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Issue 56



**Interview with
LTG Martin E. Dempsey**

**Exclusive Insight Into
His Mission and Goals
at US-CENTCOM**

BULLETIN




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Cover photo: Lieutenant General Martin E. Dempsey.

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Lieutenant General Martin E. Dempsey

Photo: Courtesy of USCENTCOM.

EDITORIAL



Changes of command may occur; but the mission remains with the aim of creating safe, stable environment and to improve relations among nations.

On October 10, Brigadier General Paolo SERRA (page 11 refers) was appointed Commander of RC-West, International Security Assistance Force. General Ray Odierno

(page 2 refers) assumed command of Multi National Force Iraq (MNFI) on September 16. General David H. Petraeus took leadership of Central Command on October 31 during a ceremony chaired by Secretary of Defense, Dr Robert M. Gates. An interview of the new CENTCOM Commander should be published in the next Coalition Bulletin.

This November issue of the Coalition Bulletin is honoring Lieutenant General Martin Dempsey who led CENTCOM during six months as “acting commander”, or as “commander” we should better say, as Admiral Mike Mullen (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) pointed out in his speech during the change of command ceremony : “Marty truly made the words Acting Commander a contradiction in terms, for there was nothing acting about the way Marty has exercised the full spectrum of command throughout his entire area of responsibility. Nothing acting about the way he orchestrated two wars at a critical time in our nation’s history. Nothing acting about the way he coordinated with fellow combatant commanders while managing the transitions of new international and interagency teams in Afghanistan and AFRICOM and finally there was nothing acting about the way he led and taught and challenged this great staff”.

Thank you, Sir! We wish you and your family the best as begins your four-star command at Armies Training and Doctrine Command (ATDC).

The objective of this issue is to highlight the Coalition mission in both theaters and to underline the great importance of the many projects conducted to improve conditions of life in the AOR.

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

Command Handover



Army Gen. Ray Odierno assumed command of Multi-National Force-Iraq from Army Gen. David H. Petraeus during a ceremony at al Faw Palace, Sept. 16.

The change of command occurs after incredible progress in the country, said Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, who participated in the ceremony held in Baghdad.

“When Gen. Petraeus took charge 19 months ago, darkness had descended on this land,” the Secretary said. “Merchants of chaos were gaining strength. Death was commonplace. Around the world, questions mounted about whether a new strategy – or any strategy, for that matter – could make a real difference.”

“Here we are, 18 months later, and Iraq is a vastly different place,” said Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during the ceremony. “Attacks are at their lowest point in four years, 11 of 18 provinces have been turned over – including the once-written-off Anbar province – to Iraqi security forces, who are increasingly capable and taking more of a lead in operations. In more places and on more faces we are seeing hope; we see progress,” the admiral said. Gen. Petraeus credited for the progress in Iraq to “the men and women of the Coalition and with the many courageous diplomats and Iraqis with whom we have served.”

Gen. Petraeus thanked the Iraqi civilian and military leaders for their leadership. “You have risked everything to help your country make the most of the opportunity that our forces and yours have fought so hard to provide,” he said. “You’ve endured tragic losses and countless hardships, but you’ve begun the process of repairing the fabric of a society ripped apart by the horrific sectarian violence of 2006 and into 2007,” he said. “There will always be a place in my heart for the ‘Land of the Two Rivers’ and the people of Iraq.”

Gen. Petraeus noted that when he took command he told Coalition servicemembers that the situation in Iraq was “hard, but not hopeless.”

“Al-Qaida in Iraq, though still lethal and dangerous, is on the run and reduced in capability, and militia activity – while still a threat as well – has been reduced dramatically.”

“Coalition troops adopted the counterinsurgency strategy wholeheartedly, and they played unconventional roles to bring about change in the land,” Gen. Petraeus said. “You have, in short, been builders as well as guardians, statesmen as well as warriors,” he said.

Gen. Odierno, who is beginning his third tour in Iraq, served under Gen. Petraeus as commander of Multinational Corps Iraq.

Exclusive Insight Into His Mission and Goals at USCENTCOM

Lieutenant General Martin E. Dempsey assumed command of USCENTCOM in March of this year.

