the global war against terrorism is stability and reconstruction.

To implement this aspect of the mission, CENTCOM civil military personnel identify and conduct humanitarian projects in the AOR, in coordination with the greater humanitarian assistance community, such as the UN, and the numerous government and non-government organizations.

The Humanitarian Assistance Working Group (HAWG) was established in October 2001 as an integral part of the USCENTCOM mission to handle and optimize the flow of donations from around the world that support this civil military effort.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

When civil military personnel identify a need on the ground, which they cannot deal with, they generate a request for assistance. This request is discussed at HAWG meetings to: first clear it with relevant elements in theater, and then solicit coalition support. HAWG's primary role is to identify countries willing to donate humanitarian supplies and/or provide transportation support to humanitarian assistance tasks. Composed of different sub working groups (SWG),



Afghans Recognize Coalition Efforts



Story and photos by
Pfc. Cheryl Ransford,
17th Public Affairs
Detachment



Maj. Richard Chadek, TF Victory, listens to Qulstan's lungs at a CMA in Pariana village.

For as long as many Afghans can remember, their country has been in a state of war – from the Soviet invasion to civil wars, to the Taliban reign, and most recently, the Coalition's fight against terrorism.

Through the many years of turmoil, the country has gone through various changes, both social and physical, leaving the pre-Soviet Afghanistan something only found in memories.

Now, the country is looking to expand past the violence and become a productive, self-suffi-

something that will happen overnight, but over time with the combined hard work of Afghan nationals and the Coalition.

The Coalition has been in Afghanistan for nearly three years and the people are realizing the improvements being made in their war-stricken nation.

"Some people are still scared that the same thing will happen as before," said Fahima, head of the emergency obstetrics center in Alingar village. "But they still welcome the Coalition in hopes of a better life."

"While life in Afghanistan has grown steadily

better since the Coalition began helping the Afghan people rebuild, there is still much more that needs to be done," said Shokria Anwari, an Afghan-American registered nurse working as an interpreter with World Wide Language Resource.

"One of the biggest problems the people of Afghanistan face is a lack of proper medical care," she said. "The people of Afghanistan are dying mostly from everyday ailments that we don't have to worry about."

Since pharmacies aren't readily available to the people of every village, the Coalition goes to different villages around the country providing medical care to all men, women and children, as well as their livestock, said Col. Steve Jones, Task Force Victory command surgeon.

When the Coalition goes into the villages to treat the villagers, the reaction of the people varies drastically.

"When the Coalition first came to the village, people were afraid of what they might do because of what has happened in the past," said Said Karim, an Alingar village elder. "But

now we have worked with them on many small projects in the village and the people are starting to learn to trust them."

Many villages throughout Afghanistan have small medical clinics, but (generally) the people working at them are not formally trained and there usually isn't enough medication to help everyone in the village.

"It is a big help when the Americans come to the village to help the people," said Fahima. "I am only able to treat them for minor illnesses and can only give a three- to five-day supply of medication, even though some of them need much more."

"In many villages across Afghanistan, the sick must travel to other villages and larger towns to go to a hospital," said Baigam, a Pariana villager. "The nearest hospital to (Pariana) village is in Laghman or Jalalabad," he said. "It can sometimes take several days to get there."

Because traveling to the hospital can take so long, the families need to make sure they

Shokria Anwari (right), an Afghan-American interpreter and RN in the United States, assists the medical staff with patients in Alingar village.





With a View to Stability and Safety

have food and water for the trip, as well as a reliable mode of transportation, which can cost more than most Afghan families have.

"The cost of traveling is much more than the people of the village can afford," said Mohamed Saa Ber, an Alingar village elder. "Most men work in the field and make very little money to care for their families."



The Coalition makes being able to be seen possible and easy for the villagers. "When the cooperative medical assistance missions are planned, they are set up in a way that makes getting to the clinic easy for both the people and their animals," said Jones.

"Each CMA takes weeks of coordination with the local villages," he said. "Before going to the villages we first have to talk with the village elders to find out what is needed and how we can best help the village."

