

# *Coalition Bulletin*

A publication of the Coalition fighting the Global War on Terrorism


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***Afghanistan, Tajikistan dedicate “Bridge to Friendship”***




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**Cover photo:** Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmonov prepare to perform a ribbon-cutting on the newest bridge connecting Afghanistan and Tajikistan. U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Mark W. Rodgers

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# IN THIS ISSUE:



*Afghanistan, Tajikistan Dedicate "Bridge to Friendship" ...2*



*Letter from Petraeus to Troops...4*



*Iraqi Air Force Conducts First Mission Without U.S. Help...5*



*Military Medics Continue to Play Vital Role in Southern Iraq...8*

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*The progress our forces have achieved with our Iraqi counterparts has been substantial. While there have been setbacks as well as successes and tough losses along the way, overall, our tactical commanders and I see improvements in the security environments.*

**General David H. Petraeus,  
Multi-National Forces – Iraq commander**

# Editorial

With this issue of the Coalition Bulletin I come to the end of my term as the Chairman of Public Awareness Working Group. I would like to thank all who worked with me and contributed towards enhancement of understanding about the Coalition. This being my last editorial, I would reiterate that the Bulletin remains an expression of the commitment of the world's largest military coalition; fighting against a common enemy and working towards global peace. Having worked here for over a year, it has become increasingly evident that while military remains an essential element to combat the ills of terrorism; it is areas other than military, which will bring sustainable and lasting peace. Military at best can provide a window of opportunity for other elements like political, social and economic to win over the alienated masses of the conflict zone.

Working here at CENTCOM also enabled the individual nations to comprehend the emerging dynamics of a shrinking globalized world. The evolving environment actually demands a far better awareness of each other's peculiarities, sensitivities and culture; and what could be a better forum than the Coalition of the willing, to obtain this understanding for mutual co-existence. All this is aimed at working for a world that would be more peaceful and tolerant, where conflicts are resolved without prejudices and bias, and no discrimination exists on the basis of colour, caste or religious belief. How much are we achieving these aims remains fundamental to the success and legitimacy of this Coalition in times to come?

The effort both in Iraq and Afghanistan has reached a stage where more than military; the requirement is of political reconciliation, honest governance and provision of promised economic assistance, for capacity building. But more than anything else, the outright requirement is of a visionary leadership which rises above the historical prejudices and age old rivalries, and works towards a promising future for their respective populace. Failure to achieve that will not only amplify the sufferings of the people, it will also destabilize the complete region. On the same note, situation in Africa continues to simmer and merit the attention of developed world to arrest the potential of increasing security threats and yet another human disaster.

In the end I would like to acknowledge the courage and praiseworthy performance of men and women of the Coalition, who continue to sacrifice their today for a better tomorrow for us all. It may take time, but success is destined to be the fate of those who persevere and struggle for justice and peace.

**Ahsan Mahmood**  
Brigadier-General, Pakistan  
Chairman, Public Awareness Working Group



## Progress in Northern Iraq



Story by Fred W. Baker  
III American Forces Press Service

**BAGHDAD** — Iraqi Security Forces have made much progress toward readiness in the past year within Multi-National Division North's area of responsibility, a top official in the region said.

Speaking to military analysts via teleconference from Baqubah in Diyala province, Army Brig. Gen. Mick Bednarek, deputy commanding general for operations of Multi-National Division North, called the change "significant."

"We are starting to see the key measure of effectiveness, ... which is independent operations — being able to plan, coordinate and execute operations on their own, standing and fighting against an adversary that is trying to kill them,"



**Iraqi Security Forces patrol the streets of Fallujah in a combined effort with U.S. Marines. Photo by U.S. Marine Cpl. Robert R. Attebury**

he said. "Only a year ago, there were times ... where they would be engaged by a demanding adversary, they'd drop their weapons and head in the other direction. Not the case any longer.

"I'm not painting a lilacs and roses picture, but in the broader perspective, clearly, we are seeing improvement from the readiness perspective of the Iraqi Army," Bednarek said.

While the Iraqi police are making some progress as well, Bednarek said they are still a "step below" the Army in terms of readiness.

"They are not where they need to be. They're getting better. Their strength has increased just in sheer numbers. Their logistics tail for supporting that increase in strength has also improved, but bottom line up front for both the Army and the police (is that) logistics remain their Achilles heel and, in my view, will probably remain that way for at least another 18 months," Bednarek said.

