

Grzegorz Piątkiewicz, PHD

UJD University in Częstochowa

email: g.piatkiewicz@ujd.edu.pl

ORCID: 0000-0001-7045-0902

Robert Socha, prof.

WSB University in Dąbrowa Górnicza

e-mail: rsocha@wsb.edu.pl

ORCID: 0000-0003-2388-1819

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EVOLUTION OF POLISH MILITARY MISSIONS ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE POLISH MILITARY CONTINGENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN. PART 2

Abstract

The Polish Armed Forces (Polish Armed Forces) have been participating in military missions since 1953. By 2023, Polish Armed Forces soldiers had actively participated in 92 missions around the world. These missions were of an observational, peace-keeping, humanitarian, police, war, stabilization and training nature. A series of three articles will present the basic principles of NATO, UN and EU military missions, the history of selected Polish military missions, the idea of ISAF (International Security Assistance Force), and the evolution of the Polish Military Contingent of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF PKW) in Afghanistan. The articles will also include the results of scientific research by G. Piątkiewicz obtained for his doctoral dissertation entitled. "Socio-Professional Inclusion of International

Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Soldiers in Afghanistan” presenting the characteristics of Polish soldiers participating in the 9th quota of the PKW ISAF in Afghanistan. The first article presented the basic principles of military missions and the history of selected Polish military missions. This article, on the other hand, will present the idea of the International Security Assistance Force mission and the participation of the Polish contingent within this mission.

Key words

Military missions, Polish Military Contingent, Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland

Introduction

The Polish Armed Forces have been participating in military missions since 1953. By 2023, they had actively participated in 92 missions of various nature, all over the world¹. These missions were of a nature, observation, peacekeeping, humanitarian, police, war, stabilisation and training. Foreign military missions are carried out especially during crisis situations in countries where the political and military situation is unstable. In many cases, it is the only effective way to ensure the security of the civilian population, provide humanitarian aid, rebuild state structures, resolve existing armed conflicts or temporarily stabilise the situation in the country². It should be emphasised that if it were not for the consistent and systematic expansion of the Armed Forces, as well as the permanent presence of American soldiers in Poland, perhaps today the country would be in a situation where NATO countries would be carrying out mandated tasks, on a military mission basis³.

Military operation “Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan

On 7 October 2001, NATO troops launched the invasion of Afghanistan⁴. This was a rapid response to the vicious terrorist attack on the United States of America on 11 September 2001, in which 3182 people were killed⁵. The military operation in Afghanistan launched by NATO was named “Enduring Freedom” (OEF). In its initial phase, the operation was structured by US, French, Canadian, British and local Afghan security forces⁶. The main task of the operation was to dismantle the al-Qaeda terrorist groups⁷ operating in Afghanistan and to remove the Taliban from power⁸.

Poland was officially invited by NATO to participate in OEF in autumn 2001. The first military contingent within OEF consisted of soldiers from: GROM, the 1st EOD Brigade in Opole, the 10th Logistics Brigade in Brzeg, the 4th Chemical Regiment and Biological Reconnaissance Team (about 300 soldiers in total)⁹. The Polish Military Contingent OEF started to perform its mandated tasks on 16 March 2002. The contingent carried out a number of tasks including: protecting the base and airport in Kabul, protecting foreign delegations,

1 *Misje*, <https://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/misje> [dostęp: 20.09.2023 r.].

2 J. Barcik, *Europejska Polityka bezpieczeństwa i obrony. Aspekty prawne i polityczne*, Bydgoszcz–Katowice 2008, p. 117.

3 B. Balcerowicz, *Sily Zbrojne w czasie pokoju, kryzysu i wojny*, Warszawa 2010, p. 28.

4 L. Jureńczyk, *Polska misja w Afganistanie*, Bydgoszcz 2016, p. 49.

5 Y. Alexander, M.S. Swetnam, *Siewcy śmierci. Osama bin Laden i inni szefowie Al-Qaidy*, Warszawa 2001, p. 75.

6 M. Tabor, *Polska w Organizacji Traktatu Północnoatlantyckiego*, [in:] S. Przymies, I. Popiuk-Rysińska (eds.), *Udział Polski w organizacjach międzynarodowych*, Warszawa 2012, p. 141.