"By working with the people of the villages, more people are able to be treated," said Jones. "This means more people will have the chance at happier, healthier lives, and shows them there is hope for a better country."

CB

Uzbekistan participation in the Global War on Terror Coalition testifies to aspirations of the Republic to exterminate international terrorism and consolidate regional security. It also indicates the principle adherence of Uzbekistan to the universally accepted values of freedom, democracy and human rights, which have become the target of global terrorism. On 15 December 2000 Uzbekistan promulgated a "Law on the Fight against Terrorism" the foundation and main purpose of which were based on maintenance of security of the person, community and government from terrorism; protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity; and, preservation of the civil peace and national consent.

Prevention of terrorist activity is achieved through the development of political, socio-economic, legal and other deterrent arrangements by the government, public, institutions and foundations.

The danger of terrorism and religious extremism in Uzbekistan has been realized for a long time, as Uzbekistan was one of the first nations to face international terrorism. After the explosions in Tashkent on 16 February 1999 the Uzbekistan people saw the real face of the extremists. In Summer 2000 Uzbekistan troops were fighting against terrorist groups in the mountain areas of the Tashkent and

Surkhandarin districts. These occurrences demonstrated that terrorism was a real threat to peace and stability.

The international terrorist organizations operating under their various 'slogans' continue their subversion, and have no consideration of human life. At the end of March 2004 terrorists tried to spread panic and fear among the Uzbekistan people during terrorist actions in Tashkent. Their expectations of success were not realized as the Uzbekistan people solidly condemned the organizers of the explosions.

Nowadays, narcotics transit through territories of the Central Asian countries making this critical regional problem. The widespread impact of narcotics trafficking is of worldwide importance, has exceeded the levels of social crime and turned into a real threat to the national security of countries. The Central Asian countries have to deal with the drug mafias that are supporting international terrorism. Sizeable proportions of funds gained from drug trafficking are directed toward financing international terrorist and religious extremist organizations, especially for the purchase of modern weapons. Uzbekistan looks forward to the time when Afghanistan will be able to



Uzbek and U.S. soldiers during the annual Uzbek Military Open House at Karshi-Khanabad Airbase.

strengthen their ability to support the struggle against drug production and trafficking in their country.

Uzbekistan is continuing to support the Global War on Terror, and Operation Enduring Freedom. Uzbekistan has provided basing (Khanabad and Termez airfields) and overflight permission for U.S. and Coalition forces. It has sent more than 300,000 tons of humanitarian cargo with International aid from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan since the beginning of operations, and has assisted with the renewal of electric power reticulation within Afghanistan. The country also delivers fuel to Afghanistan. Uzbekistan assists with the reconstruction projects for the motorway and railroad infrastructures, and the creation of an effective irrigation system. There are two million Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan has consistently supported them and the Northern Alliance with humanitarian aid. Uzbekistan provides what Coalition forces need: stability, relative safety, and access.

CB



On the Threshold of Relief

The next rotation of the largest national contribution of non-NATO member countries' contingents in Iraq is going on



Commander of the Multinational Division Center-South Major General Andrzej Ekiert (Polish AF) during the visit to Ukraine AOR in Iraq

gining of September. Ukrainian military instructors have taught local frontier guards how to operate and maintain laptop computers. To date many frontier forts along the Iraqi-Iranian border have been staffed with Ukrainian trained computer operators. The computers are used for the recording of photos and fingerprints of trespassers, and the special database can then be used for future border activity analysis.

Additionally, in concert with US personnel, Ukrainian instructors have trained a group of local specialists in diesel

Personnel of the Ukrainian 7th Detached Mechanized Brigade have been training for the forthcoming assignment for five months. At a specially equipped training area troops have been developing their skills in shooting, special tactics and other mission requirements. Special attention has been given to sharpshooter, grenade launcher, machine gunner and driver training. Final exercises prior to deployment have included 50, 70 and 150 mile-long marches; and attention has been given to the peculiarities of weapons and equipment performance characteristics in a desert climate. Compared to the 6th Detached Mechanized Brigade presently operating in Iraq, the 7th has more potent weapons; in particular, it includes a Mortar unit.

