

COALITION



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Editor's Note

By the generous permission of our NATO partners, the *Coalition* is pleased to bring you stories covering the activities of the International Security Assistance Force. As ISAF and the Coalition are separate entities, ISAF stories will be denoted by the NATO logo at the top of each page when they appear.

Cover Photo: -CHIEFS OF DEFENSE CONFERENCE

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CHIEFS OF DEFENSE CONFERENCE

Design:
Cpt. Dritor Papa



The 60th issue of Coalition Bulletin comes at a moment when the President Barack Obama has announced his strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The transfer of responsibilities to Iraqis is an on-going process (see page 5), the reinforcement in Afghanistan has begun with additional troops to enhance security environment and allow the other lines of operation in governance and socioeconomic progress to take place (page 4). These additional troops will lead to an increase of the violence as insurgents will get less safe heaven and less support from the population (page 6). There is still a long way to go but the positive signs are clear – thanks to the daily efforts made by the Coalition women and men in uniform to fulfill our common obligation.

This bulletin, like always, also brings with it an overview of the activities from the AOR, news from Coalition members and a conference with senior leaders from the Central and South Asia region hosted by US Central Command to cultivate military cooperation and enhance regional security and stability.

There are some changes within the Coalition Public Affair Team and I would like to acknowledge the commitment of LTC Muhamad Arif, who after having worked for two years as Chief of Coalition Public Affairs Team, moves back to Pakistan. On behalf of the Coalition, I extend my appreciation to Maj. Christian Popovici (Romania – Editorial Staff) and Cpt. Kastriot Rexhaj (Albania – Senior Editor) for their services to the Coalition and especially the bulletin and wish them all the best in their new positions.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Cpt. Dritor Papa, the new member of this team, and wish him the very best for his tenure of assignment with the Coalition.

Brigadier General Gilles Lemoine
Chairman of the Public Affair Working Group
Coalition Coordination Center (CCC)

Ceremony marks the accession of Albania and Croatia to NATO

On 7 April a ceremony was held at NATO Headquarters in Brussels to mark the accession of Albania and Croatia to the Alliance. The two countries' flags were raised in the presence of Prime Minister Sali Berisha of Albania and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia.

nato.int

NATO Secretary General in Iraq

On 8-9 April, NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, accompanied by NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, General James Mattis, visited Iraq

nato.int

ANSE, ISAF targeted operation in Mohammed Agha, Logar province

KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops conducted a targeted operation in Deh-e-Manakah village, Mohammed Agha district, Logar province this morning aimed at detaining insurgent commanders hiding in the village.

nato.int

NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan

NATO's Heads of State and Government at the Alliance's 60th Anniversary Summit meeting in Strasbourg-Kehl, announced today the establishment of a NATO Training Mission for Afghanistan (NTM-A). This mission will further support the development of capable and self-sustaining Afghan National Security Forces. It will comprise senior-level mentoring of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and an expanded role in developing professional Afghan National Police (ANP).

nato.int

Royal Marine Saves Iraqi Oil Worker's Life

Aboard Khor Al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) April 13, an accident occurred when a crane dislodged a pile of very large pipes. As the pipes went over the side of the platform, one struck and injured the leg of an Iraqi oil worker, knocking him overboard.

Royal Marine Cpl. Gregory Llewellyn, a marine advisor with the Coalition Naval Advisory and Training Team, was there training Iraqi Marines when the incident occurred. Without hesitation, Llewellyn jumped nearly 40 feet into the water to assist the injured man, despite parts of the KAAOT structure being unstable and full of underwater hazards.

mnf-iraq.com

Afghanistan Commander Welcomes Additional Troops

Story by Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden
Courtesy of centcom.mil

The commander of NATO and U.S. forces in Afghanistan said Wednesday that while he's pleased with President Barack Obama's authorization to send 17,000 more troops to Afghanistan, tough times are ahead.

Army General David D. McKiernan, commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces - Afghanistan, said at a Pentagon news conference that the reinforcement fulfills about two-thirds of his request for additional forces and will provide enough manpower to sustain security through the summer.