7 J. Matuszak, P. Przeździecki, *10 lat Wojska Polskiego w Afganistanie*, Warszawa 2011, p. 35.

8 L. Jureńczyk, *Polska misja...*, p. 57.

9 *Ibidem*, p. 36.

escorting supplies for the contingent and providing assistance to the local population¹⁰.

It should be added that the Polish Navy also took part in Operation Enduring Freedom – the military logistic support ship ORP Konradmirał Xawery Czernicki from the 8th Coastal Defence Flotilla¹¹. Since 10 July 2002, ORP Rear Admiral Xawery Czernicki performed tasks jointly with the US 5th Fleet in the Persian Gulf region. The ship's most important tasks included supporting, protecting and securing US Navy Fifth Fleet strike units. The Polish Armed Forces participated in OEF until 2007. X changes of the Polish Military Continent took part in this mission, no Polish soldier was killed.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission

Two months after the start of Operation Enduring Freedom, i.e. on 20 December 2001, the UN, on the basis of the

Security Council Resolution 1386¹², deployed further troops to the Afghan region. ISAF's main tasks were to support the Afghan government and ensure the security of the civilian population. The mission was carried out in parallel with OEF. The main objectives of the mission included: training, overseeing government structures and security forces, providing support in rebuilding civilian infrastructure, and humanitarian assistance¹³. The ISAF mission was to be completely distinct from the offensive-oriented counter-terrorism OEF. The main thrust was peaceful as well as defensive operations.

During the initial phase of the implementation of military operations in Afghanistan, ISAF forces were directly under the OEF operation. 11 August 2003. The UN officially handed over command of the ISAF mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. In connection with the assumption of command of the mission, NATO prepared a strategy of action consisting of five main stages¹⁴.

10 K. Kwapisz, *Wkład PKW w kształtowanie bezpieczeństwa w Afganistanie w latach 2001–2010*, „Obronność. Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Zarządzania i Dowodzenia Akademii Sztuki Wojennej” 2014, 1(9), p. 104.

11 J. Rybak, *Grom.Pl. Tajne operacje w Afganistanie, Zatoce Perskiej i Iraku*, Warszawa 2005, p. 97.

12 A. Sokołowski, *Niemcy w operacji antyterrorystycznej „Enduring Freedom” oraz misji ISAF w Afganistanie (2002–2007)*, „Rocznik Bezpieczeństwa Międzynarodowego” 2007, t. 2, p. 90.

13 M. Banasik, *Uwarunkowania misji w Afganistanie*, „Bellona” 2008, nr 1, p. 119.

14 Vide: C. Podlasiński, *Wpływ struktury organizacyjnej Polskich Sił Zadaniowych na realizację zadań niemilitarnych w strefie odpowiedzialności w ramach misji ISAF*, rozprawa doktorska, Akademia Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 2013.

Table 1. ISAF strategy

Lp.	Stages	Main milestones of the ISAF strategy
1	Stage 1	Analysis of the area and preparation for the deployment of NATO forces in and around Kabul.
2	Stage 2	Expanding the territory of operations.
3	Stage 3	Stabilisation (training, support, supervision).
4	Stage 4	Gradual ceding of tasks to local security forces.
5	Stage 5	Gradual withdrawal of forces.

Source: own compilation based on G. Piątkiewicz, *Inkluzja społecznozawodowa żołnierzy International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) w Afganistanie*, Kraków 2021, p. 53.