All training and exercises have been directly linked to previous combat experience and lessons learned in Iraq. The training has been under regular examination and review by the former Minister of Defense of Ukraine Eugene Marchuk, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Lieu-

tenant-General Sergiy Kyrychenko, and his staff.

Ukrainian troops are enthusiastic about the opportunity to develop their combat experience in Iraq. By means of performance ratings and personnel assessments, the next rotation staff was manned only by the best of the best servicemen. When soldiers could not pass the stringent selection criteria because of health reasons or lack of professional skills, they took it as a personal tragedy.

In addition to their security mission, the 6th Detached Mechanized Brigade has been conducting special classes for Iraqi Frontier Police at the Ukrainian camp near Al-Kut (administrative center for Wasit province), since the be-

electro generator maintenance. The generators are installed in every frontier fort, and their break-down can cause failure of all electrical equipment (water-pumps, air-conditioners, lighting etc). After training local frontier guards to take over responsibility for border duties, the personnel of the 61st Detached Mechanized Battalion's Mechanized Company returned from the frontier margin to the home base in Al-Kut.

Given this, the almost 1600 strong 7th Detached Mechanized



Verifying whereabouts before patrolling.

There, in Panjshir Valley...

Brigade could leave a reserve of some personnel in Ukraine.

Although the primary mission of Ukrainians in Iraq is now to train Iraqi Security Forces, the President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma believes that it is too early to consider when the Ukrainian contingent may be withdrawn. "We will start to withdraw our troops from Iraq as soon as the situation in the country stabilizes and we feel it," Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich stated recently after he had paid a visit to the Ukrainian camp in Al-Kut.

To date, questions of withdrawal or reduction of numbers have not been on the agenda. Abandonment of Iraqi territory could lead to destabilization in Wasit Province and might obstruct the attainment of stability in the country. "The date of withdrawal of the Ukrainian troops in Iraq will depend on the readiness of the Iraqi forces to control the situation in the state", said Mr. Eugene Marchuk after last month's talks with U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in the Crimea, Ukraine.

The Ukrainian contingent in Iraq is the largest non-NATO member country contribution. Ukraine's troops constitute the fourth largest contingent of the Coalition forces aiding the U.S. in reconstruction and security efforts in Iraq. **CB**

As Coalition forces reach out to more locations in Afghanistan helping with reconstruction and stability, the process of entering new areas poses new challenges. With each new location having unique cultural concerns and reconstruction needs, the experience is always different.

Members of the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction team visited the newly formed Panjshir Province – an area of central Afghanistan rich in history and pride – several times in August and September. It is also an area rarely visited by Coalition forces.

Master Sgt. Jeffrey White, Parwan PRT, was one of the first civil affairs members to enter the valley after receiving an invitation from the provincial governor. "The area was never overlooked by the Coalition, but was being respected because of its symbolic importance to the country," said White.

After initial visits into the valley, the team saw that they could help the residents with the type of aid that has been provided in other provinces. They also encountered a very receptive population. "When we initially arrived, the people were very glad to see we were here," said Maj. Charles Westover, Parwan PRT commander. "Everyone in the valley is very hospitable."

During the visits, the Parwan team gave out



Story and photo by Sgt. Frank Magni,
17th Public Affairs Detachment

Col. Steve Jones, TF Victory chief surgeon, gives vitamins to an Afghan girl during a CMA mission to Panjshir Province.

school and tool kits. Within each of the school kits are enough school supplies for 70 students. The tool kits contain an assortment of tools and materials, like hand tools and nails. As the kits were distributed throughout the province, Coalition forces also began communicating with local leaders. During the first few meetings, the residents expressed the need for medical and veterinary treatment in the villages.

As a result of this need, the PRT enlisted the aid of the Cooperative Medical Assistance team. Comprised of a group of doctors and veterinarians from throughout the Coalition, the CMA is a team that specializes in providing medical and veterinary aid to remote villages. During the PRT's third visit into the valley, the CMA team entered Shatol Village to provide aid.