Officials in northern Iraq launched Operation Lightning Hammer II at the start of the month. The offensive partners 12,000 Coalition forces with 14,000 Iraqi Security Forces to drive al Qaeda out of the provinces of Salah Ad Din, Ninewa, Diyala and Kirkuk. Officials are supporting the forces with attack helicopters, close-air support, Bradley fighting vehicles, Stryker vehicles, and tanks.



# Afghanistan, Tajikistan Dedicate “Bridge to Friendship”



**Story by Army Master Sgt. Mark W. Rodgers  
Afghanistan Engineer District**

NIZHNY PYANDZH, Tajikistan - In continued progress toward economic stability and increased cooperation between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, government officials dedicated the “Bridge to Friendship,” which solidifies a Central Asian trade during a ceremony here.

Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, Tajikistan Pres. Emomali Rahmonov and U.S. Secretary of Commerce,

Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez, attended the ceremony held a few feet from the river that for years separated the two countries in many ways.

The Afghanistan-Tajikistan \$37 million-bridge project includes a 672-meter (2,204 feet) weathering steel bridge, customs buildings, inspection bays, check points and roads that connect this bridge to a virtually untapped trade route between the two countries. Prior to the bridge, the only way across this part of the river was on a ferry that has limited capacity and the inability to operate year-round.

“Exchange of goods will increase in numbers through this bridge initially and (will) unilaterally benefit the people of these countries,” Rahmonov said. He went on to thank the U.S. for building the bridge, praised the friendship with Karzai, and spoke of the recently announced joint Afghanistan/ Tajikistan hydroelectric power plant project and the potential stability that exportation will bring.

“I want to support the words of my dear friend of Tajikistan and we hope all his sayings will come true,” Karzai said.

The bridge will tie-in to the existing road in Sher Khan Bander, Afghanistan and the road to Dusti in Tajikistan, significantly improving the flow of aid, commerce and trade within Central Asia.

Border-crossing complexes on both sides, scheduled for completion later this fall, are primarily for border security. Included in these complexes are immigration and customs



**The bridge connecting Afghanistan and Tajikistan is prepared for its dedication ceremony. U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Mark W. Rodgers**



**Afghan children at the bridge dedication ceremony. Photo by Fergana.ru Agency**

as well as state of the art scanning equipment to thwart smuggling.

“It will take a joint effort to avoid using this bridge for trafficking in human beings, drugs and arms smuggling ... this [bridge] should be a symbol of love, noble action and creativity,” Rahmonov said.

Funding for the projects came from multiple donor nations including the U.S.

“This bridge is an example of the best in international cooperation. Several countries, Norway, Japan and the European Union, also joined in the effort,” Gutierrez said. He went on to thank the two countries for their support and cooperation with the project and their dedication to the prosperity of their people. He also extended a special thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Brian Walls, project manager, for devoting tireless energy and effort.

The project is being managed as two separate ones, the bridge and the border-crossing complexes. The bridge-building project employed more than 450 people at the peak of the 19-month bridge construction period. Citizens of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Philippines, Italy, India, Russia, Africa, Thailand, Europe and North America all worked together to make the a success.



# ISAF Unit Donates Supplies to Boys' School



*Story and photos by  
HQ ISAF public information office*

FARAH CITY, Afghanistan – American and Italian soldiers from ISAF's Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah celebrated the start of another school year by donating school

supplies to Abu Naser Farahi Boys School during a recent visit.

Chief Petty Officer James Brown, PRT education officer, worked with teachers in the United States to collect pens, pencils and notebooks.



**Students at Abu Naser Farahi Boys School in Farah City help carry in school supplies during a recent visit by soldiers from Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah**



**Sergeant Gabriele Rasi and Chief James Brown look over school equipment at Abu Naser Farahi Boys School in Farah City during a recent visit by soldiers from Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah.**

“The first time I went out on a mission I brought candy for the children,” Brown said. “They didn’t want candy; they wanted pens, pencils and paper. I thought that was great.”

Working alongside the Italian Civil Affairs team, the soldiers toured the boys’ high school. Although the PRT reconstructed the 76-year-old school three years ago, the teachers and students still taught and studied with old equipment. For example, science laboratory models date from 1945 and students read from heavily worn paperbacks.

“It is very interesting to see what they are making do with compared to what we have in America,” Brown said. Despite the lack of current materials, they still teach science and they continue to function, Brown added.