"Those forces, of course, are aimed at being operational by the highest part of the insurgent fighting season this summer, and to be in place and operational before the projected elections in August of 2009," McKiernan said. The additional forces also are needed "to give us a security foundation that will allow the other lines of operations in governance and socioeconomic progress to take place and change what I've called a stalemate in the south," the general said.

The additional forces will focus their efforts in the south and along Afghanistan's border with Pakistan to combat insurgents. However, the lack of a strong central government for three decades, combined with high illiteracy and poverty rates and a resilient enemy, doesn't offer a quick solution for Afghanistan, McKiernan said.

"Even with the additional forces, I have to tell you that 2009 is going to be a tough year," he said. "While this will give us a security foundation, we certainly need additional contributions — civilian capacity-building programs that will enable people in Afghanistan to feel hope and to develop their abilities to take the lead for their governance."

About 38,000 U.S. troops are in Afghanistan, including about 6,000 reinforcements from the 10th Mountain Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team and a contingent of Marines who arrived last month. Another 19,000 troops from 42 other countries make up the balance of allied efforts there. The 17,000 additional troops are made up primarily of soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Division's 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team based at Fort Lewis, Wash., and Marines from the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Camp Lejeune, N.C.



Army General David D. McKiernan, commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, delivers an update briefing at a Pentagon news conference.

The incoming troops, as well as those currently in Afghanistan, can expect a "dual mission," McKiernan said, noting he asked for a Marine expeditionary brigade and an Army Stryker brigade because of their versatility. He wanted units with counterinsurgency capabilities that also could provide security for the population and partner with Afghan forces, he explained, adding that Afghan border and national police forces need trainers and organizers, which the additional troops also will provide.

"[The additional units] are battle-space owners conducting counterinsurgency operations, but they're also developing capacity and capability in the Afghan policing forces," he said. "Training and mentoring ... will be part of the units' mission."

When McKiernan took command in Afghanistan less than a year ago, he requested 30,000 additional forces. Even after the increased U.S. presence takes hold, he still will need 10,000 to 12,000 more, whether they come from allies in NATO or the United States, he said. He told reporters he probably will not ask for any more troops beyond that, but he stressed that the additional forces are not a short-term proposition.

"This is not a temporary force uplift. ... It's going to need to be sustained for some period of time," he said. "I can't give an exact number of years that it would be, but I'm trying to look out for the next three to four or five years."

U.S. Forces Continue to Transfer Responsibilities to Iraqis

Story by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class William Selby
Courtesy of mnf-iraq.com

American forces in Iraq continue to transfer more responsibilities to the Iraqi government and their security forces as part of the security agreement that went into effect on Jan. 1, a Multi-National Force - Iraq general said April 8.

“Our combat forces will be out of the cities by June,” Army Maj. Gen. David Perkins, the command’s director of strategic effects, said during a “DoD Live” bloggers roundtable. “That doesn’t mean we won’t operate in those cities, but we will not be basing our combat forces in the cities.”

Since Jan. 1, U.S. forces have transitioned more than 40 bases, areas and facilities to Iraqi control.

“At the request of the Iraqis, [we] will conduct operations generally by, with and through the Iraqis,” he said. “We continue to do our assessment as to the capability of the Iraqi Security Forces as we adjust our forces on the ground and they fill in some of the areas where we leave.”

Perkins described the situation as “an ongoing process of reassessment and readjustment.”

The transfer of responsibility to the Iraqi Security Forces has posed some recent challenges, the general acknowledged.

“In the last couple of days, unfortunately, we have had a series of high-profile attacks,” he said. “The good news is the response has been one of universal condemnation. You have not had the retribution killings, which a year and a half ago is what would have happened.”

When attacks do take place, officials focus on the sustained level of attacks, the time between attacks, and more importantly, the response of the Iraqi people, Perkins said.

“If they universally - all ethno-sectarian groups - soundly reject it, then it means al-Qaida has failed in their attempt to start ethno-sectarian violence,” Perkins said. “The sustained level is down 90 percent from its height.”

The time between attacks is important because it provides Coalition and Iraqi forces with insight into al-Qaida’s capability to sustain a high tempo of violence, he explained.