Setting up in the local school, central to the village's population, the CMA team opened a field expedient men's and women's clinic. They used their vehicles to create a corral for treating the ani-

mals, and another team created a separate area to make prescription eyeglasses. The CMA provided medical aid to hundreds of Panjshir residents. They also made more than 40 pairs of eyeglasses and treated more than 100 animals.

No stranger to being one of the first Coalition groups in the area, Col. Steve Jones, CMA team member and Task Force Victory chief surgeon, said the impact of the CMA mission is designed for exactly what the Parwan PRT was trying to do in Panjshir. "We have found that providing medical care increases the trust Afghans have with us," said Jones.

Using the first meeting as a guide, both the Parwan PRT and Panjshir local leaders have learned much about each other. Using this newfound knowledge, the parties are forging partnerships that will make the aid provided by the Coalition more meaningful for the residents of Panjshir Province.

CB



Iraq Duty at an End

ATC Detachment returns to Australia



RAAF air traffic controller on duty.

The 60 members of the Air Traffic Control Detachment at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) returned home last month. This fol-

lows the handover of air traffic control responsibilities at the airport to Iraqi civilian controllers.

However, RAAF air traffic controllers will retain a presence in Iraq as Defence Minister Robert Hill announced that six air traffic controllers would join other coalition controllers at Balad air base near Baghdad.

Coalition military aircraft will be relocated from BIAP to Balad. The Australian contingent at Balad will help coordinate the movements of military air traffic in Iraq. The ATC Detachment had performed a crucial role in keeping Baghdad International Airport open to civilian and military air traffic.

The handover of responsibility to the Iraqi civilian authorities marks

an important step in Iraq's transition and reconstruction. The detachment has done an outstanding job and their efforts have allowed a steady stream of humanitarian, military and civilian supplies and personnel to flow into Iraq.

The detachment, which has been in Iraq for more than a year, has handled about 175,000 movements, an average of about 400 movements a day. An ADF medical team of up to 20 personnel will be deployed to the MEAO to support a major coalition military hospital. Most likely the Australian medical team will include a combination of regular and specialist Reserve personnel. The ADF will continue to maintain the current strength of about 900 personnel deployed in the MEAO on Operation Catalyst. **CB**



Iraqi Coastal Defence Force Ready for Future Challenges

A team of 12 Royal Australian Navy (RAN) sailors stationed in Iraq has completed the first half of its mission with the commissioning of the Umm Qasr Naval Base and its transfer to local control. Defence Minister, Senator Robert Hill, and the Chief of Navy, VADM Chris Ritchie, travelled to Iraq last month for the handover ceremony. VADM Ritchie captured the feeling for everyone at the port of Umm Qasr when he said: "It's not every day you get to witness the birth of a Navy".

The historic raising of the Iraqi Coastal Defence Force (ICDF) was attended by senior military officers from the four nations that contributed to the training of the men who form the newest Navy

in the world. Australia, Britain, the United States and Poland contributed to the training of the Iraqi sailors over the past seven months, itself a mammoth task. The handover marked the culmination of many months of work to equip the newly-created ICDF with five patrol boats and refurbish its naval facilities.

One of the first tasks for the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (Maritime) at Umm Qasr was to bring together a single way of doing things out of four distinct and long standing naval traditions. This has meant a lot of work and to be able to undertake operational patrols just a few months after starting is a great credit to everyone involved.

LCDR Powell said the work had been extremely re-

warding, with the Iraqi students very enthusiastic and eager to get on with the task of

protecting Iraqi waters: "One of the ICDF sailors has been sunk three times during his Naval career - the last time he was swimming for two days before he was rescued, yet he is still keen to serve in the ICDF."

Iraq's five Nasur patrol boats, about the size of the Fremantle class, were purchased from China under the Saddam Hussein regime but were intercepted during shipping and stored in a third country. Although new, the Coalition funded refits for the boats in Ku-



New base for newest Navy.

wait. The first underwent her sea trials and was sailed to Umm Qasr in April by a Coalition crew. The Coalition team hope to salvage and refit a sixth patrol boat for the Coastal Defence Force, which consists of about 125 men.

The boats would enhance the new Iraq's ability to look after offshore security and protect its economy by deterring smuggling of oil and other contraband.

CB