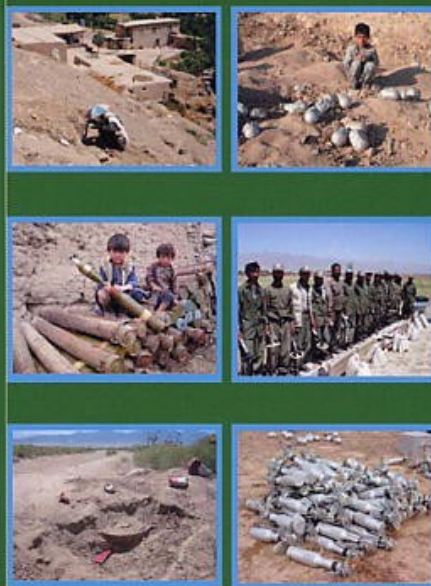




Mineclearance in Afghanistan

2006 Annual Report



HALO IS A CHARITY SPECIALISING IN THE REMOVAL OF THE DEBRIS OF WAR



'Getting mines out of the ground, NOW!'

2006 Review: Despite the declining security environment in Afghanistan, HALO's two Afghan projects, humanitarian mineclearance and Weapons & Ammunition Disposal (WAD), continued throughout 2006 without any disruption to operations. Suicide attacks may have increased across the country from 27 in 2005 to 139 in 2006, roadside bomb attacks up from 783 to 1,667 and other attacks involving small arms and other weapons up from 1,558 to 4,452; however, HALO's long-standing, multi-ethnic local workforce has ensured that HALO has had freedom to operate unhindered across the country.

Since the demise of the Taliban over 3.7 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan, primarily from Pakistan and Iran. From this figure of 3.7 million, some 2.3 million refugees have returned to the two regions, Centre and North, where HALO bases its humanitarian mineclearance operations. Despite this massive influx of Afghans returning home the accident rates have actually dropped by 70% in the Centre and North regions, thereby reinforcing HALO's view that it is correctly prioritising clearance efforts in its area of operations.

The success of HALO's humanitarian programme in Afghanistan can be highlighted on four fronts:

- 1) Clearing high priority mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contaminated land;
- 2) Reducing the number of mine victims;
- 3) Destroying ammunition that could fall into the hands of anti-government elements; and
- 4) Assisting the Government of Afghanistan in meeting its Millennium Development Goals.

With 2,400 local staff HALO continues to be not only the largest but also the most productive and cost-efficient mineclearance capacity in Afghanistan. According to the Landmine Monitor 2006 Report, during 2005 HALO, with 2,210 national staff and 14.5% of the total Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) budget, cleared 64.9% of the total area cleared by all the MAPA implementing partners.

HALO HUMANITARIAN MINECLEARANCE CLEARANCE STATISTICS 1990 – 2006						
DEVICES DESTROYED				AREA CLEARED m ²		
Anti-Personnel Mines	Anti-Tank Mines	Unexploded Ordnance	Abandoned Ordnance	Manual	Mechanical	Battle Area Clearance
90,779	4,570	824,787	1,268,991	28,965,963	4,554,119	554,006,474



HALO WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION DISPOSAL (WAD) PROJECT STATISTICS SEPT 2003 – 2006					
STOCKPILED MINES & AMMUNITION DESTROYED				OTHER	
Anti-Personnel Mines	Anti-Tank Mines	Ammunition ≥ 23mm calibre	Ammunition < 23mm calibre	SALW Weapons Destroyed	Heavy Weapons Deactivated
369,783	6,632	4,331,616	41,747,990	52,194	2,842



Manual Demining - At times both laborious and painstakingly slow, manual demining remains the mainstay of HALO's operations in Afghanistan. Working a 22-day monthly cycle from remote camps the manual deminers are able to tackle almost all types of terrain. Minefield sites are run by team leaders trained in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), mapping and reporting procedures. In 2006 the 54 manual teams, each comprising 22 demining lanes, cleared 2.9 million square metres whilst destroying 1,651 anti-personnel mines, 45 anti-tank mines and 1,047 ERW.



Mechanical Demining - HALO continues to be innovative in adapting agricultural and civil engineering plant, with armour protection, to provide mechanical mineclearance techniques. Mechanical assets are deployed onto tasks where it is not practical or efficient to deploy manual teams but also onto tasks where they can increase manual productivity through ground preparation. During 2006 the 21 mechanical teams cleared over 660,000 square metres, verified safe 797,880 square metres through rolling and disposed of 1,026 anti-personnel mines, 55 anti-tank mines and 38,698 ERW.



