

ESQUIMALT BASED ENGINEERS RETURN FROM AFGHANISTAN

ESQUIMALT, B.C.- Five of eleven members of the CFB Esquimalt Pacific Naval Construction Troop (PNCT) arrived at the Victoria International Airport on Sunday 26 April 2009. These soldiers spent the past seven months in Afghanistan supporting the maintenance of Canadian military camps as well as nation building projects with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

“The work that these individuals did in Kandahar province is just another example of how the CF and the Navy is supporting Canada’s work in Afghanistan” said Base Construction Engineering Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Jon Burbee. “Whether maintaining military camps in Afghanistan or conducting domestic operations such as fighting forest fires in the B.C. interior, the PNCT members are up for the challenge” The troop has supported numerous training projects in the local area, a previous Technical Assistance Visit to Afghanistan in 2006, as well as construction work in Jamaica under as part of their preparatory training for this mission.

On average, while in Kandahar the troops worked 12-14 hours per day on a variety of projects such as: an operations centre, a hospital complex, sleeping accommodations, and washroom facilities. Specific duties included the pouring of concrete slabs, renovations, building construction, erecting prefab structures, and the connection of utilities necessary for “normal” human basics such as electricity, water, and sewer services. In the Provincial Reconstruction Team, members provided technical support to community projects such as schools and police stations through contracts run by Afghani nationals.

First stood up in September 1997, the PNCT provides general engineering support and disaster response when tasked to Canadian Forces international or domestic operations and includes a broad range of typical construction trade skills such as carpentry, refrigeration, electrical, plumbing, and potable water production services. With 17 total members, the PNCT is designed to be readily deployable to any part of the world where these construction trades are required. The PNCT also provides the core of the CFB Esquimalt Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team.