“About a year ago, the average time between high-profile attacks was 1.9 days,” Perkins said. “Last month, our average was 3.8.”

Perkins also explained that al-Qaida used to be able to sustain a high number of attacks when 50 to 60 terrorists crossed into Iraq each day. But that number has shrunk to three or four a week, he said.

While security responsibility is being transferred to the Iraqis, some issues within the government need to be addressed, Perkins said. The Iraqi government has yet to pass a budget, but officials are working through political challenges to mend the issue.

“When they initially put the budget forth, oil was \$140 a barrel, and it’s now \$40 a barrel,” Perkins said. “So that dramatic reduction in income obviously has a huge impact, since oil is 95 percent of their budget.”

Even though the Iraqi government has yet to pass a budget, the officials have found a way to pay for the “Sons of Iraq” civilian security groups formerly financed by Coalition funds, Perkins added.

Though they face many challenges, Perkins said, he believes the Iraqis are taking the necessary steps to become fully sustainable.

“There are a number of challenges, but the Iraqis are working very hard to step up to the plate,” he said.



Iraqi national policemen operate a checkpoint while U.S. Soldiers observe, in Karada, eastern Baghdad, Iraq, on March 20. American forces in Iraq continue to transfer more responsibilities to the Iraqi government and their security forces as part of the security agreement that went into effect on Jan. 1. Photo by Staff Sgt. James Selesnick.

Incoming Troops Likely to See Initial Rise of Violence in Afghanistan

Story by John J. Kruzal
Armed Forces Press Service

The number of attacks in Afghanistan is likely to rise with the influx of additional U.S. forces there, an International Security Assistance Force commander said Friday.

An increased U.S. presence in the region will spur NATO-led pressure on insurgents and improve efforts to counter narcotics and makeshift bombings, Netherlands Army Maj. Gen. Mart de Kruif, commander of the ISAF's Regional Command South in Afghanistan, said.

But the overall addition of 17,000 U.S. troops to the American contingent in Afghanistan will be met with increased violence at the outset of the plus-up, including a possible uptick in insurgents' growing use of homemade bombings, the commander said.

"That will lead in the first couple of months after the influx of U.S. forces to what I think is going to be a significant spike in incidents," de Kruif told reporters at the Pentagon.

The United States has roughly 38,000 forces in Afghanistan with the deployment of additional troops to begin in late spring. NATO has some 32,000 forces there.

De Kruif expressed optimism that security would improve following a round of Afghan elections slated for August, adding that there's no current evidence suggesting insurgents are focused on disturbing the balloting process.

"I think that what we are doing now is actually planting the seeds, and that we will view a significant increase in the security situation across southern Afghanistan next year," he said.

The area covered by Regional Command South comprises a restive section of Afghanistan that has been the scene of heavy insurgent activity. Under de Kruif's command is a roughly 22,000-strong composite force with troops from the United States, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Canada, among other contributors.

The command's focus centers on security and stabilization operations and building government institutions, including a national Afghan security force, de Kruif said. He added that he hopes ISAF will be able to assume a mentor role to the Afghan National Army and Police in three to five years.

Meanwhile, one of the multinational force's major security concerns is the "nexus" of the narcotics trade and networks responsible for launching attacks involving improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, which account for 70 percent of the region's casualties, according to the general. Over the past two years, such attacks have increasingly targeted the civilian population, de Kruif said.



Photo/Rafiq Maqbool

A U.S. soldier of 101st Airborne Division patrol in the outskirts of Bagram in north of Kabul, Afghanistan, Sunday, March 8, 2009. U.S. President Barack Obama's last month ordered 17,000 more troops to Afghanistan to bolster the record 38,000 American forces already in the country. Obama has promised to increase the U.S. focus on Afghanistan and away from Iraq, as the U.S. begins to draw down its forces there

"The insurgents changed their overall strategy from attacking our strength, being ISAF, towards focusing on terrorizing the local nationals, the Afghan people," he said. "For ISAF, that means that we have to deliver a 24/7 security in the focus areas where we are placed. It's no use of getting into a village at 8 in the morning and then leave that village at 5 in the evening."