Under the current UN Security Council Resolution 1510 of 13 October 2003¹⁵. ISAF was obliged to gradually and systematically increase its territorial responsibility in Afghanistan. By the end of 2003, ISAF forces were in control of the northern part of Afghanistan, control of the western part of Afghanistan was gained in 2005, and responsibility for the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan was acquired in early 2006. At the end of 2006, the OEF Coalition Troops Command was dismantled. As a result of the changes, ISAF took responsibility for all ongoing military activities, and soldiers carrying out tasks under OEF transferred to its jurisdiction¹⁶.

One of the main fundamental objectives of the ISAF military mission was for the troops to try to win over the local populations trust. In order to achieve this goal, NATO began to introduce a variety of programmes aimed

at improving their quality of life. These programmes include: a programme to improve the economic situation of the locals; educating and showing how important the role of the state is in a citizen's life; providing humanitarian aid; increasing the security of the locals; and educating and training Afghan soldiers and police officers.

The aforementioned programmes were implemented through: strengthening the role of the government; strengthening the borders of the state; assisting government institutions; reducing local conflicts conducting preventive activities with the Afghan military and police, with particular emphasis on combating corruption and drug abuse. The main objective of the above-mentioned projects was to strive for the Afghan Security Forces to take over responsibility for state security. It was very difficult to achieve this goal due to the fact that

15 *Stopniowe zwiększanie odpowiedzialności terytorialnej w Afganistanie. Na podstawie Rezolucji RB ONZ nr 1510 z 13.10.2003* <https://isaf.wp.mil.pl/pl/15.html> [dostęp: 24.11.2023].

16 M.L. Everett, *Merging the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): A Strategic Imperative*, Pennsylvania 2006, p. 13.

the following armed organisations were vying for power over Afghanistan:

- Pashtun troops, Uzbek troops and Hazara troops;
- Masud's troops;
- Talibans¹⁷.

Each of the organisations featured was well armed and trained. A significant contribution to the Pashtuns being well armed came from the United States, due to the fact that it had supported the Mujahideen during the war against the Soviets¹⁸. The Taliban, on the other hand, were systematically rearmed by Pakistan¹⁹, which in turn received arms and money from the United States.

From the very beginning, the ISAF mission faced serious difficulties. Firstly, the ISAF countries did not show commitment to take responsibility for the command of the contingents sent to the mission area (this was due to the multinational contingents and the responsibility for the tasks carried out). Secondly, global politicians as well as the general public had negative attitudes towards the ISAF missions²⁰. The negative attitude was mainly due to the high self-inflicted losses in the form of killed and wounded soldiers, the high financial outlay, and the disruption through national and task constraints of the mission's mandated tasks. The national, task constraints and losses of soldiers

and civilians that occurred are detailed below:

- national restrictions: Rules Of Engagment – ROE (rules for the use of force): in most situations were not adapted to the prevailing realities in Afghanistan. Soldiers and their commanders were afraid to use weapons because weapons could only be used for self-defence. The use of weapons in other situations could have resulted in soldiers being court-martialed (which also happened in many cases);
- Task constraints: inability to use contingents in the most dangerous areas. ISAF wanted to minimise its own losses at all costs, through this approach, despite total control of Afghanistan, there were places in which ISAF soldiers did not appear. This approach had a negative impact on the morale of the local population and the terrorists' sense of impunity;
- losses among civilians and coalition troops: This was the main topic of international discussion by almost all governments, media and communities from around the world²¹.

The ISAF mission has been continuously carrying out tasks in Afghanistan for 13 years. The highest price was paid by the soldiers who died there, 44 Polish soldiers and 1 civilian employee, while as far as the American troops were

17 M. Pawlak, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe – dokąd prowadzi nas mapa drogowa Afganistanu*, p. 3, https://www.academia.edu/7160695/Artykul_Bezpieczenstwo_miedzynarodowe_doka_prowadzi_nas_maapa_drogowa_Afganistanun_15_05_2011_Artykul [dostęp: 24.11.2023].

18 Ł. Jureńczyk, *Reakcja administracji Jimmy'ego Cartera na komunistyczny przewrót i wkroczenie wojsk sowieckich do Afganistanu*, „Dzieje Najnowsze” 2015, nr 3, p. 160.