He has been at the helm of the strategic headquarters of the 27-nation AOR for a short seven months. Given the scope of the issues facing CENTCOM's AOR and the relative short amount of time he had to transition the command to incoming General David H. Petraeus, who assumed command on October 31st, he had little time to slow down and grant interviews.

However, two days before he handed the CENTCOM reins over to Gen. Petraeus, the Coalition Bulletin had a chance to sit down and ask Lt. Gen. Dempsey a few questions about his tenure at CENTCOM and his thoughts on the 60-plus Coalition nations serving at USCENTCOM in Tampa, Florida.

Lt. Gen. Dempsey, was interviewed by LTJG Joe Vermette, US Coast Guard Liaison Officer to CPAT.



Q: Sir, you assumed command of CENTCOM from ADM Fallon in March of this year. What were some of your goals when you assumed command and what would you say has been the hardest challenge in the past seven months?

A: The fundamental task that I had to take on knowing I was a transitional interim commander was literally to ensure that we did not lose what we already had gained and that we focused our energies on a few key tasks; reorganization of our headquarters, review and revision, and refreshing, if you will, of our plans to counter Al Qaida. To sort of focus in the time available and then very aggressively enter into a transition campaign with Gen. Petraeus. I am pretty proud of the fact that we have had such a good transition, which is not about advancing Gen. Petraeus. It is about our country at the end of the day.

Also, shame on us if we don't remember that there is three-thousand Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, contractors, and DoD civilians in this headquarters who have done exactly what I asked them to do, as I just described to you, and to help me transition this command from ADM Fallon to Gen. Petraeus. Because we have 250 thousand personnel deployed, three hundred aircraft, fifty or so warships. Were it not for the willingness of this command to take that burden on with me... it could have been the case where the command took a vacation. But that is not what happened. It happened that the Command rallied around the thought, the big idea if you will; that the Command owed something to those

deployed, owed something to the country, and owed something to itself to kick it up a notch and get ready for what was coming. I am very proud of that and I have been going around the headquarters telling people thank you, and I am sincere about that.

As I think about the History of USCENTCOM in this past seven-month period, it is not about the acting commander of USCENTCOM who managed to not run the train off the tracks. It is about USCENTCOM, this group of 3,000 or so, with 250 Coalition partners from 60 nations or so... it is that group who rallied around the challenge and frankly, getting a heck of a lot done. I am very happy with that.

I wouldn't characterize [any of these tasks] as "hard," those are just the issues we chose to focus on. Everything is hard about USCENTCOM. USCENTCOM is difficult because it sits between the tactical and the strategic. Every single issue, look at the papers; on any given day there are five or six things that begin as tactical issues. Piracy off the coast of Somalia, civilian casualties in Afghanistan, a change of leadership in Country X, a provocative statement in Country Y, an earthquake in Country Z – any one of those can become a national issue. So, I think the way you get through this is, with every issue that comes up...you force yourself to see not only the liabilities, but also the opportunities. So, something comes up in Afghanistan and at first glance it is all liability, it is all negative. But it is not. If you can find a way to address it, find a way to engage NATO and draw closer, and harmonize our interests, and harmonize our approaches, then it becomes an

opportunity. Again, "hard" is sort of abstract. "Opportunities and liabilities" is really what it is all about.

Q: Did you set a personal goal when you assumed command here? How would you rate yourself on accomplishing that goal?

A: I did set a goal. The goals were to ensure that our partners felt a sense of continuity and consistency. I didn't want to jerk, at that time, our 27 countries around. I wanted consistency and continuity. On the other hand, I wanted to prepare for the arrival of the next commander of USCENTCOM, and initially, we did not know who that would be. I wanted to have the command ready for that. In the middle of that, as I said, we picked out a couple of key issues that had perhaps gone somewhat neglected, to pull them forward, and if possible to get policy consensus among the Interagency. How would I rate the success? I can't tell you whether the partners felt a sense of consistency and continuity. I can't tell you if the transition to Gen. Petraeus has gone well. And I can't tell if we've got the issues to where I wanted them. You can only know these things looking backwards. Ask Gen. Petraeus how the transition went. Ask our partners if they felt a sense of continuity. I will say that I am very pleased with the progress we have made over the last seven months.