De Kruif noted that the higher frequency of attacks has not been matched by an increase in the IEDs' sophistication, nor is there evidence suggesting materiel from Iran is being used in the assembly of the explosives. The most common IED is detonated by a pressure-plate mechanism triggered by the victim, about 70 percent of whom are Afghan nationals, he said.

"Based on the fact that these IEDs are relatively easy to produce, we don't see any real signs of influence by other countries like Iran with the fabrication and the use of these IEDs," he said. "So I would not say that IEDs are sophisticated yet."

"The first step is having an approach in which you win the hearts and minds of the people. So that means that every day, although we have an IED threat, our forces will go out and have a 24/7 presence amongst the Afghan people," he said. "Because by the end of the day, it is the Afghan people who will deny the use of IEDs by the insurgency."

Australia Announces Increase In ADF Forces In Afghanistan

Courtesy of
www.defence.gov.au

The Australian Government announced a decision to enhance its military and civilian commitment to Afghanistan and specifically its intent to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

These additional force elements will increase Australia's troop contribution to Afghanistan to approximately 1550 Australian Defense Force personnel. This increase represents an effective and sustainable contribution in Afghanistan to coalition efforts while allowing us to expand on our current operations.

Australia views this development as the cornerstone of a successful counter-insurgency strategy and key to ensuring an enduring satisfactory level of security in Afghanistan.

Afghan ownership and leadership remain pre-requisites for success.

This is why Australia has evolved and increased its military contribution to increase the focus on training and mentoring the Afghan National Army (ANA).

This enhanced commitment will see an increase in operational capability and logistics support to the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force as well as a short term commitment to assist with security during the upcoming Afghanistan elections.

The increased contribution will be made up of:

- Two additional Operational Mentor and Liaison teams (OMLTs) of approximately 100 personnel;
- Additional personnel for our current Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force efforts of approximately 70 personnel;

- An increase to the number of HQ embedded staff by approximately 70 personnel.
- An enhanced engineering element of approximately 40 personnel; and
- An Election Support Force of approximately 120 personnel.
- An additional 50 personnel consisting of logistics and transport specialists, including one additional C-130 aircraft and support crew, will get the new elements of the force established in Afghanistan.

This decision to increase Australia's troop contribution to Afghanistan will provide the Australian Defense Force with the necessary resources to support this strategy to good effect.



A young Afghan patient tries on Captain Elizabeth Anderson's glasses as he enjoys the morning sun, while being treated at the state of the art medical facility based in Camp Holland.

British Royal Air Force Pilots Ran Florida Coast-to-Coast for Cancer Support

Story and pictures courtesy of
CPT Ethan Tan, Singapore Armed Forces

Two British Royal Air Force pilots ran across Florida to raise funds to give hope and contribute to the advancement of treatments for cancer patients.

On 11 April 2009, Chris Heath and Ben Whittaker's five-marathons-in-five-days feat from Cocoa Beach to Tampa clocked a total of 130 miles. Their achievement has raised funds for Tampa General Hospital and the Moffitt Cancer Center in USA, and MacMillan Cancer Support in the United Kingdom. The Coast to Coast run was a tribute to Heath's father, the late Air Vice-Marshal Mike Heath, who died in November 2007 from pancreatic cancer. Air Vice-Marshal Heath was serving



Chris Heath (left) and Ben Whittaker crossing the Coast to Coast Florida finish line



The runners, with Air Vice-Marshal Graham Stacey (third from left) and members from HQ SBMA, presenting the cheque to representatives from Tampa General Hospital and Moffitt Cancer Center

as the Senior British Military Advisor to the US CENTCOM as part of the Coalition Forces at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa when he was struck by the disease.

Representatives from the headquarters SBMA at US CENTCOM attended the finish of the Coast to Coast run and presented a cheque for \$300 which they had raised in support of the designated charities. Members from all three UK Armed Forces were present, headed by the current SBMA, Air Vice-Marshal Graham Stacey.

United States, Central, South Asia Leaders Discuss Strategy

Story and Pictures by
Gunnery Sgt. Nathaniel Garcia

U.S. Central Command hosted a conference with senior leaders from the Central and South Asia region March 30 through April 1 to cultivate military cooperation and enhance regional security and stability.

interests in that region. Admiral Mullen emphasized the need to work together in their common interests in this area.