19 M. Pawlak, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe...*, p. 3.

20 Ł. Jureńczyk, *Polska misja...*, p. 77–78.

21 M. Lasoń, *Stanowisko wybranych partii politycznych w sprawie udziału Wojska Polskiego w operacji ISAF w Afganistanie*, <https://repozytorium.ka.edu.pl/handle/11315/23308> [dostęp: 24.11.2023].

concerned, 2455 soldiers gave their lives²². ISAF forces made a lot of mistakes, but there were also successes.

One of the biggest mistakes of the mission was the too slow subordination of the entire Afghan territory to ISAF²³. This resulted in the fact that the Afghan Security Forces could not be properly supported by ISAF soldiers. In addition, no provision was made for the fact that many terrorists were deliberately recruited into the Afghan police and military structures and 'executed' the soldiers conducting the training. The language and cultural barrier should also be noted. ISAF was supposed to support the local population, but often found it difficult to communicate properly verbally and non-verbally. This was caused by soldiers' lack of skilful behaviour in a Muslim environment and poor communication with elders (hired Afghan interpreters often deceived ISAF soldiers when interpreting meetings).

The successes of the ISAF mission, on the other hand, include the dynamic development of the Afghan Security Forces. Thanks to the enormous commitment of ISAF, the Afghan army and police rapidly increased their numbers. The increase in the number of Afghan police officers and soldiers was ultimately to allow them to take independent control of the entire Afghan state. ISAF forces also conducted training in specially prepared centres/schools, most of which

were located on military bases. The training provided included instruction in reading, writing, criminal law, the Afghan Constitution, drill and shooting²⁴. In addition, ISAF soldiers carried out thousands of operational tasks, consisting mainly of providing security to the Afghan community, supporting the police and military, and dismantling illegal arms and ammunition depots. During the mission, hundreds of thousands of IEDs (Improvised Explosive Device) were located and destroyed.

The final major challenge of the ISAF mission was its completion. The realisation of this task was undertaken by US General John R. Allen. He commanded ISAF forces from 18.07.2011 to 10.02.2013. In 2011, he initiated the 'Process o transition' (gradual transfer of responsibility to Afghan forces)²⁵. The process was divided into three basic stages:

1. By the end of 2012, the ISAF mission is responsible for providing security in Afghanistan while enhancing the security commitment of the Afghan government.
2. The Afghan State Security Forces will take over responsibility for state security by the end of 2013.
3. Since the beginning of 2014, ISAF troops have only supervised the training of the Afghan Security Forces.

With NATO achieving all its stated objectives, the decision was taken to

22 <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/pl/articles/2023/06/20/zaangazowanie-nato-w-afganistanie-lata-2003-2021-z-punktu-widzenia-planisty/index.html> [dostęp: 01.10.2023r.].

23 G. Piątkiewicz, *Inkluzja Społecznozawodowa żołnierzy International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) w Afganistanie*, Kraków 2021, p. 56.

24 J. Matuszak, P. Przeździecki, *10 lat Wojska Polskiego...*, p. 83.

25 *Zapoczątkowanie „proces transition”* https://isaf.wp.mil.pl/pl/1_1815.html [dostęp: 24.11.2023].

officially end the ISAF mission, which took place on 28 December 2014 in Kabul.