Mr. Atiqullah, director of education for Farah province said more than a thousand students study in shifts due to a shortage of classrooms. The students’ average age is 18, but there are several 22-year-old students whose education was interrupted by years of conflict, according to Atiqullah.



# Letter from Petraeus to Troops



Story by U.S. Army Sfc. Daniel Moriarity  
Combined Press Information Center



**General David H. Petraeus Multi-National Forces – Iraq Commander**

**BAGHDAD** — General David H. Petraeus, Multi-National Forces – Iraq Commander, thanked U.S. military and Coalition force members for their sacrifices during recent operations in an **open letter**.

Petraeus said that the letter, dated Sept. 7, is a detailed description of what Coalition forces have accomplished or have yet to accomplish as he and Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker finalize their assessment for presentation next week to Congress.

“My sense is that we have achieved tactical momentum and (have) wrested the initiative from our enemies,” Petraeus said. “We have to contend with the relentless pace of operations, the crushing heat, and the emotions that we have all experienced during long deployments and tough combat.”

Petraeus said Coalition forces have made that progress while operating in an environment of “limited Iraqi governmental capacity, institutions trying to rebuild and various forms of corruption. In spite of these challenges, our operations – particularly the offensive operations we have conducted since mid-June – have helped produce progress in many areas on the ground,” he said.

The number of attacks across the country has declined

over the past 11 weeks, Petraeus said, “reaching, during the last week of August, a level not seen since June 2006. This trend is not just a result of the greater number of Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

“It also reflects your determination, courage, and skill in conducting counterinsurgency operations,” he said. “By taking the fight to the enemy, you have killed or captured dozens of leaders and thousands of members of Al Qaeda-Iraq and extremist militia elements. You have taken many of Al Qaeda’s former sanctuaries away from them, and you have dismantled a number of their car bomb and improvised explosive device networks.”

Coalition forces are building the foundation of the Iraqi security elements who will then assume an ever greater role in the fight against the insurgents. The effort of the Coalition forces is also enabling local officials to oppose Al Qaeda-Iraq, in local neighborhoods.

“We are building momentum in an emerging area of considerable importance, local reconciliation,” Petraeus said. “Local Iraqi leaders are coming forward, opposing extremists, and establishing provisional units of neighborhood security volunteers.

“This is very significant because, as many of you know first hand, extremists cannot survive without the support of the population,” he said. “The popular rejection of extremists has helped the Coalition and Iraqi Forces take away other areas from Al Qaeda as well, and we are seeing a spread of this sentiment in an ever-increasing number of Sunni areas. Now, in fact, we are also seeing a desire to reject extremists emerging in many Shi’a areas.

In the coming months, our coalition’s countries and all Iraqis will continue to depend on each of you and on our Iraqi counterparts to keep the pressure on the extremists, to help improve security and strengthen the rule of law for all Iraqis, to work with the Government of Iraq to integrate local volunteers into local security and national institutions, to assist with restoration and improvements of basic services, and to continue to develop conditions that foster reconciliation,” Petraeus said.

Petraeus said he and Crocker will “share with the U.S. Congress and the American People,” the progress made and challenges remaining to be addressed.

“I will also describe the recommendations I have provided to my chain of command,” he said. “I will go before congress, conscious of the strain on our forces, the sacrifices that you and your families are making, the gains we have made in Iraq, the challenges that remain, and the importance of building on what we and our Iraqi counterparts have fought hard to achieve,” he said. “Thanks once again for what each of you continues to do. Our nations have asked much of you and your families. It remains the greatest of honors to serve with you.”



## Iraqi Air Force Conducts First Mission Without U.S. Help



**Story and photo By Spc. Nathan Hoskins**  
**1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

**CAMP TAJI** — The Iraqi Air Force (IAF) recently flew its first mission without the assistance of its American partners.

Iraqi pilots flew a mission to survey and monitor the power lines here during a mission appropriately called “Operation Power Line,” Aug. 25, said Brig. Gen. Sati, commander of the IAF, Taji Wing, who asked to be identified by only his last name.

“We did our duties today for the very first time and it was a 100 percent Iraqi mission,” he said. Sati announced the

Sati feels that there are two reasons why the IAF have had this recent success.

“As I informed my close, dear friend (Col. Dan Shanahan, commander of the 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div.), there are two reasons behind that,” said Sati.