In the spirit of working together, the attending countries of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan,

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were represented at the conference to hear from senior leaders like the Commander of USCENTCOM Gen. David Petraeus, who expressed his goals of working together to promote security and stability in the region.

“Your presence here represents a shared commitment to regional security and stability,” said General Petraeus. “We look forward to discussions on how we can better address our common interests in a number of areas, in combating extremism and the spread of extremism.”

While combating extremism is a high priority for USCENTCOM, it isn't the only

shared interest involving the United States and CASA region. The common theme of working together emerged as



Although the second annual CASA Chiefs of Defense conference was in the planning stages months before President Barack Obama came into office, a major focal point of discussion was the President's announcement of his strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“What we have done here in the United States...is work hard on a comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is very regionally focused meaning is not focused on one country or another. It includes requirements far beyond the military side; to include an economic piece, a diplomatic piece, and a governance piece. All of which must go together,” said Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during a lunch with the chiefs of defense. “I have a great sense of urgency about where we are right now with this strategy. The trends in Afghanistan over the last three years are generally not positive. The level of violence is up. My sense of urgency is that 2009 is a really critical year in executing this strategy.”

The chairman went on to express the need for these countries to work together to meet and execute that strategy. In his travels, the leaders he encountered expressed a concern for a positive outcome in Afghanistan and Pakistan and in each meeting there was always a discussion about mutual



many of the speakers expressed the mutual interests in this region.

“We have a shared interest in countering the illegal narcotics industry that has caused problems in the region, in securing borders and in protecting key infrastructure, and in

responding to humanitarian crisis,” said General Petraeus, during his opening remarks. “We also play other important roles in helping to promote the growth of commerce, the development of economies that are particularly challenged right now, and even the development of societies.”

In order to get a better understanding of how to work those common interests within the region, USCENTCOM arranged for a myriad of discussions to be conducted over the three-day period.

“The purpose of this conference was to create the conditions for open and candid discussions in order to further regional stability through cooperation,” said Lt. Gen. John Allen, deputy commander of USCENTCOM. “Perhaps even through a determination to take collective action.”

Each of the visiting CHODs was given the opportunity to discuss strategy and issues important to their region with each of the guest speakers at the conference.



Guest speakers encouraged each country to continue hosting these discussions as they are important to the region and the United States today and in the future.



In some cases, the meetings were done one-on-one between the visiting countries. Other guest speakers met with the visiting leaders in a more open forum. Some of those guest speakers included the Honorable Michèle Flournoy, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and the Honorable James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State.

“Nobody can do this alone anymore,” said Admiral Mullen. “There isn’t a country in the world that can. Your insights and your inputs... are not just important today but will continue to be important. In the not very distant future, our young officers; our young leaders; our young diplomats; will be sitting where you’re sitting or in other critical positions.”

Royal Navy Continues Training Iraqi Navy

Story and pictures
Courtesy of UK MoD

The withdrawal of British combat troops from Iraq has already begun and by 31 July 2009 the vast bulk of British Armed Forces will have all left the country. Except that is, a small group of Royal Naval personnel.

The naval personnel will be staying in southern Iraq to train the fledgling Iraqi Navy who have a task essential to the country's future economic development; protecting the country's oil network and main port of Umm Qasr.

The port of Umm Qasr is gradually growing into a thriving area of commerce as it fulfils its role as Iraq's only deepwater quay facility.

The port operates 24-hours-a-day and hundreds of containers are being shipped from the area with thousands of trucks daily coming in and out of the port area. Located close to the Kuwaiti border, Umm Qasr receives 80 per cent of the country's imports.



The crew of an Iraqi Navy fast attack boat undergoes training in the approaches to Umm Qasr (Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter)

The port is therefore also home to the Iraqi Navy which as well as protecting the port traffic has the vital role of protecting the country's two oil terminals out in the Gulf.