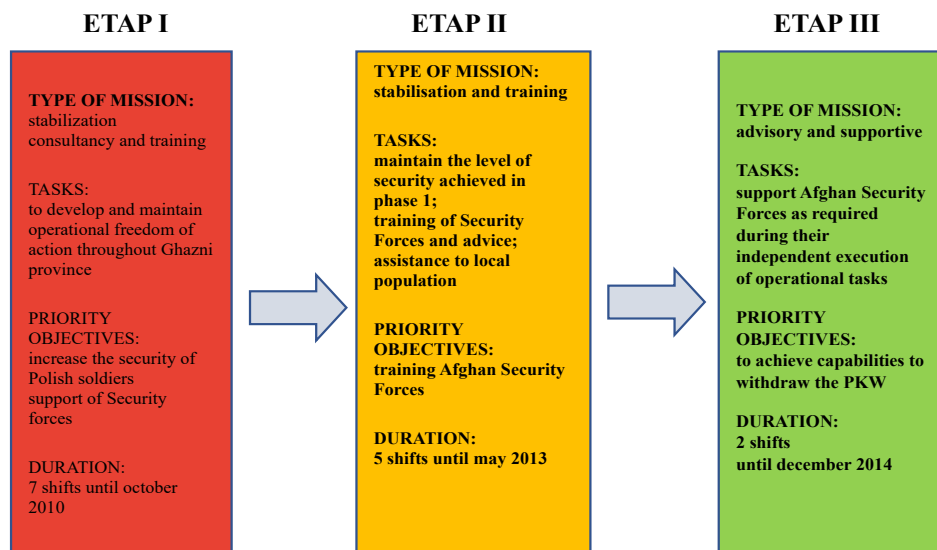
Evolution of the Polish Military Contingent International Security Assistance in Afghanistan

The Polish Military Contingent ISAF (PKW ISAF) in Afghanistan was in some ways a rarity. On the scale of the entire Polish Army to this day, no other foreign military contingent has involved such a large amount of forces and resources, and has not carried out so many tasks, under such difficult combat conditions. The formation of PKW ISAF

was mainly based on the reformation of PKW OEF in Afghanistan. Taking such a decision created the right conditions for a smooth transition to the execution of tasks in a mission of a different nature, but in the same area.

By virtue of an order signed by the President of the Republic of Poland on 22 November 2006 amending the order extending the period of the Polish Military Contingent's deployment in the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the ISAF PKW began its operations in April 2007. Polish soldiers performed tasks under the ISAF mission on the basis of the "*Strategy of Polish involvement in Afghanistan*".

Diagram 1. Poland's engagement strategy in Afghanistan



Source: G. Piątkiewicz, *Inkluzja społecznozawodowa...*, p. 58.

The three-phase strategy outlined was built on NATO guidelines, which directed all troops in the international

coalition to carry out tasks based on the NATO prepared ISAF mission concept²⁶.

26 M. Pytel, B. Pytel, *Bezpieczeństwo w Afganistanie*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Oficerskiej Wojsk Lądowych” 2013, nr 3, p. 22.

The largest Polish Military Contingent was commanded by many excellent commanders, including former Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army General Rajmund Andrzejczak. For

the purpose of this article, a table has been prepared below showing all the commanders and the most important tasks of each shift of the Polish Military Contingent ISAF in Afghanistan.

Table 2. Evolution of ISAF's PKW in Afghanistan

№ change	Duration	Commander
I	as of 30.04.2007 until 31.10.2007	Brig-Gen Marek Tomaszycski
<p>PKW size of 1200 troops. Location, military bases in Bagram, Sharana, Waza Khawa and Ghazni. Main task of the shift: to create the best possible conditions for the proper functioning of the civilian population in the area of Paktika and Ghazni provinces. The objective was achieved largely through joint patrol duty with ANSF (Afghan National Security Forces) troops.</p>		
II	as of 31.10.2007 until 15.05.2008	Brig-Gen Jerzy Biziewski
<p>PKW size of 1200 troops. Main location, military bases in Bagram, Sharana, Waza Khawa and Ghazni. In addition, a small number of soldiers were directed to bases in Gardez, Kabul, Mazar-i Sharif and Kandahar. Main task of the shift: continuing to carry out tasks in conjunction with the ANSF to improve the security of the Paktika and Ghazni area. Additional tasks: training of ANA (Afghan National Army) and ANP (Afghan National Police) troops, as well as deepening and strengthening contacts with the local population and authorities.</p>		
III	as of 15.05.2008 until 30.10.2008	Brig-Gen Grzegorz Buszka
<p>PKW size of 1200 troops. Location, military bases in Bagram, Four Corners, Ghazni, Giro, Kabul, Qarabagh, Warrior, Waza Khawa. Main tasks: preparations for linking up scattered elements of the PKW in Afghanistan, with a view to deploying them in Ghazni province; preparing to gain responsibility for the entire Ghazni province. This was a major undertaking due to the fact that the very difficult area of the province for combat operations was 23,378 km², with 1,080,000 people living in the 19 districts of Ghazni. The aforementioned tasks forced a number of structural adjustments in the contingent.</p> <p>Among the most important were: the creation of a battle group stationed at the Ghazni base, the creation of an engineering company stationed at the Bagram base, the creation of a Special Forces Grouping stationed in Kandahar province, the assignment of some officer cadres to the commands and provincial reconstruction teams in various districts, as well as the retrofitting of the contingent with KTO Rosomak combat vehicles.</p>		