Q: In regards to Iraq, as the security forces there take more control and we move towards a new Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), what is your view of the future role of the Coalition in both Iraq and Afghanistan?

A: I will start at the macro level and neck it down a bit. I am an internationalist, a multi-lateralist, and a coalitionist. Meaning, to the extent that we don't have to do things unilaterally we are much better off. Much better off because in this century with the proliferation of information and media, nations that act unilaterally are putting themselves at risk, putting their image at risk, and therefore their ability to influence indirectly at risk. It's not just about image for image's sake; it is image to maintain the ability to influence others through your good faith. If you lose good faith, you lose image, and you lose the ability to influence. At the top of this pyramid, or maybe that is the foundation – I think that every time we have to do something unilaterally it is unfortunate. It doesn't mean we don't ever do it. It doesn't mean we shouldn't ever do it, but the going in point should be to try to find partners. Examples abound. Secondly, in Iraq and Afghanistan, therefore, if my thesis is to hold, then you would expect me to say that to the extent that the Iraqi government and the Afghan government will accept partners, we are better off. In Iraq there is a formula to go from whatever it was before, 27 flags, to potentially four, five, or six. But with one of those flags being the NATO flag which brings with it 26 nations out of Europe, and I am all for that. We have to find the instrument to provide authorities, responsibilities, immunities, and protections for all of those. We are doing our SOFA negotiation and they are doing theirs. We have to find a way to bring that together at some point; the same in Afghanistan.

Q: Here at the headquarters we share a lot of meetings, planning, and coordination with our Coalition partners. What do the 60-plus nations, present here in the command, bring to the table?


A: They bring perspective and they bring context. They bring their perspectives on what and how these issues are playing out in their countries. They bring context – so when we consider various options, they can provide context that we cannot provide. They bring cultural sensitivity. They bring that image of multi-national cooperation. And they bring, frankly, friendships that will last long after they leave. Those are the five reasons I would continue to advocate for the coalition presence here.

Q: Gen. Petraeus is assuming command of Central Command from you this week and there will be a battle hand-off. What exactly will you talk to him about regarding our Coalition members that are here in Tampa?


A: There is a very deliberate transition plan. Part of it involves the Coalition. We have already had that conversation and he has already met with and had dinner with several of the senior national representatives, he has had briefings with the Coalition Planning Group, and he is at least as big an advocate of the Coalition as I am; potentially an even greater advocate. He has just finished tours of duty where he saw the benefit of having international partners. I am absolutely confident that he will be a strong advocate of the Coalition as I have been.

Q: If you had any one thing to say to the Coalition members, what would it be?

A: Thanks. Thanks for being our partners. Thanks for their candor. Thanks for those that have their families here and contribute to the community. As you know, they go downtown and interact with the community. They give briefings and visit the ROTC units and they bring their sense of culture with them. As always, I would ask them to encourage their nations to leave them here longer. If we are really to learn about each other, I think the minimum tour length should be a year and I certainly would like to advocate a two year tour length.

As I have said earlier, when I say that I want to thank the headquarters for rallying around this interim commander, the same is true of the Coalition. I want to thank them for the same thing. 

Lt. Gen. Dempsey, has been confirmed for promotion to General and his next assignment will be as Commander of the United States Training and Doctrine Command.

On 31st of October, General David H. Petraeus assumed command of USCENTCOM. He most recently served as Commander Multi-National Forces-Iraq, where he oversaw all Coalition forces from February 2007 to September 2008. Gen. Petraeus is most noted for his contribution to the stabilization of Iraq during surge operations in mid-2007. In 2003, he commanded the 101st Airborne Division and participated in the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He returned to Iraq in 2004 as the first commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command. 

Poland's Contribution in Coalition



*Col. Zbigniew Lenarczyk,
Senior National Representative of Polish Army
in CCC.*

*Interviewed by:
LTJG Joe Vermette
US Coast Guard Liaison
Officer CPAT.*

When and why did the Polish Army join operation in Iraq/Afghanistan?