These generate around 90 per cent of Iraq's income. British troops are currently based at two camps in Umm Qasr. One of the two sites will be handed over to the Americans at the end of this month, but UK military personnel are likely to remain at the second camp until at least 2011 where a British-led Naval Training Team, currently consisting of 55 British and 25 US personnel, will continue its work mentoring the Iraqi Navy.

The Iraqi Navy has been working hard to improve the safety and security of the port, their offshore oil infrastructure and Iraq's territorial waters, and while at present coalition forces protect the two oil terminals in the Gulf, known as KAAOT and ABOT, on-platform defence of KAAOT is expected to be handed over to the Iraqis at the end of this month.

The Iraqi Navy has around 2,000 personnel, including Marines, and has grown and improved significantly since the 2003 invasion.

Royal Navy Captain Richard Ingram, head of the coalition naval advisory team in Umm Qasr, said their progress had been "pretty dramatic", but added: "There's still a lot to achieve."

Security has not been a problem at the oil terminals since April 2004, when a failed attack was launched on KAAOT, but it is still taken extremely seriously.

British soldiers from The Queen's Royal Hussars currently patrol around Umm Qasr port wearing soft hats and without body armour, although they still carry weapons. But they will hand over responsibility for the port's security to the increasingly professional 2nd Battalion of the Iraqi Marines and return home at the end of this month.

Royal Navy Captain Graham Charlesworth, who advises the port on development, said:

"We're not blasé about security. We've adopted this posture because that's what the threat assessment says pertains to this port. We are not just cavalier about it."

Colonel Jamal, the Iraqi Marines 2nd Battalion's commanding officer said the security situation had improved "from zero to 70 per cent" since a major Iraqi Army-led operation against militias in Basra last year known as Charge of the Knights - and to "80 per cent" at Umm Qasr.

He described the port as an "artery" feeding all of Iraq, adding:

"I am happy because the port of Umm Qasr belongs to all Iraqis and the investment that comes in the future is going to help Iraq's development and reduce unemployment."

The Iraqi Government has asked for the Royal Navy-led training team to stay in the country after the bulk of the British troops pull out over the summer.

The port's capacity is increasing by 20 per cent a year, and it handled imports of 7.5m tonnes in 2008.

Major projects to dredge the port and remove wrecks will enable it to take more large vessels in the future.

While it is primarily a commercial port, it also has a passenger terminal and a ferry from Dubai runs to Umm Qasr twice a week.

British Defence Secretary John Hutton highlighted the importance of the port earlier this year, saying:

"The UK and our coalition partners are working with the Iraqi authorities to develop the port and it is one of the key areas in which international companies are looking to invest." With the British mentoring of the Iraqi Navy set to continue, the economic lifeline of southern Iraq should become ever more secure.

Army Nurse Honoured For Bravery in Iraq

Story and pictures
Courtesy of UK MoD

Captain Gary King from the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps received the Associate Royal Red Cross from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace.

The medal recognises his nursing work during a five-month deployment to Iraq in 2007, which saw him treating and rescuing troops in the middle of a battle ground.

Capt King's nursing position involved giving medical attention to some run-of-the-mill ailments such as insect bites as well as treatment for more serious injuries such as shrapnel wounds and major head injuries.

Although he was in some cases saving people's lives, Capt King said that it was all in a day's work:

"I was doing what I had been trained to do. I was in Iraq on TELIC 10 and was based at what is effectively the police HQ at the camp with about 68 guys and I was the only nurse.

"My predecessor told me when I took over the post that I had better have lots to read as nothing ever happened there, but then five days later we were attacked.

"While I was in Iraq I had to transport wounded soldiers onto helicopters and on one occasion we had to run through a mortar



Captain Gary King with his award, the Associate Royal Red Cross, which he received from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace

attack with shells landing on either side of us. But that's what I was there for, so I was just doing what I was trained to do." Capt King travelled from Bath to London to receive his medal from Prince Charles which proved to be a memorable experience. Capt King said:

"There were 96 other people there receiving their MBEs and I was the last person to go up. According to my wife who was watching, Prince Charles spent more time with me than anyone else, but I'm not sure if that's actually true!

"He knew exactly what my citation said and he knew it word for word - it was amazing. I was amazed that he knew so much about me and that made it so much more special. He really took the time to give us attention.