Nº change	Duration	Commander
IV	as of 30.10.2008 until 29.04.2009	Colonel Rajmund Andrzejczak
<p>PKW size of 1600 soldiers. Main location Ghazni. On 30.10.2008, the PKW was given full responsibility for the Ghazni province. The largest Polish base was named after Jacek Winkler (Polish mountaineer, opposition activist, partisan during the Afghan-Soviet war, photographer and journalist). Main tasks: providing security and support to the civilian population; cooperation with the Afghan National Army and police; training of the Afghan army and police (POMLT, OMLT teams implemented); assistance in the reconstruction of the country's infrastructure; reconstruction and demining of the areas around the Ghazni base; patrolling the main road (Highway One), located in the area of PKW responsibility on the Kabul-Kandahar route.</p>		
V	from 29.04.2009 to 26.10.2009	Colonel Rajmund Andrzejczak
<p>PKW 2000 troops. Priority tasks: ensuring calm during the presidential elections, scheduled for August 2009; increasing the number of operations, in view of the planned presidential elections (which were to be disrupted by rebel troops); infiltration of militants from the side of the Pakistani border, which could significantly affect the security of the local population; taking over responsibility for the operation of Kabul International Airport.</p>		
VI	from 26.10.2009 to 20.04.2010	Brig. Gen. Janusz Bronowicz
<p>PKW 2200 troops. Priority task: continuing the direction previously set to support and enhance the security of the local population. Task implemented through frequent patrolling of districts and engaging in dialogue with elders.</p>		
VII	as of 27.04.2010 until 28.10.2010	Brig-Gen Andrzej Przekwas
<p>PKW 2600 soldiers. Main tasks: to increase the security of the parliamentary elections being held in Ghazni; to intensify the training of Afghan soldiers and police officers. Training was carried out by specialised mentoring and liaison teams: the OMLT (Operational Mentoring Liason Team) dealt with the training of the army, while the POMLT (Police Operational Mentoring Liason Team) trained the police. The training of Afghan soldiers was handled by the ground troops, while the police were the responsibility of the Military Police.</p>		
VIII	28.10.2010 to 20.04.2011	Brig. Gen. Andrzej Reudowicz
<p>PKW size 2600 soldiers. Main tasks: operational tasks, mainly focused on the security of the people throughout Ghazni province; opening of the TSS (Troop Sustainment Site) police training centre at FOB Ghazni. The TSS trained Afghan police officers in literacy, law, Afghan constitution, drill and shooting.</p> <p>The 8th Shift was awarded the title of 'Leading Troop of the Polish Army' by the Minister of Defence for the first time ever.</p>		