Survey - HALO relies upon the survey teams in order to instigate priority mineclearance operations. After the General Survey teams undertake the initial survey (recording, mapping & prioritising the suspect mined area) the Technical Survey teams determine the exact limits of the mined area by inserting breach lanes. In 2006 HALO deployed 6 General Survey teams and 13 Technical Survey teams which cleared 133,464 square metres and destroyed 247 mines and 266 ERW, and surveyed over 93.7 million square metres of suspect mine / ERW contaminated land.



Explosive Ordnance Disposal - HALO Battle Area Clearance (BAC) teams destroy UXO and conduct bulk demolitions of explosive ordnance. HALO also provides an EOD call-out service thereby responding quickly to any requests for assistance from the local population. 2006 operations were focussed on village-by-village clearance in the Shomali Valley and the systematic clearance of a number of old Soviet bases in northern Afghanistan. During 2006 HALO Afghanistan's 16 BAC teams cleared over 93.3 million square metres and destroyed 352 mines and 171,152 ERW.

Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WAD) - HALO's WAD project in Afghanistan aims to remove weapons and ammunition from uncontrolled caches spread across the entire breadth of Afghanistan. Freely accessible weapons add to the instability of the security situation and allow commanders of anti-government elements (AGEs) to act against the country's interests with impunity. Unsecured ammunition and weapons stocks allow AGEs not only to get their hands on weapons but also to use ammunition in the construction of improvised explosive devices or suicide bombs. Elsewhere ammunition is frequently tampered with, often by children, in order to sell the metal casings as scrap metal; as a result fatal accidents are common.

During 2006 the 23 WAD teams destroyed 336,769 anti-personnel mines, 2,298 anti-tank mines, 1.2 million items of ammunition with a calibre \geq 23mm, 8.2 million small arms ammunition and 30,695 small arms and light weapons.

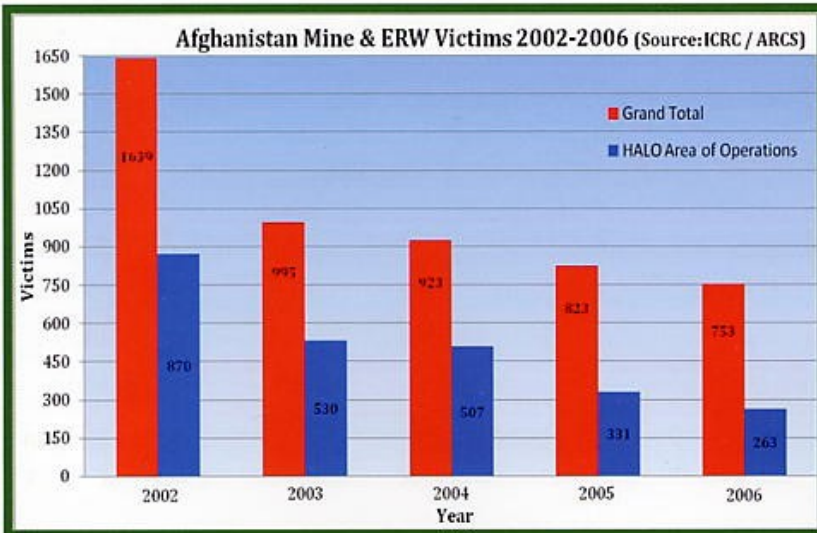
Although 2006 was extremely productive for the WAD teams, the disarmament process in Afghanistan will span many years into the future. HALO will continue to support the Government of Afghanistan's vital disarmament work for the foreseeable future.