"My wife organised for loads of members of my family to come to London on the day that I received my medal and that was a huge surprise; especially as she was in Afghanistan on operations while she set it all up!"

Capt King comes from a military family with many of his relations having been in the forces. He has also guaranteed more Service personnel for the forces as his children all have aspirations to join up:

"It started with my granddad and all my uncles were in the military as well," he said. "My dad and my uncles did national service and all ended up in the TA [Territorial Army].

"I was at school during the Falklands and that influenced my future. I love being in the military and that has obviously gone down to my children."

Capt King returned to the UK from Iraq in March 2009 where he had volunteered for his third tour of duty in three years.

Coalition Members Gather for ANZAC Service

Story Courtesy of www.nzdf.mil.nz

General David Petraeus, Commander of US Central Command, joined Coalition members as the senior guest at the Anzac Day dawn service at MacDill Air Force base in Tampa, Florida on 25 April.

On Anzac Day the NZDF had over 680 personnel deployed on 14 peacekeeping operations, United Nations missions and defence exercises around the world.



The service was attended by 150 people including New Zealand Senior National Representative to US Central Command Air Commodore Dick Newlands, and Australian, Turkish, British, French and Canadian military representatives. The service was followed by a breakfast at the Officer's Club.

Air Commodore Newlands said, "General Petraeus laid a wreath on behalf of the US military, which was well represented at the service by five General and Flag officers. He was well versed in the significance of ANZAC Day, having attended previous ANZAC Services in Iraq and elsewhere."



Iraqi Army Commandos Secure Owesat

Story and pictures

Courtesy of By Pfc. Evan Loyd, 1st Armored Division

The Iraqi Army (IA) took the lead in conducting Operation Al-Sakar, a combined Iraqi/U.S. counterinsurgency operation in the Owesat area southwest of here, April 12. The purpose of the operation was to clear weapons, find any hidden explosives and capture insurgents in the area.

“The Owesat area is void of a Coalition forces presence and is a potential location to move accelerants into the Baghdad area,” said Lt. Col. Brian Eifler, commander, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment. “The objective of this mission was to destabilize any AQI and other terrorist organization operations in the Owesat area.”

The cornerstone of any counterinsurgency effort is establishing security for the local population and controlling the area. Once security is stable, a long-term presence can be implemented to facilitate the basic needs of the people.

The joint task forces began the operation in the early morning hours with an air-assault insertion to secure and defend the objective.

“We wanted to surprise any insurgents and show them that nowhere is safe from the combined ISF and Coalition forces,” said Eifler. “We can surround an area in minutes with little to no warning and that we can do it anytime.”

During the mission the joint task force cleared a total of six square

kilometers, found five 152-mm rounds and detained several individuals.

“Today’s mission was a success not only in what we found but in our building relationships with the local citizens of

Owesat,” said Lt. Col. Ayoob, commander, Commando Battalion, 17th Iraqi Army Brigade. “It’s important that the people of the area can see the Iraqi Army as a positive influence they can trust to keep them safe.”

Beyond securing weapons, explosives and detaining insurgents the goal was also to show the local Iraqi citizens that the Iraqi army and MND-B Forces were there to meet their needs and improve the quality of life in the area. One of the goodwill projects carried out during the operation was the handing out of backpacks and school supplies to the local children.

“The local populace didn’t feel threatened by us, instead they felt secure against an AQI presence being built up in their area,” said Eifler. “We showed the local Iraqis that the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces still care about them.”



Local Sons of Iraq security volunteers greet Lt. Col. Ayoob (right), commander, Commando Battalion, 17th Iraqi Army brigade, during Operation Al Sakar in the Owesat area, April 12.

FACT SHEET



Statistics below reflect projects funded via Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), Developmental Fund of Iraq (DFI), Commander's Emergency Response Fund (CERP), Iraqi Commander's Emergency Response Fund (ICERP), Economic Support Fund (ESF), and Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF).