In 2003 Polish government actively joined the Global War on Terror. We were one of the first to offer practical assistance to the US and British operations sending a small unit of 200 soldiers of Special Operation Forces to fight in the Iraq, as well as logistic support ship "Xawery Czernicki". In August 2003 the government decided to send more than 2,500 soldiers to Polish led MND CS, which took over responsibility for one of the four districts of Iraq. In the beginning MND CS comprised soldiers from 26 nations, but this contribution dwindled to 9 nations. The same happened with Area of Responsibility which was spread over 5 provinces. On the day of transfer of authority to USA, MND CS AOR consisted of 1 province (QUADISIYAH). As far as Afghanistan is concerned after the terrorists' attacks on September the 11th 2001, since early beginning Poland among Several other nations took part in the battling a resurgent Taliban-led insurgency during Operation Enduring Freedom. In March 2002 Poland provided combat engineers and logistical support. Subsequently we have increased our engagement within the framework of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Could you give us a broad overview of you country's mission in both OIF and OEF?

On October 1st 2008 in Iraq Polish troops serving as part of MND CS formally completed their operational activities, and three days after we officially handed over responsibility to US forces. The ceremony was attended by Minister of National, chief of the General Staff and representatives of the Polish government and US friends with Commander of Multi-National Force in Iraq. During entire period of the Polish military presence in Iraq the main tasks of the MND CS was to advise, train and support ISF, conduct full spectrum of military operations and support Iraqi authorities on the provincial level to handover responsibility in respective governed and controlled area. We also provided medical and humanitarian support do Iraqi people, and carried on CIMIC projects. Talking about Afghanistan The Polish Armed Forces (PAF) have taken part in military operations conducted by the International Community in Afghanistan since 2002, firstly in operation Enduring Freedom and then, since 2004 within the framework of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). As a consequence of earlier plans we have started to gradually increase the troops' number, and in May 2008 Afghan Army Training Team and Polish Personnel in PRT began implementing the mandatory tasks. By the end of October 2008 we deploy our

troops to GHAZNI province within RC EAST (Regional Command), where the main element of our contingent - Polish Battle Group - will be located.


What do you feel are your country's most impactful accomplishments in both missions?

As a most impactful accomplishment is that in the summer this year MND CS was able to hand over the responsibility for DIVANIYAH province to local authorities what means that we fulfilled the major aim of our presence in Iraq. What is more the mission in Iraq has changed Polish military in both, political and military dimension. Poland has presented itself as a reliable, secure and responsible ally. The mission has also put its impact on the transformation process of our armed forces. The Polish military learnt how to establish and command multinational division according to NATO standards and directions of development of the equipment, logistics and training of the PAF. Another achievement from my point of view is that our presence in Iraq significantly contributed to improve the stability of Iraqi population that lives in our AOR.

What do you think is the way ahead for Polish forces in Iraq and Afghanistan?

For five years we've shown that we're more than just close allies and we are trustworthy. Beside operation Iraqi Freedom Polish soldiers also served in NATO Training Mission in Iraq - there are 18 soldiers. After the withdrawal of our forces from coalition operation, we will continue our involvement in NTM - I. As far as NATO ISAF in Afghanistan is concerned it remains the most important mission we are now contributing. Poland is the one of largest troop contributing nation among 40 participating member states. General Staff of PAF sees the ISAF operation as a test of the of the Polish military's capabilities to conduct operations far from our own territory under extreme conditions. By the end of October we enlarge the Polish Military Contingent to the ISAF operation from the current 1200 troops to roughly 1600 and take over the responsibilities of the GHAZNI province.

Do you have anything else you want to talk about relative to your mission in OEF and OEF?

I would like to highlight that during our presence in Iraq since 2003 for more than five years Polish Armed Forces have deployed 15,500 soldiers. During that time, we've lost 22 soldiers and seen 43 others wounded in combat missions. We carried out more then 88,000 patrols and convoys, established almost 50,000 checkpoints. We have trained 31 thousands ISF, carried on 3 thousands CIMIC projects on 172 mln USD and we destroyed 3.6 mln different kind of ammunition. We proved that we are reliable, secure and responsible ally. Last but not least I would like to thanks to our American friends for the assistance and support we got in Iraq and Afghanistan especially in providing logistics support, supplies, services and strategic movement. Without this support it would be impossible for us to carry on these both missions. 