№ change	Duration	Commander
IX	as of 20.04.2011 until 26.10.2011	Brig-Gen Sławomir Wojciechowski
<p>PKW 2600 soldiers. Main tasks: ensuring the security of the local population; training the Afghan Security Forces, with whom the Polish soldiers actively participated in military operations; harmonising the Polish soldiers with the assigned US military soldiers, 1400 in number, and civilians, 700 in number. The correct harmonisation of all elements of the contingent was a key challenge for the command.</p> <p>Skilful management resulted in a high efficiency of the tasks carried out. Soldiers carried out 14k combat tasks, conducted regardless of the time of day. Approximately 60 caches for warfare agents and 200 IED improvised explosive devices were dismantled.</p> <p>The Ninth Shift was another shift awarded the title of ‚Leading Troop of the Polish Army‘.</p>		
X	as of 26.10.2011 until 18.04.2012	Brig. Gen. Piotr Blazeusz
<p>PKW size of 2,500 troops. Main tasks: continuation of tasks enhancing the security of civilians; ANSF training; gradual coercion of Afghan Security Forces to take over responsibility for Ghazni province. During this shift, Polish soldiers were withdrawn from bases: Warrior, Ariana and Giro. They were then deployed to the Ghazni area.</p>		
XI	as of 18.04.2012 until 24.10.2012	Brig-Gen Bogdan Tworkowski
<p>PKW size of 2,500 troops. Main tasks: handover of 8 districts under PKW to US troops; ensuring security of civilians; ANSF training; gradual preparation of Afghan Security Forces to take over responsibility for Ghazni province; involvement in reconstruction of Afghan Security Forces infrastructure.</p>		
XII	as of 24.10.2012 until 08.05.2013	Brig-Gen Andrzej Tuz
<p>PKW size 1,800 troops. Main tasks: to accelerate the reconstruction of the Afghan Security Forces; to prepare the Afghan Security Forces to take over responsibility for the northern part of Ghazni province; to carry out operational tasks together with the Afghan police and army; to hand over the Polish bases of Vulcan and Waghez to the Afghan army.</p>		

Nº change	Duration	Commander
XIII	as of 08.05.2013 until 26.11.2013	Brigadier-General Marek Sokolowski
<p>PKW size 1,600 soldiers. Main tasks: patrolling, inspecting, demining and securing the main road running through Ghazni province (Highway One). The road was of strategic importance for the retreating ISAF troops. During this shift, PKW soldiers were stationed in Ghazni and Bagram. On 28.08.2013 at 15.45, an attack took place on a Polish base in Ghazni. The attack resulted in the death of 1 American soldier, while 10 Polish soldiers were wounded. An unknown rebel group was responsible for the attack, all its members were killed.</p> <p>The 13th shift was the third shift in the history of the Polish Army to be awarded the title of "Leading Troop of the Polish Army".</p>		
XIV	as of 26.11.2013 until 05.06.2014	Brig. Gen. Cezary Podlasiński
<p>PKW size 1000 soldiers. Main tasks: handover of responsibility for Ghazni province to Afghan Security Forces (09.05.2014); support of ANSF operations and movement of soldiers and equipment to Bagram base.</p>		
XV	as of 05.06.2014 until 04.12.2014	Colonel Adam Słodczyk
<p>PKW 500 soldiers. Main tasks: strengthening the Bagram Security Zone security system; safe withdrawal of forces and resources from the territory of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; securing the closure of the Polish Embassy in Kabul.</p> <p>Location: at this point Polish soldiers were only stationed at Bagram base.</p>		
The official end of the PKW ISAF mission took place on 04.12.2014 in Bagram.		

Source: own elaboration based on: G. Piątkiewicz, *Inkluzja społecznozawodowa...*, pp. 58–64.

The presented comprehensive course of the Polish mission shows the enormity of the tasks faced by Polish commanders and soldiers. Entrusting the Polish Armed Forces with the Ghazni province under their jurisdiction was confirmation of how much respect and recognition the Polish soldiers earned in

the eyes of the entire NATO. The NATO areas of responsibility are shown below and the Ghazni province for which the Polish Army was responsible is highlighted. In addition, the military bases where Polish soldiers were stationed are marked.