As of 01 Mar 09, GRD has:

- 4,497 projects completed – construction cost of \$6.8 billion; program cost (construction + administration) of \$7.2 billion
- 344 projects ongoing (started not completed and awarded not started) – construction cost of \$1.8 billion; program cost of \$2.0 billion

Water

- 856 water supply projects completed; 74 ongoing
- Water treatment and sewage projects - 567 completed and 41 ongoing
- 0.9 million cubic meters per day of water treatment capacity achieved affecting 5.2 million people (1.1 million cubic meters per day planned through IRRF funding)
- 0.2 million cubic meters per day of water treatment capacity is under construction

Facilities

- 2,772 projects completed; 133 ongoing (see facilities breakdown below):

Transportation and Communication

- Completed 243 village road projects; 25 ongoing
- 112 of 113 railroad renovation projects completed

- 25 of 26 aviation projects completed; improving 8 airports
- 8 port projects completed; one ongoing (Umm Qasr Pier and Seawall – Iraqi funding)

Building, Health and Education

- All 132 IRRF funded Primary Healthcare Centers (PHC) have been turned over to the Iraqi Ministry of Health; 2 other PHC projects (other funding) are ongoing
- 44 hospital renovation projects completed; 9 ongoing
- GRD projects have increased the capacity to treat patients - approximately 6.6-million patients in hospitals and 4.6-million outpatients at the PHCs annually
- 1,109 school renovations or new construction projects complete; 32 ongoing

Security and Justice

- 155 border posts, 14 Point of Entry facilities completed (MNSTC-I funded projects included)
- 95 fire station projects complete
- 57 courthouse projects complete; 12 ongoing
- Constructing/rehabilitating 5 correctional facilities that will provide nearly 8,500 beds and improve conditions for many more

For more detailed information and updates, visit www.mnf-iraq.com

NATO / ISAF



Construction & engineering budget:

- FY 2008 : \$ 1,643 billion
- FY 2009 (estimated): \$2.5 billion

Afghan First Initiative:

- Average: 11,200 Afghans employed by AED
- Peak construction season: 20,000 Afghans employed
- 86% of AED contracts awarded to Afghans firms
- 91% of all AED workers are Afghans

The Afghan Engineer District (AED) is involved in four major program areas:

- Afghan Security Forces
- US and Coalition Forces Power Projection Program
- Counter Narcotic and Border Management Initiative
- Strategic Reconstruction

Afghan National Security

- 52 Afghan National Army projects underway
- 342 Afghan National Police facilities under construction

Roads

- 1255 kilometers of roads under construction
- 616 kilometers planned in FY 2009

Micro Hydropower

- 86 micro hydropower units in 69 remote areas
- 11,900 families with power

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------|--|---------|------|--|-------------|------|--|--|--------------|
| | Albania | 140 | | Finland | 110 | | Lithuania | 200 | | Spain | 780 |
| | Australia | 1090 | | France | 2780 | | Luxemburg | 9 | | Sweden | 290 |
| | Austria | 2 | | Georgia | 1 | | Netherlands | 1770 | | The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* | 170 |
| | Azerbaijan | 90 | | Germany | 3465 | | New Zealand | 150 | | Turkey | 660 |
| | Belgium | 450 | | Greece | 140 | | Norway | 490 | | Ukraine | 10 |
| | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 2 | | Hungary | 370 | | Poland | 1590 | | United Arab Emirates | 25 |
| | Bulgaria | 820 | | Iceland | 8 | | Portugal | 30 | | United Kingdom | 8300 |
| | Canada | 2830 | | Ireland | 7 | | Romania | 860 | | United States | 26215 |
| | Croatia | 280 | | Italy | 2350 | | Singapore | 20 | | | |
| | Czech Republic | 580 | | Jordan | 7 | | Slovakia | 230 | | | |
| | Denmark | 700 | | Latvia | 160 | | Slovenia | 70 | | | |
| | Estonia | 140 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | Total (rounded) | 58390 |

* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

Current as of 03 April 2009

For more detailed information and updates, visit www.nato.int/isaf



A girl at the Michal al-Hurria School in Baghdad's Abu Ghraib district is elated when she receives her backpack full of school supplies from Coalition forces, April 5

Photo by: Staff Sgt. Peter Ford
Courtesy of mmf-iraq.com