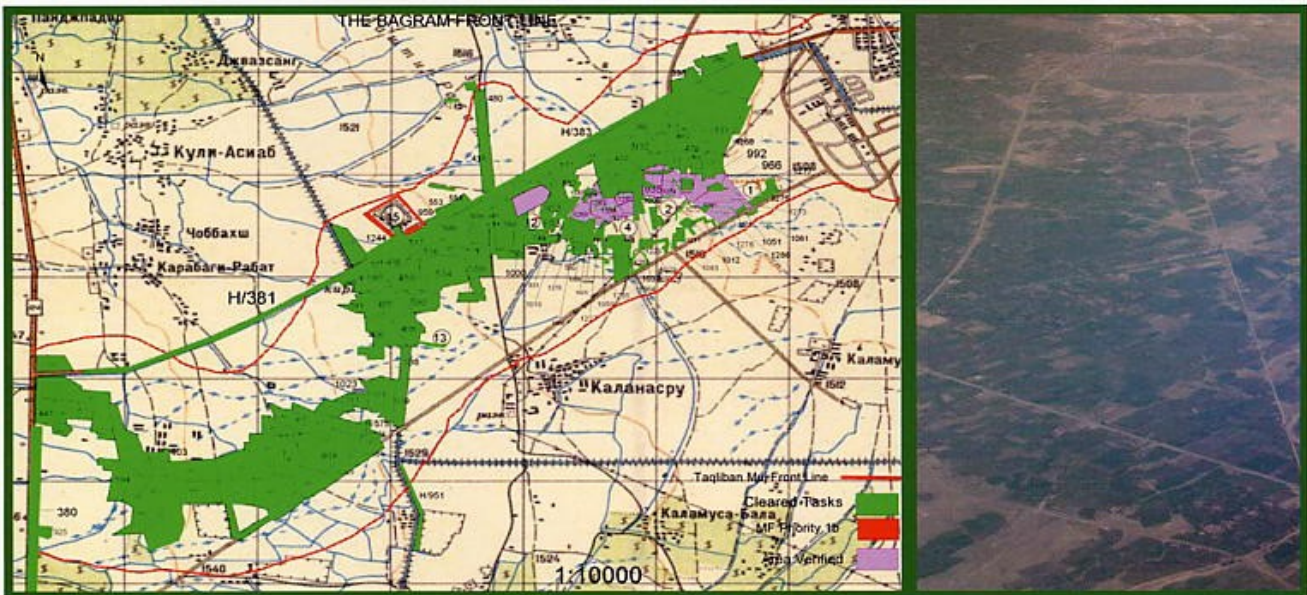
As well as the disposal of weapons and ammunition, the WAD teams deal with the destruction of large air-dropped bombs and guided missiles, cluster sub-munitions, and stockpiled anti-tank and anti-personnel mines.

Stockpile Destruction at Sheberghan Airport: Sheberghan Airport (see photos to the right), in Jawzjan Province, functioned for decades as a key ammunition stockpile, first for the Soviets, then for the Northern Alliance. After the fall of the Taliban, large stockpiles remained, including hundreds of guided missiles, thousands of aircraft bombs, and hundreds of thousands of mines and cluster bomblets. Much of this ammunition was in an unserviceable and even dangerous state after long exposure to the elements. Unfortunately in 2005 as ISAF forces were attempting to deal with the ammunition there was a tragic accidental explosion, which caused the deaths of international military experts, as well as casualties amongst the local population. In 2006, the Afghan Ministry of Defence asked The HALO Trust to take over the work of clearing the site. HALO teams deployed rapidly and made great progress over the course of the year, destroying over 300,000 PFM-1 air-deliverable anti-personnel mines, 80,000 cluster bomblets and 1,200 aircraft bombs. By the end of 2006, Sheberghan Airport was largely free of ammunition.





Mine & ERW Victim Data - The chart on the left illustrates the positive impact that humanitarian mineclearance operations are having on the number of mine and ERW victims in Afghanistan. Despite the influx of 3.7 million returning refugees accident rates have reduced across the country by 54% between 2002 and 2006. More encouragingly for HALO there has been an almost 70% drop in the number of victims in HALO's area of operations, including a 79% decline in the number of mine victims.



LIVES RETURN TO NORMAL AT BAGRAM: In December 2001, hard on the heels of the fall of the Taliban, HALO began clearing the minefields along the six-kilometre Bagram front line (see map and photo above). For four years the Northern Alliance and Taliban had been entrenched at Bagram resulting in some of the most heavily mined areas in Afghanistan, if not the world. By July 2006 these six kilometres of villages and prime agricultural land were finally cleared by HALO. Following HALO's clearance of 4.9 million square metres at Bagram, and the destruction of more than 9,140 mines and 12,180 ERW, the UNHCR has reported that 73,700 refugees have returned to Bagram District. Thanks to the generous support of HALO's various donors life at Bagram has begun to return to normal.



Despite the success at Bagram, high priority mineclearance is still required elsewhere around numerous towns and villages throughout Afghanistan to further reduce the number of innocent mine and ERW victims.



HALO would like to thank all donors who have supported our operations in Afghanistan during 2006: United States of America (Department of State), United Kingdom (Department for International Development and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office), Royal Government of Norway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Royal Netherlands Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Government of Ireland (Department of Foreign Affairs), Government of Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Government of Germany (Federal Foreign Office), Government of the Kingdom of Belgium (FPS Foreign Affairs), Czech Republic (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Association for Aid and Relief (AAR, Japan).



HALO Afghanistan's goal is to clear mines and ordnance in order to prevent casualties amongst the civilian population and to promote resettlement, reconstruction and stability by returning mine and ordnance contaminated land to productive use. HALO is directly supporting the development strategies of the Government of Afghanistan as outlined in Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals.

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HUMANITARIAN MINECLEARANCE and WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION DISPOSAL in: AFGHANISTAN, ANGOLA, CAMBODIA, ABKHAZIA / GEORGIA, KOSOVO, MOZAMBIQUE, NAGORNO KARABAKH, SOMALILAND and SRI LANKA.