“Number one, is because (of) the ability of our Iraqi pilots to understand and digest the information and because of their (aviation background),” the Iraqi general said proudly.

“The second reason is because the continuous day and night help from our American brothers who did everything we asked of them. They didn’t deny us any efforts to accomplish what we wanted,” he said.



**Aviators from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and the Coalition Air Force Transition Team joined members of the Iraqi Air Force in one of their hangars to get an up close look at the Iraqi helicopters during a static display, Aug. 25, at Camp Taji. Earlier that same day, the IAF completed its first aerial mission with no assistance from their U.S. partners. U.S.**

mission at a partnership event Aug. 25 between the IAF and 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, in which the American and Iraqi service members enjoyed dinner.

The mission came about because insurgents have been causing unrest throughout the country by cutting power lines, thus cutting off electrical power to the Iraqi people, said Washington Court House, Ohio native, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Bryan Bartlett, commander of the 770th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron and the Coalition Air Force Transition Team.

“There’s (a proposed) Iraqi law about people keeping their distance from power lines since there are so many dropped,” said Bartlett.

The IAF is taking action on this problem by surveying for downed lines and also watching for anyone violating the stand-off distance, he said.

“The mission is to go outside and patrol the power lines and to get the word out that the Iraqi Air Force is flying,” said Bartlett.

Sati described the moment they completed their first Iraqi mission.

“The whole base is very happy today – extremely happy. We feel like a graduate who just graduated and got his diploma,” he said.

The progress is obvious when one looks at the numbers, said Bartlett.

“To put it in context, last year this wing flew a total of 300 hours. Most of those hours were on a couple of these (Bell 206) Jet Rangers,” he said.

“Last month, they flew 200 hours just in the (Bell UH-1H) Huey II alone. So far they’ve got about 700 hours on the aircraft and they’ve only really been flying them since the end of February, first of March,” said Bartlett.

Along with keeping a watchful eye over the power lines, the IAF has also moved Soldiers and dignitaries and visitors across the country.

“They are also moving passengers. They’ve moved about 500 passengers so far this year,” said Bartlett.



# ISAF Completes Major Health Facilities in Tarin Kowt



*Story and photos by  
HQ ISAF public information office*

TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan – The Australian Reconstruction Task Force (RTF), part of the Dutch-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Regional Command South, has completed two of its major construction projects this week.



**Governor Monib and Captain Dan Keep cut the ribbon to officially open the Tarin Kowt Hospital**

The redevelopment of the Tarin Kowt Hospital and construction of the Yaklengah Comprehensive Health Clinic are landmark projects in the international community’s quest to deliver improved health care for the people of southern Afghanistan.

The two projects were opened and handed over to the local government by Commanding Officer of the RTF, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Jarvie, at a ceremony at the hospital on Sunday 16 September.

“The International Security Assistance Force is determined to assist your government to steadily improve your lives” Lieutenant Colonel Jarvie said to the assembled crowd gathered for the hospital opening.

“We see high quality health and education facilities as the foundation of a prosperous community and this is why we are working so hard to deliver improved health infrastructure in and around Tarin Kowt” he added.

The US\$700,000 Tarin Kowt Hospital project began in late 2006 and was completed on schedule this week by the RTF and local contractors.

Project manager, Captain Dan Keep from the Australian Army’s 19th Chief Engineer Works was on hand to assist with the hospital opening and said the transformation of the site has been impressive.

“Prior to commencing the works, the hospital was in a poor state of repair. It was ill-equipped and poorly staffed, struggling to perform the role of the major health facility in the Province” said Captain Keep.

In a little under one year, the hospital has become one of the more developed medical centres in Southern Afghanistan.

The main building has had its interior completely refurbished to dramatically improve hygiene standards. Fundamental services that previously did not exist, such as a clean water supply and reliable electricity, have been installed.

A new kitchen building has been constructed and fitted with modern appliances, replacing a single wood fire that once serviced the entire facility.

An Out-Patients Department is the largest of the new structures built at the hospital, providing an additional Comprehensive Health Clinic facility for the region and freeing up room in the main building for additional in-patients. It comprises 16 rooms incorporating male and female wards, consultation and storage rooms and x-ray facilities.

Finally, an infectious diseases ward was built to improve treatment of contagious diseases such as cholera. The transmission of cholera

has had a debilitating effect on the health of the local population in the past, but can now be treated safely in this purpose built facility.