Singapore Army Opens Bamyan's Regional Health Training Center

*Story courtesy of 1st Lieutenant Lory Stevens
Task Force Warrior PA*

A new healthcare training facility is set to open this month in Bamyan province, Afghanistan, to improve medical treatment for people living in the area.

The Singapore Armed Forces, who provided most of the funding and know-how for the project, alongside with the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team and Task Force Warrior, assisted in reconstruction and development in Bamyan province.

"The Regional Health Training Center will house administrative offices for the Ministry of Public Health, as well as provide several classrooms for community education," said Singapore Armed Forces Lt. Col. James Tan.

When the project began in May, construction was delayed over land disputes at the site location. An individual would visit the project site and intimidate local contractors to stop working. Tan said the provincial governor had the person arrested, but when he was released the man returned to the site to continue threats.

"The issue was resolved after we utilized rule of law, letting provincial authorities deal with concerns and compensation," Tan said.

The Singapore team learned not to take things for granted in Afghanistan. Standards and techniques, power supply and the skill level of workers require unique considerations and flexibility.

"It has been interesting and eye opening," Tan remarked about the project management and work with the local work force.

As a result, teaching and mentoring became a focus out of necessity at the project site, said an engineer from the Singapore Armed Forces.

"In order to ensure the completion of a quality building, we used the project site as a live classroom to broaden their [30 local laborers] exposure to better construction practices," said the engineer.

He said it was important to show the local Afghans superior ways of mixing mortar and laying brick. One day the workers mixed cement on the ground allowing twigs and rocks in the

composition, claiming the cement mixer caused headaches. Also, there was no standard for the mixing of materials.

"Teaching the concept of selecting the same amount of materials each time, such as one pail of water to mix with two shovels of cement, ensures a consistent composition and better method of construction," the engineer said. Better planning and the need to prioritize work emerged as issues requiring more attention. The engineer said every




Lt. Col. James Tan of the Singapore Armed Forces speaks with local contractors at the site for the Bamyan Regional Health Training Center.

building in Bamyan is constructed to be self-sufficient, and in order to have a building that will stand long term, there needs to be a plan for central water, power and sewage.

"There needs to be a plan for water before building the road, and workers need to wire electricity before finishing the drywall," said the engineer.

Overall, the Afghans did take to heart the teachings of the Singapore Armed Forces. Tan said he feels fortunate to have a good contractor to work with, and the locals do attempt to employ the better construction practices.

"The Bamyan Regional Health Training Center offers a location to build the capacity of healthcare in the area," Tan said, "and working alongside Afghans during the project builds the capacity of local workers as they incorporate our teachings into their operating culture." 

The Lieutenant and His Platoon

Story and pictures Courtesy of
Major Gabriel Patrascu, 341 Bn PIO

Here in the Theater of Operations Iraq, you can see him every day in the forefront of those he commands. They can be seen together all the time: planning missions, patrolling or spending free time.

Together, The Lieutenant and his platoon make a strong team.

The Kid

It was evening and the stunning heat of the day begins to dissipate in the cloud of darkness coming over Camp Dracula. In a tent the Alpha platoon were briefed about the next day mission by Major Liviu Raccoon Dinu, one of the seniors in Afghanistan.

Raccoon is direct and straightforward: "Tomorrow we'll run a patrol mission combined with support of CIMIC team, which



Alpha Platoon, 341st Infantry White Sharks Battalion; among soldiers, Lieutenant Valentin The Kid Priciu; on the left, the priest just had blessed them before a new mission.



In the middle of the crowd The Kid carefully prowls the area. He kept one eye on the people who were delivering the goods, and the other one on the soldiers who were securing the zone.

will move in to the AOR to provide food and other stuffs to the locals".