Figure 1. The ISAF PAC area of responsibility

Source: Own compilation based on: G. Piątkiewicz, *Inkluzja społecznozawodowa...*, p. 60.

Summary

7 years of the ISAF military mission contributed to the fact that Polish soldiers took part in 494 operations and conducted 21,754 combat patrols. During this time, more than 27,000 Polish soldiers served on Afghan soil²⁷. Unfortunately, some of them remained there forever, as 43 soldiers and 1 civilian employee of the army lost their lives in the ISAF mission, while 361 soldiers were wounded²⁸. Polish soldiers took part in 99 infrastructure projects, 50 training projects, 45 procurement projects (projects included: construction of roads (40 km), water supply (25 km), bridges (5), schools, kindergartens and orphanages (19), hydroelectric power plants (3), dams (4), sewage treatment plants, landfills, wells (30), medical waste incineration plants (10), renovation of hospitals (4),

expansion of the power grid of Ghazni city, modernisation of bazaars (4), development of green areas and service and technical areas (9), training of 4 thousand people in administration, judiciary, education and vocational activation, and equipping 130 public facilities). A crisis management centre was established in Ghazni city with the main task of collecting data on possible terrorist threats. A voice messaging system was set up to quickly notify residents of threats such as fire, flood and windstorms²⁹. The Ministry of Defence donated 137 tonnes of various types of material resources (accommodation, medical, food, uniform equipment, etc.) to the Afghans. Polish soldiers also provided medical assistance to thousands of Afghan citizens.

Another important task was to train and prepare Afghan soldiers and police officers for their statutory tasks.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 263.

²⁸ *Misja ISAF przeszła dziś do historii*, <http://polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/14612?t=Misja-ISAF-przeszla-dzis-do-historii> [dostęp: 30.11.2023].

²⁹ *Ghazni będzie bezpieczniejsze*, <http://www.polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/8093?t=Ghazni-bedzie-bezpieczniejsze> [dostęp: 01.12.2023].

During the ISAF mission, Polish soldiers trained under the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT), Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (POMLT) and Transitional Support Strategy (TSS) 9k Afghan soldiers and police officers³⁰. The Poles were highly appreciated by both the Afghan Security Forces and NATO. This was confirmed when the NATO Commander-in-Chief awarded the 3rd Brigade of the Afghan National Army (ANA) stationed in Ghazni as the best-trained unit in Afghanistan (2013). In addition, police officers from Ghazni province, compared to police officers from other provinces, had the highest level of effectiveness in 2013 in combating crime. Taking into account the overall functioning of the ISAF PKW, it must be concluded that its actions have had a measurable impact on the security and improved living conditions of the people of Ghazni province³¹.

The ISAF mission officially ended on 04 December 2014. It was seven long, exhausting and intense years of carrying out extremely difficult tasks. During this time, the Polish Armed Forces have undergone an unprecedented evolution, both in terms of organisation, training and equipment of soldiers.

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³⁰ Ł. Jureńczyk, *Polska misja...*, p. 280.

³¹ *Realizacja programu odbudowy prowincji Ghazni*, https://isaf.wp.mil.pl/pl/1_2486.html [dostęp: 30.11.2023].

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About the Authors

Grzegorz Piątkiewicz, graduate of the Academy of Land Forces named after Gen. Tadeusz Kosciuszko, the Academy of Philosophy and Pedagogy in Cracow and the Higher School of Security in Poznan. He received his doctoral degree in social sciences at the University of the Commission of National Education in Cracow, at the department of pedagogy and psychology. He directs his research interests around national security, military missions, military police, human resource management, and combat stress. He has been continuously involved with the Military Police since April 2001. He has gained professional experience in the positions of platoon commander, company commander, head of the Department. Currently, he is serving in the position of Commander of the Military Police Outpost in Gliwice.

Robert Socha, Professor at the WSB University. His research interests focus, e.g. on the issues of states of emergency and local security, with particular emphasis on the cooperation of authorities responsible for the security of local communities.