The second project to be completed this week was the Yaklengah Comprehensive Health Clinic, located about ten kilometers South West of Tarin Kowt. The works conducted at this facility have included an extension and renovation to the main clinic building, construction of staff accommodation, expansion to the compound wall and an upgrade to the water supply.



**Warrant Officer Brendan Johnson and a local engineer finalise plans for the Yaklengah Comprehensive Health Clinic.**





## Soldiers Lend Medical Hand to Madhariyah Residents



*Story and photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
2nd Brigade Combat Team*

**MADHARIYAH** — Coalition troops took a break from combat operations recently to assess the medical needs of local residents near Patrol Base Whiskey 1.

Artillerymen of 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and Paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, provided medical care from an abandoned veterinary clinic in Madhariyah.

The event was an initial step in a larger project that could bring more permanent medical care to the region.

“We’re hoping to turn this into a local clinic,” said Capt. Daniel Joyce, 1-40th Cav. Regt. battalion surgeon. “We are working on a Commander’s Emergency Response Programs (CERP) project to get power and water here.”

Most importantly, the region needs doctors. Currently, four local Iraqi doctors and a female obstetrics/gynecology doctor have been identified as possible candidates to work at the proposed clinic.



“We are working with them right now to figure out their schedules; try to work it so they can come in and work with residents to reinvigorate the health care system here,” Underwood said.

Working with Iraqis will put an Iraqi face on the mission and make the clinic truly an Iraqi enterprise, he added.

Although Coalition forces will continue to provide medicine for the clinic, the medicine will be purchased through a local

**Maj. Catherine Haverty, 3rd Civil Affairs Battalion, Detachment 1, a registered nurse, checks out a baby boy. The mother was concerned about a lump on the child’s chest**

Iraqi Army (IA) troops joined the Americans, lending medics, translators and security.

“We came in and secured the sight with the IA,” said Capt. Dave Underwood, commander, 1-9 FAR.

Iraqi and Coalition troops also handed out items to improve local residents’ quality of life, including clothes, sandals, toys for children, and hygiene items such as soaps, shampoos, tooth paste and tooth brushes. Feminine hygiene items were also provided to local women.

With the new school year coming soon, school-aged children were given supplies such as pens, pencils, paper and book bags.

“We want the Iraqi people to know that we care and that we are doing as much as we can for them. We haven’t forgotten about them,” said Maj. Catherine Haverty, 3rd Civil Affairs Battalion, Detachment 1.

Iraqi company, Haverty said. She expects the medicine to arrive within 10 days.

“It makes you feel pretty good,” Joyce said. “It shows we care enough to come out here. They are going to remember an American doctor looked at my baby and said ‘he is OK.’”

Even with limited resources, Joyce, who has a background as a family doctor, Haverty, an emergency room nurse with 35 years experience, and an Iraqi army medic, Sgt. Maj. Kalid Latif Miza, were able to examine several patients and view common problems in the area.

“Most of the illnesses are minor,” Haverty said. “Most of them are skin, bug bites, aches and pains from arthritis, and rashes.”

Overall, 106 men, 43 women and 153 children were examined, the youngest being a baby born less than 12-hours prior to the event.



## Netherlands Minister of Defense visits HQ CENTCOM



**The Netherlands Minister of Defense, Eimert van Middelkoop and CENTCOM commander, Admiral William J. Fallon. U.S. Navy photo taken by Mass Communication Specialist Second Class Alisha M. Frederick**

**Story by Lt. Col. Jan Otter  
Netherlands Liaison Office**

The Netherlands Minister of Defense, Eimert van Middelkoop, accompanied by the Netherlands Commander of the Armed Forces, General Dick Berlijn, visited the US from 10 till 14 September.

In Washington Minister Middelkoop met with the secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice and the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates.

The visit aimed primarily on the bilateral relations between US and the Netherlands, to combined military operations, multinational crisis response operations and the future of the NATO.

The Netherlands, as one of the three lead nations in ISAF/RC-S, currently has deployed 1700 men/women in Afghanistan. Together with Australian forces, the Dutch are responsible for the province of Uruzgan.

On September 14, Minister Van Middelkoop visited CENTCOM. Upon arrival, he was greeted by DCOM CENTCOM, LG Martin Dempsey and the Netherlands SNR, BG Rob KnoI. He was briefed on the situation in the AOR and had an office call with CENTCOM commander, Admiral William J. Fallon.