From one of the wood benches among of the soldiers, a blond hair youngster went to the map. All subunit watched him. He was their platoon commander, Lieutenant Valentin Priciu. *The Kid*, as nicknamed, gave orders for the next day mission.

Once the preparations completed, each of them headed back to the barracks to relax. The platoon corps-man, Corporal Danut Baraceanu, a subscriber at the marathon that U.S. military troops hold regularly, checked his sports attire. Soon he would be taking part in another tournament. In front of a puzzle game, Corporals Daniel Mistreanu and Viorel Albu reconstructed the naval battle of Trafalgar. Soon "lights-out" was announced and a quiet fell over the Alphas.

Shoulder by shoulder

In a few hours, clocks in the barracks declared the reveille and each of the soldiers started preparing himself for the

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Before a new mission, with the bulletproof vest put on, the officer waived a kiss to his wife.

mission in an absolute silence. Before leaving the bedroom, the lieutenant stopped in front of photos posted on the wall next to his bed.

A beautiful young lady in a wedding dress was smiling at him. She is his wife. They married in May this year. With the bulletproof vest put on, automatic rifle in one hand and helmet in another, the officer waived a kiss to her. From photos, she encouragingly smiled with love. Around the smoking shack, the soldiers waited for their leader. They headed to the vehicles at will. Prepared by the evening the HUMVEEs are ready to march. The CIMIC (Civil Military Cooperation) Team was also ready for the mission. The battalion priest, Lieutenant Dragos Ciobanu blessed the soldiers before the departure. Shoulder by shoulder, Alphas listened to the words the priest. Engines started and radios were checked. Every officer reported mission ready. At the ordered time, the motorcade started moving.

They approached the destination shortly after. At the *Kid's* order, the patrol left the highway and turned into a country road. They aimed for a large, huge tent next to a sheepfold.

The platoon stopped and they were met by head of the family, surrounded by his many children. CIMIC team entered and dialogued with the man. They told him that the Romanian military acknowledged that this period is holiday of Ramadan and for that they had brought gifts for the occasion. From the HUMMVE trailers were downloading packages containing food, sweets and toys for children. The Alphas helped the CIMICs for in the unloading. Romanians

were immediately surrounded by the children happy to see the gifts. The patrol left the area for another. There they were welcomed by women in black dresses. Holding the kids, they got food and clothes from Romanians. In the middle of the crowd *The Kid* carefully prowls the area. He kept one eye on the people who were delivering the goods, and the other one on the soldiers who were securing the zone.

Mission Patrol

The CIMIC team completed the mission. Now The Alphas started with second mission, patrolling a highway in the AOR. Having displayed the map on the vehicle computer screen, the officer set the coordinates of the next destination. The road is extremely difficult to travel on as it was full of pot-holes. Along the irrigation channels and oil pipes, a field full of scraps, dozens of burnt cars was seen bearing the footprint of war. Up in the towers, the machine gunners took a hawk eye on the terrain. Except the drivers, every soldier prowled the land. They finally reached the highway. In the distance the Ziggurat from Ur could be seen. The platoon turned into the route which led straight to the camp. Far away you could see the Romanian flags waiving indicating their destination.

The mission was completed, and the platoon commander reported it through the radio. Now, The Lieutenant, *The Kid* and his platoon headed back to the barracks, as they had done early in the morning, shoulder by shoulder. ■

Combat And Diplomacy

Story and pictures Courtesy of
Cpt Konrad Von Finkenstien and Cpt Themis Gittersos
3 RC Battlegroup, Canadian Forces

The first month in theatre is always very interesting and always extremely busy. Like being the new kid in a school, the new neighbor on the block or your first day in the office, building relationships and getting to know your surroundings quickly will make your job that much easier.

After receiving an outstanding handover from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, members of November Company, 3rd Battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group (N Coy, 3 RCR BG), quickly started conducting platoon and company level operations into Zharey District aimed at disrupting insurgents, getting to know the area and building relationships.



PHOTO BY WO CHAD KENDALL


Lieutenant Jeff Lloyd, N Coy, 3rd Battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group, speaks with villagers during a patrol.

“The biggest challenge thus far has been getting to know the people in the district,” said Lieutenant Jeff Lloyd, N Coy, 3 RCR BG. “They are the key to success in this mission and becoming acquainted with them is the first step in establishing a solid working relationship. Once we have established a solid foundation of mutual understanding and trust we can begin with the challenging and demanding task of expanding security and enabling reconstruction and development.”

The operations have been large and small; depending on the situation they can be as big as a company and sometimes as small as a section. The larger operations are generally partnered with both the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. The smaller operations focus on engaging the local population in dialogue and working with them to improve security across the district.

“The most rewarding part of my day is having the opportunity to talk to villagers about their issues and assist them in developing solutions,” added Lieutenant Jeff Lloyd.

The jobs that soldiers do in Afghanistan can sometimes be as far away from combat as possible. Although all are

exceptionally well trained and prepared to deal with insurgents, they need to be equally capable of astute diplomatic skills. 



Georgians Bring OIF Mission to Close

Story Courtesy of
SpC. Allison Churchill 41st Fire Bde

The remaining 34 soldiers of Georgia's 1st Infantry Brigade cased their colors during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Delta, Oct. 20, 2008.

"For the time they've been here, tasks were completed fully and well," said Capt. Mzia Sulaberidze, 1st Georgian Bde., logistics officer and officer in charge of the remaining contingency.

She said from her position she could not assess the whole brigade, but that she was proud of her section's humanitarian aid efforts.

"What was done was very good," she said.

Other leaders stood up to offer the Georgians praise.

"Never forget what you have accomplished here. Years from now, you will be able to look back and know you were part of something great, something that shaped the world for future generations," said

Marine Maj. Gen. Paul E. Lefebvre, Multi-National Corps – Iraq deputy commanding general.

"We thank the Coalition forces, especially Georgian troops, who participated in liberating Iraq from the Baath Party and criminal Saddam Hussein," said Wasit Deputy Governor for Administration Yousif Reja.

The Georgians received several tokens of appreciation during the ceremony. Romanian Army Brig. Gen. Mihai Chirita, Multi-National Force – Iraq deputy chief of staff, presented a certificate of appreciation. Lefebvre, MNC-I




PHOTO BY SPC. TIFFANY DUSTERHOFT

Cpt. Mzia Sulaberidze and her senior enlisted Soldier case their colors during an end of mission ceremony on Forward Operating Base Delta.

presented a token on behalf of the Corps leadership. Col. Richard Francey, 41st Fires Bde. commander, also gave the Georgians a certificate of appreciation.

Nearly 2,000 Georgians left FOB Delta in August to support combat operations in Georgia.

During the Georgian's time in Wasit province, they supported an array of force protection missions, including convoy security, perimeter and base defense of FOB Delta, quick reaction force duties, checkpoint and patrol base operations and traffic control points. 

Thank You, Sergeant!

Sergeant Josef Samijn was a part of a convoy on his way to PRT PeK on the 20th Aug 08 in the early afternoon when approaching an accident scene where a Finish military vehicle had come off the street due to blast tire. Although the second Finish car was on the scene, help was needed. It was due to Sgt Samijn's swift reaction and skilled first aid that the three injured comrades could be stabilized and prepared for further treatment. His courage and responsiveness is what soldiers aim for, when doing First Aid training. We hope never to be in the need to do this, but also hope that when we need it, someone like Josef Samijn comes along.

Sergeant Josef Samijn well done! 

Story and Pictures Courtesy of
Belgian Office in CCC



Sergeant Samijn (left), Brig. commended by Gen. Weigt (right)

ISAF - Regional Command West, Change of Command Ceremony

Story and pictures Courtesy of Italian Office in CCC

After about six months serving as commander of Regional Command West (RC-West), Brigadier General Francesco Arena handed authority of RC-West to Brig. Gen. Paolo Serra.


General David D. McKiernan, ISAF Commander, and Lieutenant General Giuseppe Valotto, the Italian Joint Operations Commander, attended the ceremony. Several authorities were present as well, such as Italian Ambassador Claudio Glaentzer, Herat and Farah provinces Governors, Sayed Hussain Anwari and Rohul Amin, Major General Fazal Ahmad Sayar, the 207th Corp Afghan National Army commander, Major General Al Haj Ekramuddin, Regional Police chief.

Gen. McKiernan thanked Brig. Gen. Arena for his service to his country and to the alliance.

“RC-West has been a model. Your teams have mentored, trained, and enabled Afghan National Security Forces and leaders to increasingly take the lead in the fight. This is progress.”

“General Serra our mission is about building a future of hope and progress for the Afghan people.”




Since 31 August 2007, General SERRA has been commanding the “Julia” Alpini Brigade and Multinational Land Force in Udine. 

German-Afghan Cooperation

The Commanding Officer (CO) of the German Provincial Reconstruction Team Feyzabad, Colonel Torsten Gersdorf, lately handed over responsibility for a nearby military camp built for the ANA. The meanwhile completed camp will be the temporary home base for an ANA battalion. The CO of that battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Hayatullah (r.), raised the Afghan flag for the very first time in the new camp. During the symbolic hand-over-ceremony the German CO stressed that the German Bundeswehr and the Afghan Army have been working hand-in-hand in order to ensure a speedy completion of the camp, which is meant to be used by approximately 600 ANA-soldiers. Raising the Afghan flag is a proper symbol that the reconstruction of Afghanistan is advancing and the presence of the Afghan Army in province Badakhsan is becoming even more noticeable.

Lieutenant Colonel Hayatullah has been very pleased about the step towards more autonomy and stated that he and his men were well prepared to accept their share in the responsibility for the reconstruction work. The Afghan key personnel in that effort, mainly the core of the 1st Battalion 2nd Brigade 209.ANA Corps, has been in the camp for quite



some time already. They are being supported in their task by German reconstruction experts: Officers and NCOs of the German Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team have lately provided the necessary training. 

The Tripartite Commission Meeting

The Tripartite Commission composed of senior military representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Coalition Forces in Afghanistan, held its twenty fourth meeting in Rawalpindi, Pakistan on 15th October 2008. Delegations were headed by General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, Chief of the Army Staff of Pakistan, General Bismullah Khan, Chief of Defence, Afghan National Army and General David D. McKiernan, Commander International Security Assistance Forces, Afghanistan.

The meeting reviewed current operations and security situation along the Pak-Afghan Border. Measures to improve effectiveness of ongoing operations in the respective areas were also discussed. While forum expressed satisfaction at the current level of cooperation, it also discussed steps for better coordination and enhanced cooperation to avoid misunderstandings. Forum reiterated the resolve and commitment to restore peace and security in the area. ■■



Countries' Presentations



Photos by: Cpt Ethan Tan, Singapore Air Force, CPAT
Major Cristian Popovici, Romanian Air Force, CPAT

Slovak Constitutional Day



MG Michael Diamond received by LTC Milan Pollak.



MG Jay Hood, with Col Stanislav Stulrajler, addressing the audience.

German National Day



RAdm Juergen Mannhardt addressing the guests.



RAdm Mannhardt showing appreciation to SMSgt Victor Gilroy.

Korean National Day



The Korean Liaison Team and their spouses.



BG Yong H Jeong, received the Certificate of Appreciation from Commissioner Mark Sharpe and Mrs. Springsteen.

Spain National Day



RAdm Fernando Gea welcoming BG Peter Lennon, Head of G4.



State judge Emiliano Salcines receiving the Superior Cross of Military Merit from RAdm Gea.

Hungarian National Day



Col Gabor Nagy welcoming the guests at the reception.



MG Michael Diamonds addressing the audience.

Eid-Al-Fitr Luncheon



Col Sori receiving MG Thomas (UK)



Col Sadi receiving MG Allen



The guests and hosts together



Col Sadi receiving MG Diamond



Col AL-Ammari welcoming the guests



BG Maqsood highlighting importance of Eid-ul-Fitr

COALITION FLAG-WAVING IN SUPPORT OF OUR TROOPS IN OIF & OIR

Photos by: Cpt Ethan Tan, Singapore Air Force, Coalition Public Affair