The current mandate for the Netherlands mission in Uruzgan ends in August 2008. After this, NATO needs to have a

replacement. The Netherlands government has announced that a decision on a possible continuation of this deployment will be made in the near future.

Today, the decision making process on that issue is still ongoing. No doubt that the discussions with the different US authorities have an important role in this process.



**The Netherlands' Ministry of Defense and U.S. CENTCOM officials cheer for future cooperation. U.S. Navy photo taken by Mass Communication Specialist Second Class Alisha M. Frederick**



# Military Medics Continue to Play Vital Role in Southern Iraq



Story and photos courtesy of UK Ministry of Defense



Military medics serving in southern Iraq have to work in challenging and testing conditions. For all of them the chance to make a difference is what makes their work worthwhile. Report by Barry Shaw.

In recent months the work of military medics on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan has rarely been out of the news. Working under pressure and in a challenging and difficult environment, their efforts have drawn much praise from those who benefit from their skills as well as those who have had the opportunity to see their work at first hand. Indeed one of those recent visitors to Iraq was Doctor Peter Carter, the General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing. After a visit to UK troops in Basra in August Dr Carter was impressed with what he saw, saying:

“A lot is asked of the Armed Forces and understandably their medical care is a high priority.

I have been extremely impressed by the world class standard of nursing care that I saw on my recent trip to Iraq.”

For the medics themselves their work keeps them busy. Flight Sergeant Susan Brown, aged 41, from Bolton, is an RAF nurse who is normally based at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine in Birmingham, where she lectures in nursing practices. In Basra FS Brown is part of a team that provides complete, essential and life saving medical care to all deployed Service personnel on operations in the area.

Corporal Elisa Riley, aged 28, is an RAF dental technician normally based at RAF Halton in Buckinghamshire. After volunteering for service in Iraq, Corporal Riley has found herself deployed as a battlefield ambulance driver, enabling the rapid movement of medical personnel to incidents and casualties where time can be critical. In addition, she assists the medics in dealing with the broad range of injuries and illnesses that are experienced in operational theatres, from emergency casualties and their handling to domestic routine ailments.

Corporal Riley deployed to Iraq in May and her job has proven to be challenging and varied, offering her invaluable experience of military operations.

Corporal Riley joined the RAF in 2005 after completing a Dental Technology degree at Leeds University. Although she is employed on slightly different duties in Iraq, she is enjoying the challenge:

“Helping people is probably one of the most rewarding jobs I think anyone can do and to work alongside some of the best medics in the Services. I feel honoured to be doing the job I’m doing,” said Corporal Riley.



Surgeon Commander Peter Small performing a tracheotomy on a patient in Basra



## Operable 24 Hours a Day, Moldovans Save Lives in Iraq



*Story by Major Diana Gradinaru  
Moldovan Mass Media Military Center*

The fifth Moldovan contingent, consisting of an eight-soldier Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team and three staff officers, has been deployed to Iraq for more than three months. Attached to the U.S. Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Multinational Division-North (MND-N), the mission of

mission. Iraqis cooperate with us on a daily basis, this way helping us and making our job easier.”

Asked if Iraq has changed since his first deployment, Galasan said: “Yes. I am very impressed how this country and its people have changed. They are very confident in themselves and work hard towards achieving something –

a democracy that was denied them during Saddam period. They are building their future and believe that one day everything will be different”.

In addition to working with the Iraqis, Moldovans operate side-by-side with American, who are responsible for their security, and Bulgarian soldiers. “It is a great opportunity to work in an international environment since we learn something from them, and they are learning something from us”, Galasan said.

Away from home, Moldovan engineers are saving innumerable lives. They all look forward to accomplishing their six-month mission in Iraq and returning home safely.



**In Iraq Moldovans operate side-by-side with American, who are responsible for their security, and Bulgarian soldiers**

the Moldovan engineers is to conduct explosive ordnance reconnaissance, destroy articles of unexploded ordnances(UXO) that would threaten Iraqis and coalition forces lives, and instruct local population about specific actions that they must take in case they locate UXOs.

According to Moldovan Army Lt. Col. Alexandru Galasan, the contingent commander, since their first deployment to Iraq, Moldovan engineers have collected and destroyed more than 18,500 UXOs. They also conducted explosive ordnance reconnaissance of 23 square kilometers. Galasan, who is on his second deployment to Iraq, said: “What we are doing here is a very dangerous job, and we are thankful to Iraqi people and coalition forces, without whose help we could not have accomplished our



**Moldovan Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team in Iraq**



## Simplistic? Maybe. Effective? Yup.



*Story and photos by Kristina Davis  
The Maple Leaf, National Defence Canada*

Corporal Matthew Iverson is a Reservist from the Royal Westminster Regiment, attached to the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, part of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment (2 RCR) Battle Group. A criminology student at the University College of the Fraser Valley, he did 10 months of workup training before, as he puts it, hitting the ground running.

Chatting in the searing heat at Sperwan Ghar, there's no relief. In fact, there's no point in looking for some shade. There isn't any.

From Abbotsford, B.C., Cpl Iverson says he joined the Army because it's something he always wanted to do. "I wanted to be part of something bigger than most people ever get to do," he explains thoughtfully.

Part of that has been working with the Afghan National Army (ANA). After experiencing some joint operations, he says they are good at their jobs. "It's good to see they are well on their way."

And out in the countryside, from what he's seen, a normalcy is returning to everyday life. But, he adds, the infrastructure is more than dated. "It reminds me of Biblical times," he says.

He readily admits his first dismounted patrols were a bit unnerving; but after the first half hour, kids were trailing along behind. Your senses, he adds, become incredibly tuned to your surroundings and the slightest niggling feeling is taken seriously.

Captain Andrew Vivian is also with 3 PPCLI and is the 2 i/c of Charlie Company. In the Army for 14 years, he's

originally from Halifax, N.S. Like Cpl Iverson, he too has experienced joint operations with the ANA. "We're focused on building and reinforcing their capacity," he explains. And while working with the ANA has its obvious challenges in both language and cultural differences, they have invaluable knowledge of the area and the local population. Joint



**Corporal Matthew Iverson is a Reservist from the Royal Westminster Regiment, attached to the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, part of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment (2 RCR) Battle Group**

operations are often modified based on their input. "It brings an added dimension," says Capt Vivian, "it's a good partnership."



**Recruit Afghan National Army soldiers await instructions before their next exercise**

That partnership, says Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Walker, commanding officer of the 2 RCR Battle Group, is a critical piece to the puzzle. So, too, is the influence of the local Shuras in affecting change and influencing opinions about the Taliban. When the Shura can meet and debate without fear, it's a clear step away from past chaos.

Another measure of success is the degree to which operations are disrupting the efforts of the Taliban, including the number of attacks they are able to orchestrate. Walker also points to the ever-increasing development projects, both large and small, that are dotting countless villages. "As those projects increase," he explains, "it has a very positive impact."



## Farah City Orphans Get New Orphanage



**Story and photo by  
HQ ISAF public information office**

Farah City, Afghanistan - Soldiers from ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah helped the city's 200 orphans move into their new \$130,000 USD orphanage recently. Working side by side, the orphans and soldiers loaded beds, bedding, desks and kitchen utensils into a five ton truck.

Previously the orphans lived in the dining facility at the Education Department, with two rooms allocated for administrative offices. There was no running water, so hygiene consisted of sponge baths from a bucket near the local well.

The new orphanage features both boys and girls dormitories, a dining facility and administration offices. There will also be a septic tank with a leach field, and a generator for power.

"The new orphanage is nicer, cleaner and more secure than the old facility, but the big advantage is that they also have running water," said U.S. Lt. John Genta.

Shir Pir Construction employed 20 men for a 10 month



**A soldier from ISAF Province Reconstruction Team Farah helps the orphans move into their new home**

period in the construction of the orphanage, which has the capacity to comfortably house 300 orphans.

"Before there was no one to help the orphans, but now the PRT has given them a new home," said Nasrullah Amini, Director of Social Affairs for Farah province.

## *Coalition Members Visit Nuance Galleries*



*Robert Rowen explains the events of the Waterloo battle*



*Participants engrossed in discussion*

## *Coalition Tennis Tournament*



## *Netherlands Minister of Defense visits CENTCOM*





A young Iraqi boy's American flag-themed outfit earns him a high five from Capt. Andrea Pierce, a tactical human intelligence team member with B Co, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, during a patrol through the Grayya area of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District. Photo by Sgt. Michael Pryor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs.