

Engineering Freedom

MAY/JUNE 2011

Serving the Afghanistan Engineer District-South



Aerial surveillance takes wing with Corps project



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Afghanistan Engineer District - South

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Engineering Freedom is the field magazine of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South (AED-South) and is an unofficial publication authorized by AR 360-1. It is produced bi-monthly for distribution by the Public Affairs Office, AED-South. It is produced in the Afghanistan theater of operations.

Views and opinions expressed in the Engineering Freedom are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Articles or photographic submissions are welcome and should arrive in PAO by the 15th of each month preceding publication. They can be mailed to the below address or they can be e-mailed. If electronically submitted, all stories should be in Word document format. All photographs should be high resolution (at least 5x7 inches and 300 dpi), include photo caption information, and be submitted as separate .jpg or .tif image files.

All photographs appearing herein are by the AED-South Public Affairs Office unless otherwise accredited.

The mission of Engineering Freedom is to support the Commander's internal communication program for AED-South. It also serves as the Commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies, operations, technical developments and command philosophy to AED-South team members.

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Engineering Freedom
is available online at
www.aed.usace.army.mil/AES

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On the cover ...

To meet additional ISR requirements in Afghanistan, phase two of the U.S. Air Force's ISR ramp project began turning dirt March 2011 at Kandahar Airfield. See story about phase one on page 12. (Photo by Brenda L. Beasley)



Commander's message...

This is my final column for Engineering Freedom as commander of this District and Task Force Breshna Barq. I cannot believe how quickly my year has passed. It is always difficult to relinquish command before the mission is complete, but I know you will be in good hands under the leadership of Air Force Col. Benjamin Wham II.

As I reflect on this last year, it is amazing to see all this team has accomplished. It seems like only yesterday that we discussed how we were going to get a multibillion dollar program done in fiscal year 2011. We knew that accomplishing this work by the end of the fiscal year was overwhelming; we had to approach it systematically by creating a monthly schedule that we managed with the same intensity that accompanies activities at the end of the fiscal year. Each month this team has persevered to meet its milestones and "eat another bite of the elephant." And we have done all this with a fraction of the people needed to get the job done. You should all be proud of yourselves, as Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp (former Chief of Engineers) recently said, for being the most productive district per capita in the Corps of Engineers.

This description is significant and a matter of pride as we review what this team accomplished in the last 12 months. We have awarded 87 projects valued at more than \$847.9 million for the U.S. military construction (MILCON), Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and Water and Infrastructure programs. In the same period, we placed more than \$426.5 million in construction. This is no small feat in this kinetic contingency arena. The team has overcome many challenges with regard to contractor security, delivery of materials and contractor capacity. Your tenacious efforts helped the contractor work through these issues, and when warranted we terminated and re-solicited contracts as quickly as we could.

Your accomplishments are many:

Some of the finest efforts came in the ANSF program where we built multiple provincial and district police facilities, regional Ministry of Interior

administration buildings, national training facilities, numerous Afghan National Army (ANA) kandaks (battalion-size facilities), and the Joint Regional Afghan Security Force Compound.

Our MILCON program was highlighted by the command and control facility, the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance and Close Air Support ramps, Mustang rotary ramp, Tarin Kowt runway and aprons, and many more equally strategic projects.

Our Water and Infrastructure team also compiled a hefty list of completions to include construction of two 10-megawatt power plants; completion of Kandahar City water master planning, well drilling, watershed studies, key roads like Spin Boldak and the border crossings, and counternarcotics facilities; materials and supplies for Herat and Kandahar universities; and efforts to move and/or get projects started at Kajaki and Dahla dams.

We did all of this and more as we built the infrastructure of the AED-South organization and brought in more teammates to help carry the workload. Thanks to the team's efforts for tenacity and patience as we built our new facilities on Kandahar Airfield and at the area and resident offices. We have improved our foxhole every day.

I also take great pride in this team for coming together to free ourselves from the bonds of employee turnover and for maintaining District stability in this environment by developing continuity books and capturing our quality management processes. We never used rest and recuperation or the absence of individuals as an excuse for not accomplishing the mission. That says a lot about your character and commitment.

Every member of this team, past and present, has contributed to this success. I want to thank each and every one of you:



Photo by Karla K. Marshall

our Civilians, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. And a special thanks as well to our Afghan associates, Global and ITT contractor teams, our construction contractors and our battlespace command teams for your partnership and support. And as I say, each has earned his or her stock in this organization. Each of your individual stocks has gone up in value, showing folks outside this organization what you are truly capable of. They will appreciate your value to their teams in the future because of what you have accomplished in this austere environment.

I hope you all have enjoyed your tenure with AED-South and that you will take many great memories when you depart. I have enjoyed each day of this incredible journey. I have been rewarded with a great sense of accomplishment and feel blessed to have contributed to a great mission for our Nation. I am also extremely proud and thankful for all the awesome friendships I have developed with you. Thanks for all the challenges, solutions, laughs, cookies, donuts, diet soda and stories we shared.

As I depart to serve on the Joint Staff at the Pentagon, I ask that you continue to accomplish our mission and make AED-South the best district in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The greatest compliment you can provide a commander is to "not lose a beat" in the transition and to continue to work at our level of excellence. Thanks for volunteering! 

Command Sergeant Major's message ...

My tour of duty here is ending; it is amazing how quickly 12 months can go by.

When I arrived on Kandahar Airfield to serve as the Command Sergeant Major for the Afghanistan Engineer District – South, this compound had five buildings, the flag stand, numerous tents and a building in the process of being removed. Now we have nine buildings and Graneyville and have increased the population on the compound and in the District by more than 100 people. Concurrently, we increased the quality of life across the District with exercise equipment, the availability of Armed Forces Network, and additional communications capability. The remaining tents on the AED-South compound are scheduled to be torn down, along with the final building (J3/Operations) as soon as its new location is ready. Across the rest of the South, expansions are continuing, with construction at every area office and at many of the resident offices.

The MRAP (mine resistant ambush protected) teams are maturing and the expansion of those assets to Helmand and Herat are well underway as well. The professionalism of these teams enables all of us to do our jobs, along with the rest of the security personnel who support our missions.

With the buildup of the facilities comes the buildup of personnel. The District has grown from a total number of 324 to more than 425 with the expectation of another 30 over the next few months.

The buildup of people is necessary to manage a program that has doubled in the last year to approximately \$3 billion of ongoing construction and new awards. To manage this feat, AED-South has instituted a quality management system that includes a continuity program, process improvement standard operating procedures, and a customer satisfaction survey that has increased productivity exponentially. This is possible because of the caliber of Servicemembers and Civilians serving in our District. For the most part, everyone here exhibits high

professional standards.

Serving here has been an opportunity of a lifetime. I've had the honor to be a part of a great organization that is changing the lives of so many Afghan citizens and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a whole. AED-South is part of a program of construction and infrastructure improvements

that is unparalleled. Our work is setting the stage for development and commerce, security and governance for generations to come.

Goodbye is never easy, especially when you grow close to so many people. Thanks to those who did the right thing and complied with the rules and policies in this contingency environment. Remember that command sergeant majors don't make the rules and policies; we are appointed to enforce them. Please keep this in mind and help ease the transition for my replacement; Command Sergeant Major Lorne Quebodeaux will arrive in June. He comes from Louisiana where he worked as the Command Sergeant Major for the Corps of Engineers Emergency Response Team. Please give him the respect and cooperation that you have given me. He has the task of taking what we have now and making it even better for AED-South Service members and Civilians.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank the leadership team here for their support: Col. Anthony Funkhouser, Lt. Col. Martha Kiene, Mike Scarano and John Adams.

I want to extend my personal thanks to every Service member and Civilian who has been a part of AED-South across the entire South of Afghanistan and for the entire 12 months that I have been here. This has truly been the experience of my lifetime. Continue to build Afghanistan and make a better world for the people here. I will cherish my experience here for the rest of my days. Please continue to better your foxhole every day. 

Command Sergeant Major Rickie E. Virgil will return to Frederick, Colorado, near Denver, upon his departure from Afghanistan.

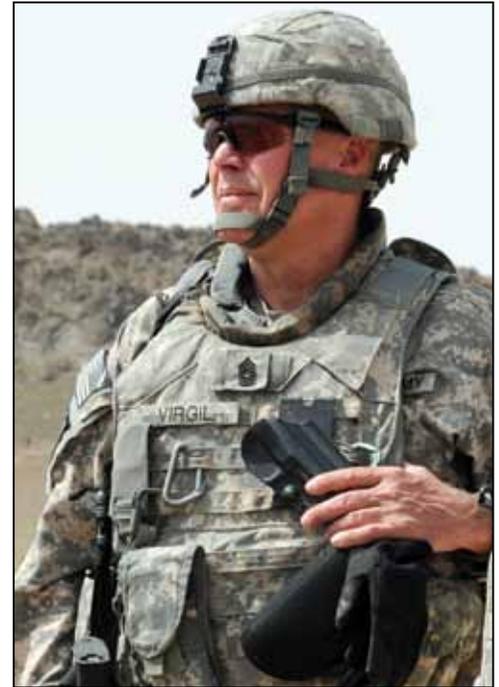


Photo by Joan F. Kibler



Courtesy Photo

Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser and Command Sergeant Major Rickie E. Virgil give thumbs up for the strong support they have received.

TAD realigns Afghanistan operations by Paul Giblin, AED-North

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is realigning its overseas operations this summer to reflect the shifting workloads in Afghanistan, Iraq and throughout the Middle East and Central Asia.

An important feature of the new configuration is that it will provide Corps of Engineers commanders in Afghanistan a more direct chain of communication to Corps of Engineers leaders in Washington, D.C., said Maj. Gen. Kendall Cox, a key figure in the reorganization.

According to the new plan, the Transatlantic Division, which is based in Winchester, Va., will serve as the umbrella organization for three districts that oversee operations within the region.

The trio of districts are the Afghanistan District-North, which is based in Kabul; the Afghanistan District-South, which is based in Kandahar; and the Middle East District, which is based in Winchester.

Meanwhile, the once bustling Iraq District has been downsized to an area office and will report through the Middle East District, which has oversight of area offices in 20 countries across the Middle East and Central Asia. The Transatlantic Division reports directly to Corps of Engineers headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The new arrangement mirrors the success the United States has had in assisting Iraq rebuild its government and the work ahead in Afghanistan, Cox said. The Corps of Engineers is the primary organization building military bases, police stations, roads, airstrips and other infrastructure projects in Afghanistan to increase the country's stability and economy.

Previously, the two Corps of Engineers districts in Afghanistan had an indirect reporting method that failed to keep pace with the increasing scope work, Cox said during a phone interview from his office in Virginia.

"The actual construction management and programmatic management and oversight are not really being done by anyone in theater. Hence, the two districts are having to do a lot of that by themselves by calling back to the United States," he said.

"We look forward to the establishment of the expanded TAD (Forward) in Afghanistan and the opportunities it will bring," stated Col. Anthony Funkhouser,

commander Afghanistan Engineer District-South. "We anticipate that the new command structure will expand our USACE capabilities in theater as it did in Iraq."

"The new headquarters staff can really help carry more of the load that comes with higher level planning and coordination with USFOR-A, ISAF and IJC and allow us to use our limited resources to focus on executing our huge programs. I think its win-win for everyone involved," said the colonel.

The vastly different time difference between Afghanistan and the United States frustrated even the best efforts by personnel on different sides of the globe to communicate effectively, Cox said. To strengthen the ties between the districts in Afghanistan and the division in the United States, part of the district's operation will be based in Afghanistan, the general said.

That portion will be comprised of about 20 personnel and will be called Transatlantic Division -Afghanistan. It will be housed in its own compound located adjacent to the U. S. Embassy in Kabul, though a specific location has not

"... new command structure will expand our USACE capabilities in theater ..."

yet been announced.

Division personnel will focus on tasks such as hiring, contracting and procuring technical assistance from professionals in the United States for projects in Afghanistan, which will allow district employees in theater to concentrate on primary duties to develop infrastructure, Cox said.

And with operations in both the United States and in Afghanistan, division personnel will be in business around the clock.

Cox expects to travel extensively between the division's headquarters in the United States and its area operations in Afghanistan, the Middle East and Central Asia. He envisions spending seven to 10 days a month just in Afghanistan.

His first order of business will be to tour the Corps of Engineers' project sites throughout Afghanistan. He previously served 16 months in Iraq, but he hasn't been to Afghanistan yet. (A scheduled

trip in May was cancelled.)

"If I can see and touch every single project office, every single resident office and area office, chances are, I can better understand what's happening on the ground, because I've had zero time in Afghanistan. I can learn the requirements and fundamentally what is needed. That's a critical piece – what's needed," he said.

He wants to visit both the best sites, so that he can articulate the successes to members of Congress and others back in the United States, and the most troubled sites, so that he can assist in resolving issues, he said.

He wants to take in the scenes at the headquarters operations in Kabul and Kandahar, and experience the living and working conditions at the smallest forward operating bases in the most remote mountains and deserts of Afghanistan, which is about the size of Texas.

A critical component will be meeting individual professionals from the Corps of Engineers, other U.S. government agencies and the private sector who have volunteered to work together under the Corps of Engineers' flag to rebuild the war-torn country, the general said.

"Getting out and seeing them and talking to them, I can find out what makes them tick. What's their passion? What do they need from me to help them do their jobs?" he said. "That's extremely difficult for us to do back here in Winchester."

The best measure of success for the new Transatlantic Division realignment would be the need to re-scope it again in three to four years, Cox said.

"If we are doing what we're supposed to be doing, which is providing facilities and capabilities for a better quality of life and security for the Afghan national security forces and the Afghan people, then we are working ourselves out of a job, per say, in Afghanistan. But we're doing it the right way," Cox said.

He expects, however, that the Transatlantic Division simply will morph during coming years to address the ever-changing needs in a strategic region of the world.

"The potential exists that in 2014 or 2015, our mission will be done in Afghanistan and we will close down the offices just like we're doing in Iraq," he said. "But I guarantee, if we deliver, we'll be someplace else in the world, because they need our capabilities." ■

Brothers see “small Army,” Army sees double

Story by
Brenda L. Beasley

“Soldier, stop!” The private first class exiting the elevator turned and froze as the officer’s command reverberated through the Fort Jackson hospital corridor. The officer was looking at him! His mind raced as he began frantically wondering what he had done. “Where are you from, Soldier?” demanded the officer. The private responded “Foxtrot 3-13, Sir!” The officer said, “No, where are you from?” He responded, “Maine, Sir!” The officer’s next question confirmed what was just beginning to dawn on the young private. “Do you have a twin brother?” was the next question.

The scene was different, but the scenario was all too familiar. He was once again mistaken for his brother, 1st Lt. Jonathan R. Higgins, who was actually serving in Iraq at the time. “It’s a small Army,” said Capt. Daniel L. Higgins as he laughingly recalled the moment. He politely set the record straight, but doing it immediately isn’t always easy for either one of them. “Sometimes it is hard to stop every single person who thinks I’m Dan and correct them - especially while I’m moving down the aisle at church,” chimed in Jon. “So, I wait until after the service,” he added with a grin.

These two Army reservists who are on similar yet different career paths have been experiencing a lot more of these scenarios since April 2011. When, as chance would have it, they found themselves deployed to the same location at the same time - Kandahar Airfield, Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Older by six minutes, Dan is serving a one-year deployment as the unit executive officer for the 883rd Medical Detachment (Combat Stress Control) at Role 2 - KAF’s troop medical facility. There he runs the daily operations and activities of the headquarters element of a 46-member unit that provides behavioral health services at 10 sites across the volatile southern Afghanistan area of operations. He also moves Soldiers around theater to meet the demands of the mission and assumes the role of unit commander for several days each month.

His efforts have led to creation of a successful tele-behavioral medicine program that has dramatically increased



Photo by Brenda L. Beasley

1st Lt. Jonathan R. Higgins, left, receives a visit from his twin brother, Capt. Daniel L. Higgins, at the Afghanistan Engineer District-South compound at Kandahar Airfield.

the ease of service delivery for psychiatric care across southern Afghanistan, according to his Unit Commander Lt. Col. Richard Toye. Dan has developed training materials for providers and technicians, ensured proper training of technical support staff, and integrated efforts to document service utilization to demonstrate the effectiveness of this endeavor. His liaison with other in-theater behavioral health units has led to an effective and uniform service protocol.

Meanwhile, Jon, a military intelligence officer with the 133rd Engineer Battalion in Maine is serving a one-year mobilization with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Division Intelligence Fusion Center in Winchester, Va. When the opportunity arose to help cover staff shortages for several months in the Joint Staff Intelligence section at the Afghanistan Engineer District-South headquartered at KAF, Jon jumped at the chance to support Operation Enduring Freedom and serve where his brother was serving.

“If you can turn and burn to fill the gap, it’d be a big help to us,” said AED-South Joint Staff Intelligence Chief Lt. Col. John E. Carpenter. Once given the go ahead, Jon focused on pushing the

paperwork through. He managed to arrive in Afghanistan one day before his birthday - a birth date that Jon shares with Dan with only two minutes to spare. “I was born at 11:58 p.m.,” said Jon, “I almost had a different birthday.”

Catching up to or surpassing his brother is nothing new to Jon. A healthy, competitive spirit has always existed between them. “We’ve always been very competitive,” said Jon. “He’s constantly trying to out-do me, and I’m trying to out-do him. We’re each other’s biggest critic.”

Of course a military competition was the furthest thought from their minds. After living a military lifestyle with a career U.S. Navy father, neither brother had any intention of joining. “We didn’t want to leave a family back home, because we knew how hard it was on our mom and our older brothers,” said Jon. “It sometimes seemed as if he was a stranger in our household.” It wasn’t until they reached high school age that the twins began to understand why their father was away so much and came to respect his service.

Two years after high school, the brothers went their separate ways. Jon enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve in April



Courtesy Photo

After the promotion orders were read by Capt. Zahn (center), Lt. Col. Toye (right) pins on Dan's new rank of captain May 12 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

2001 and went to basic and advanced training to be an intelligence analyst. "I was going to join the military," said Dan, "but Jon beat me to it, so I went off to college."

Halfway through attending Johnson and Wales University, Dan enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve in January 2004. He still went on to earn a bachelor's in Advertising Communications and a master's in Global Marketing Communication. He graduated summa cum laude in 2006. While there he had the opportunity to work on accounts such as Nike Golf, Swarovski Narragansett Beer, and be a part of the re-launch of season five for Showtime's "Dexter" series. "I was on a social media strategy team," he said with excitement. "We created a trans-media story that enlisted the aid of social media users in finding the killer. It was really fascinating to watch it work.

Getting people involved and building relationships, I loved it!"

In March 2007, Dan received a direct commission to second lieutenant. Then in August 2010, he graduated from Emerson College in Boston, Mass., just three days before his deployment to Afghanistan. On May 12, with his brother by his side to share in the moment, Dan received his promotion to rank of captain.

In 2002, after serving a one-year tour in Iraq with his Maine Army National Guard, 133rd Engineer Battalion, Jon decided to go back to college. He followed Dan to Johnson and Wales University. "We had a one-year overlap when I was a freshman and he was a junior," said Jon. Here he was the first student in the history of the school to double major in International Business and Marketing Communications. He graduated magna cum laude in 2008, and also received his

commission as second lieutenant and became an intelligence officer in the National Guard that same year.

Jon discovered upon his redeployment that he also had more free time. Feelings of not excelling in high school steered him toward volunteering to help inner city high school students with their home work. Paired with a young man who was unfocused and gang involved, Jon met with him at least four to five times a week. The student improved his grades, graduated, and went on college. Jon still keeps in touch with him to this day. "I feel like even though I helped him, he did it all," said Jon. "I was learning with him."

Shortly afterward, Jon went to the Military Intelligence School for his Officer Basic Course. Afterwards, he was assigned to help one of his Guard units prepare for deployment back to Iraq. When the mission fell through, Jon found himself with two degrees and jobless. He began job hunting with a desire to continue wearing the uniform. Having worked closely with them when his engineer unit was deployed to Iraq, Jon turned his attention to USACE, where he landed a position with the Transatlantic Division.

Here he gets to share his love for puzzles, which is how he views his job of harvesting, analyzing and fusing information together. "It's like a puzzle," he said. "You're taking the different pieces of information, fitting them together and seeing the bigger picture."

Solving puzzles for AED-South has been a great experience said Jon. The quality of his work is such that he quickly earned the confidence of the command team and subordinates, according to his J3 leader Lt. Col. Gaston P. Bernier. His contributions in intelligence assessments helped lead the way for Mine Resistance Ambush Protected teams on numerous successful ground movement and personal security detachment missions in areas commonly patrolled by armed and hostile enemy. "1st Lt. Higgins defines the Army's values and leads from the front," he added.

Proud of being able to help out the district in a time of need, Jon said he's enjoyed working with such great people. "It just so happens that my brother was here in Kandahar also," he added with a grin. Although they don't see each other often, the twins keep in touch through social media. As for being missed at home, Jon laughed as he recalled the last time both he and Dan left home, his parents got a cat to fill the void and named him JD. "Jack Daniel's, of course," he added with a grin. 🐾

Afghan and U.S. partners celebrate completion of airfield at Tarin Kowt

Story and photos by Joan F. Kibler

A ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of an airfield project at Multinational Base Tarin Kowt truly demonstrates the international commitment to this valley in the Uruzgan province.

The new 7,300-foot runway and associated facilities at Tarin Kowt will provide significant benefits for both the military and civilian communities well into the future.

“This project represents a partnership between the coalition forces and the people of the Uruzgan province,” said Col. James Creighton, commander, ISAF Combined Team Uruzgan (CTU). “It is a symbol of the security that is now present here that will allow the civilian leadership to focus on economic and political growth.”

“On behalf of Australia, this project invests in the future of Uruzgan and will lead to good things in the future,” said Paul Foley, the Australian ambassador. “I look forward to coming back in 20 years with my grandchildren, flying on a civilian jet, to tell them we were here when this started.”

More than 175 Afghan and U.S. civilian and military members gathered for the ribbon cutting. Speakers included Mohammad Omer Shirzad, the Uruzgan provincial governor; Mehdi Saeedi, the deputy minister of transportation; Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser, commander, Afghanistan Engineer District South; and Munci Doganci, vice president of Kandahar Constructors.

Also attending were Uruzgan community leaders, Afghan National Army soldiers, Afghan National Police officers, and members of the Uruzgan provincial reconstruction team, Task Force Attack, AED-South and CTU. CTU is the multinational brigade-level headquarters responsible for mentoring Afghan National Security Forces in the Uruzgan province. It consists of personnel from the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Slovakia.

Funkhouser also noted the value of the airfield project for the coalition and its partners. “The project is important for airfield operations now, and it will provide civil aviation for this region of Afghanistan,” he said. To the Afghans, he said, “It is a concrete form that will provide a strong foundation for your



The new runway at Tarin Kowt.

security, development and commerce.”

Funkhouser also thanked Creighton for supporting the project while the old landing strip was still in operation.

To Kandahar Constructors, Funkhouser said, “You’ve provided quality that will last this region for years.”

AED-South, through the Kandahar Area Office, Tarin Kowt Resident Office, was responsible for the nearly \$30 million project, which consisted of a paved runway, a rotary wing helicopter apron and taxiways, an airlift apron for fixed wing parking, and a cargo handling area.

“The runway provides an airlift platform for coalition forces for fixed and rotary wing missions, and it provides

support for civilian aviation,” said Capt. Matthew Strickler, officer in charge, Tarin Kowt resident office.

The paved runway replaces a dirt landing strip that had been used since July 2009. The airfield project was built even while the dirt landing strip was still being used, requiring a phased construction plan.

With the dirt landing strip, deliveries were limited.

“The new airstrip allows us to bring in larger aircraft – such as C-17 (Globemaster military transport) and C-130 (Hercules) aircraft – for the delivery of medical, food, ammunition and other supplies,” said Maj. Eddie



Afghan and U.S. officials participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Multinational Base Tarin Kowt on April 14.



Local Afghan leaders turned out for the ceremony.

Phillips, AFCENT Construction Management Officer, Kandahar Airfield.

The base serves as the hub for supplying 18 smaller bases in the region, Phillips said. Supplies are then moved to the outlying locations via helicopter or ground movement.

“The rotary wing apron will park 10 CH-47 Chinook helicopters, and the fixed wing apron will park two C-17s,” Strickler said.

The C-17s are the largest aircraft that

can land at Tarin Kowt.

“Now, we can bring in more supplies in fewer trips, improving safety as well as delivery of supplies to outlying areas,” Phillips said. Operations can continue year round as well. The dirt landing strip was often shut down during the rainy season.

While the ribbon-cutting ceremony occurred on April 14, the first plane landed on the paved airstrip on Jan. 13, according to Kayhan Suhrab, the

quality control manager for Kandahar Constructors. He said the work was completed in phases, with a cargo handling building remaining to be completed.

Accordingly, the project was turned over in phases for the Air Force’s use. The concrete placement for the new runway was completed March 3. The runway was turned over for C-130 traffic on March 8 and for C-17 traffic on March 22.

“It would have been very difficult to complete this project without the support of the Corps of Engineers, the Afghan National Army and the airmen,” said Munci Doganci, vice president of Kandahar Constructors LLC. “We had to construct the airfield without impairing flying missions. We appreciate the efforts of Maj. Samantha Bebb (the former officer in charge), Bill Kiddy (the resident engineer) and Jim Myers (quality assurance representative) who helped us succeed with this project.”

The project provided work for approximately 300 Afghan workers, Strickler said. During his remarks, Creighton expressed his appreciation for their efforts and called for a round of applause. 



Courtesy Photo

AED-South employees volunteered on Memorial Day to help set up the mTBI Recovery Center on Kandahar Airfield. Kneeling left to right are Rita Bocchieri, Ray Greenheck, Sue Fox, Ian Liong and Jeremy Wilson. Standing left to right are Capt. Leah Miller, Rich Webb, Breeanna Witt, Richard Horton, Josh Keyser, Laura Rowland, Sonny Sapida, Karla Marshall and Staff Sgt. Danilo Aseron. Behind left to right are Gary Weiler, Jim Slomer, Pete Delaney, Brett Frazier, James Ediger and Christine Weisenberger.

Corps celebrates Memorial Day helping wounded

Story by Karla K. Marshall

Since 1860, Americans have been observing Memorial Day, the day when we honor the U.S. military members who died in our nation's service. Some would contend that the focus of Memorial Day has changed over the years, but for the Soldiers and Civilians of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South, the spirit of honoring Soldiers continues.

District employees celebrated Memorial Day first with sports on the Boardwalk, then by inviting 12 wounded warriors and their care givers to a brunch prepared by a team of USACE employees. Headed by Norma Dean, the chief of Resource Management,

the brunch was prepared in the newly constructed AED-South kitchen. Immediately following brunch, more than 20 AED-South employees volunteered the rest of their day off to help prepare a new 10-bed Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) Recovery Center to receive patients.

Originally the brunch was organized solely for USACE employees and was funded by the AED-South Employee Activity Committee. However, when the AED-South Wounded Warrior Support Committee asked if they could invite several of Kandahar's wounded Soldiers to the brunch there was overwhelming support.

"We don't have the opportunities to perform

community service here like we do in the States, so cooking a few more servings for today's brunch was no big deal," said Dean. While preparing food for USACE employees and the honored guests was a labor of love, it did take a good bit of effort and planning. "We can't get all of the groceries we needed here on Kandahar," noted Dean. "We had to purchase some items on the internet, and our muffins and donuts came from Tim Horton's on the Canadian Compound."

The Soldiers were treated to two kinds of quiche, egg cups, hash browns, pancakes, cheese grits, blintzes, and homemade cinnamon rolls, plus donuts, muffins, coffee and mock mimosas.

"This is awesome," said Staff Sgt. Jose Carlos, a medic with the 4th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team from Ft. Carson, Colo. "These Soldiers have been living in very austere conditions and to be treated to a home-cooked meal shows them they have not been forgotten." In fact, most of the Soldiers attending the USACE Memorial Day Brunch had been living without running water and in very isolated camps for a while.

"Being invited to observe Memorial Day with the Corps of Engineers here on Kandahar has been a real blessing," noted Capt. Leah Miller, the mTBI Recovery Center officer in charge and an occupational therapist.



Photo by Karla K. Marshall

Before the Memorial Day brunch, some AED-South employees participated in sports events on Kandahar Airfield's Boardwalk. Left to right, Andy Phillips, Lynn Jarrett, Nabil Abourialy, Brett Frazier, John Adams, Chad Richards, Stephanie Dupey, Pete Delaney, Bill Slezak and Dan Finke.



Photo by Karla K. Marshall

Betty Jo Spiering (right) and Ruth Townley (center) enjoy Memorial Day brunch and the time away from their desks with the AED-South family and some of KAF's Wounded Warriors and their caregivers.

Together with Staff Sgt. Danilo Aseron, the mTBI Recovery Center NCOIC, Captain Miller has been busy locating a usable facility, and procuring beds, bedding and other necessities to make the recovery clinic comfortable for the patients.

After brunch, Miller, Aseron and the AED-South employees headed to the recovery center to clean,

organize, and prepare the center for patients. "We are so grateful that people from the Corps of Engineers volunteered their valuable time off to help us get this facility up and running," stated Miller, a native of Dayton, Ohio. "Setting up a new recovery center is a challenge in this environment and to have so much help from the Corps pushed our

opening date up by a couple of months."

Soldiers recovering from mTBI need a different kind of environment than Soldiers recovering from other types of wounds. In all instances though, the goal is to return the Soldier to duty as quickly as possible.

"Since mTBI is the signature wound of Operation Enduring Freedom and

Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Surgeon General has asked the services to focus on concussion recovery," noted Aseron. "This recovery center will help speed the recovery of our Soldiers and get them fit enough to return to duty."

The AED-South learned of the need through a relationship between two Detroit District employees. Christine Weisenberger deployed to Kandahar with AED-South and Angelique Bartreau, an activated Navy Seabee Reservist also at Kandahar. Bartreau's unit, the Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 26 Seabee Unit, had been supporting the Wounded Warrior Unit; however, they were concerned about continued support after they return to the States this summer. Bartreau turned to Weisenberger who also had been supporting the Seabees efforts to continue on the support.

Responding to the need, Christine solicited help from fellow AED-South employees Rita Boccieri and Susan Fox to organize a new volunteer effort. Through their cooperation, the AED-South Wounded Warrior Support Group was formed.

"This was a fabulous way to spend our day off," stated Boccieri. "I'm proud to be a part of the Wounded Warrior Support Group. These young men and women who continue the fight here in Afghanistan are easy to care for."

Affirming Boccieri's comments and covered in a layer of dust and grime, Brett Frazier, deployed to Kandahar from the Huntsville District, summed up the motivation of almost all the USACE volunteers, "because it's the right thing to do."

With the support of the USACE Afghanistan District South Command Group, USACE will continue its volunteer efforts on behalf of Kandahar's wounded warriors via its Wounded Warrior Support Group. 

Aerial surveillance takes wing with Corps project

Story and photos
by Brenda L. Beasley

Day or night plays no role. Any cleaning only lasts a short time. The only variable is how thick it hangs in the air, creating a haze that severely reduces visibility. But, no matter the object, there is no escaping the extremely fine, powdery dirt that continues to cover everything within its reach at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

This environmental condition has made it impossible for the U.S. Air Force to perform maintenance on their Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance aircraft while at KAF.

“These aircraft require enclosed parking areas to shelter them from the harsh environmental condition of Afghanistan,” said Air Force Maj. Edward P. Phillips, the construction management officer at KAF for the U.S. Air Force Central Command.

With completion of a \$24.8 million military construction project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South May 14, the Air Force now has operational facilities at KAF that mitigate this harsh environmental factor.

The ISR apron and hangars give the United States additional aerial surveillance capability to support the

warfighter, according to Army Lt. Col. Martha E. Kiene, AED-South deputy commander. “We are extremely happy to finally turn over this project to the Air Force,” she said. It’s been a huge challenge to find technical capability for installation, and operations and maintenance, she added.

ISR aircraft are multifunctional. They can take pictures of what’s on the ground and serve as communications relay platforms across Afghanistan’s rocky terrain. Some of the regular maintenance



These concrete structures were built first to house the high expansion foam tanks and distribution piping for the fire suppression system. Each hangar has both water sprinklers and foam generators. The hangar was then constructed around the structures.



Army Lt. Col. Martha E. Kiene, AED-South deputy commander, holds the DD Form 1354, which is the Transfer and Acceptance of Military Real Property record, as Air Force Maj. Edward P. Phillips (right) signs and accepts the completed Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance apron and hangars built at Kandahar Airfield. AED-South’s Area Engineer James E. Gehle and Army Maj. Anthony S. Hammett look on.



Once initiated, the high expansion foam exits through the four foam generators that are installed in the ceiling. Within two minutes the hangar can be under about one meter (3.33 feet) of high expansion foam, which will suffocate the fire.

to aircraft and onboard equipment requires relatively dirt-free environments. This leads to fewer aircraft available to complete the mission. "We need hangars here to do maintenance so that we can keep them in theater longer to provide critical support to units on the ground," said Phillips. This project was just the first step needed for the initial mission in Afghanistan, he added. Phase two is a separate contract increasing the size of the apron to accommodate an additional 12 hangars.

One of the biggest challenges the

Corps faced was the end user's need to move in before the work was complete. "Although the final turnover was May 14," said AED-South North Airfield Office Resident Engineer Brian E. Zickefoose, "the Air Force has been occupying the space since June 2010."

An initial obstacle was the Russian debris found during the mine clearance process, said Zickefoose. It had to be dug up and removed, then filled with engineer "select fill," which is an approved type of dirt because of its composition. It can be used for sub-grade and sub-base material, he added.

These are also the first hangars built on KAF that utilize a foam fire suppression system in case of fire in one of the hangars. "I enjoyed the experience of learning about this unique fire suppression system," said Zickefoose. The final testing of each of these fire suppression systems was successfully accomplished with Dave Miller, a fire protection engineer in the Middle East District's Technical Center of Expertise for Hangar Fire Protection, on-site.

Now, no matter how thick the dirt hangs in the air at Kandahar Airfield, warfighters have the capacity to perform maintenance on their aircraft in theater, thereby increasing their mission capability in Afghanistan. Because of similar aircraft and similar missions, the hangars and aprons are being used by both the Army and the Air Force. "This project is a good example of joint operations, as we are all supporting the same mission," said Phillips. 



The foam is stored in a 250 gallon tank, where it mixes with water to fill the hangar with foam and suppress any fire in a few minutes. This automatic fire suppression system is designed to save lives and valuable equipment with minimal human intervention.



Each of the eight hangars is sized to fit the majority of small aircraft used today and sits on a medium-load concrete parking apron.

Construction complete on two Afghan National Border Police headquarters

Story by
Karla K. Marshall

Patrolling borders is an important part of any nation's security. For Afghanistan, which shares a border with six other countries, maintaining border security is overwhelming and often near impossible. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South just made that job easier with the completion of two border police company headquarters facilities in southwestern Afghanistan.

Located along the Iranian border in Farah province, the two self-sustaining compounds, with a combined contract cost of almost \$11 million, are 200 kilometers (116 miles) apart and consist of several facilities and infrastructure components. Within their perimeter's force protection walls, each compound contains an administration building, barracks, a dining facility, ablution buildings, warehouses, a well house, entry control points, guard towers, site utilities, ammunition supply points, fuel storage and vehicle refueling points, road networks and parking areas.

"The construction of new infrastructure is key to providing an improved security condition for Afghanistan," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Alex Stites of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan Combined-Joint Engineering Directorate (NTM-A/CSTC-A CJ-ENG). "These new facilities will provide border police with the necessary infrastructure for operations and berthing to support their mission. The facilities provide a sustainable, enduring compound for the border police to live in and deploy from for years to come."

Originally scheduled to be complete



Courtesy Photo

Afghan National Border Police headquarters at Farah province.

in October 2009 but not finished until March 2011, these Pashmakey and Mile 73 construction projects were difficult to complete on time because of their remote location. "No coalition forces were operating in the areas we were building," said Herat Area Engineer Donny Davidson, who's on deployment from USACE's Memphis District. "The terrain was difficult to navigate and the long distances made the risk of ground movement very high."

The contractor for both locations, which are more than 150 kilometers (87 miles) from Farah city, was Road & Roof Construction, an Afghan company. Despite the distance and difficulty of travel for AED-South engineers and project managers, the Afghan quality assurance representatives, vital members of the construction team, lived on the project sites along with the contractor's

employees. "The QARs were our eyes and ears on the sites," noted Davidson. "For these projects, they were trained in our Herat Resident Office to ensure quality, safety and technical construction standards were met."

AED-South's QARs have many tasks they are asked to perform and must be highly skilled. For instance, they provide daily quality assurance reports, perform safety inspections, document project progress with photography, report and track deficiencies, inspect for contract compliance and estimate work completed during construction. "These guys are actively involved with problem solving and are invaluable for input when issues arise," said Davidson. "The quality of the work at these two sites and exemplary safety records demonstrate the success of the Afghan QA program in Herat."

AUP District HQs opens at Takteh Pol

Story by
Joan F. Kibler

Afghan National Police forces lined up in formation to celebrate the opening of the Uniformed Police (UP) District Headquarters at Takteh Pol, a village on the main road between Kandahar City and the Pakistan border.

Kandahar Provincial Police Chief Brig. Gen. Khan

Mohammed Mujahid saluted the policemen and then greeted residents of Takteh Pol village.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony held April 11 drew more than 200 people to celebrate the opening of this strategically located police headquarters.

In addition to the

provincial police chief, distinguished guests included Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Bannister, deputy commanding general for ISAF operations, 10th Mountain Division, and Col. James Edwards, commander of the Combined Task Force Lightning, Spin Boldak. Several dozen U.S. military and civilian members attended

the ceremony.

"Completion of this police headquarters is integral to this region for improved security and governance," said Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser, commander of the Afghanistan Engineer District South, which was responsible for construction.

Edwards reiterated the

importance of the facility and its key geographic location to operations in the area.

Afghan and U.S. participants participated in a shura, dined together and then toured the new compound.

The ANP was anxious to move into its new headquarters and expressed appreciation for the quality of the facility during the shura. The \$839,299 two-story district headquarters building includes a dining facility, sleeping areas, offices, conference areas, armory and detention cells. The construction contract also includes security features and utilities.

Basirat Construction, an Afghan firm, completed this ANP project, the third of six that the firm was contracted to build.

The UP district headquarters at Takteh Pol has been a long time coming.

The Corps of Engineers awarded a contract in May 2007 for the construction of seven uniformed police district headquarters located throughout the Kandahar and Helmand provinces. Subsequently, one location was removed from the contract requirement. The headquarters compounds originally had an 18-month

construction period but have far exceeded the anticipated construction duration, mostly because of lack of security at the construction sites.

In addition to Takteh Pol, two other sites were completed and turned over to the ANP in fall 2010 – Spin Boldak in Kandahar province and Nahri Saraj in Helmand province. The remaining sites – Zhari, Nad Ali and Garmsier – are nearly finished.

The Afghan construction firm had many challenges learning Corps of Engineers processes and quality assurance standards, but over time they met the standards and produced quality and sound construction, Funkhouser said.

“We’ve had problems meeting the construction schedule because of the lack of security in many of these areas (which prevented oversight inspections), so we hired Afghan quality assurance representatives to assist in our oversight,” Funkhouser said. “This contributed to our ability to finish these projects, and Afghan police leadership is pleased to have these facilities to operate from. It has been a great morale boost for ANP forces.”

Lt. Col. Ronald Bahr, officer in charge, Helmand



Photo by Joan F. Kibler

Takteh Pol residents, distinguished guests, and U.S. military and civilian members enter the new district headquarters building for a shura.

Area Office, said that the district will continue to visit the remaining project sites to complete the construction of these ANP facilities. Many of those site visits are conducted by Lance Walker, quality assurance representative in the Tombstone Resident Office, and the Afghan quality assurance representatives. Walker has been recognized for his tenacity in getting remote projects completed acceptably.

Following the ceremony, Capt. Curtis Million, Tombstone officer in charge, presented Basirat Construction with a certificate

for completion of the Takteh Pol district headquarters.

The Afghan Uniformed Police is a branch of the ANP, assigned to police districts and to provincial and regional commands. Under a new model, the Afghan Ministry of Interior and the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan require mandatory training for all police recruits. ■

Writer’s Note: Kandahar Provincial Police Chief Brig. Gen. Khan Mohammed Mujahid was killed April 15 as a result of a suicide bomb attack.

Sangin Qala opens AUP District HQs

Story by
Karla K. Marshall

The Afghan National Police Uniformed Police play a critical role in the security of Afghanistan’s civilian population. To bolster the AUP capabilities, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South has completed construction of 13 AUP District Headquarters compounds, with the most recent at Sangin Qala in Helmand province.

Initially part of a 22-facility contract awarded in February 2007, which was subsequently de-scoped to 14 facilities, the Sangin Qala AUP district headquarters compound was completed April 18 at a cost of \$892,174.

“These projects are among the ‘legacy’ projects that AED-South inherited when it was created (in August 2009),” said



Courtesy Photo

Force protection wall surrounds AUP District Headquarters at Sangin Qala.



Courtesy Photo

Helmand province local leaders and distinguished guests turned out for a ribbon cutting ceremony to commemorate the opening of the new AUP facility.

Michael Chang, project manager, Afghan National Police program. “Since most of the ANP stations fell within Kandahar province, the Kandahar Vicinity Resident Office had responsibility for finishing them.”

The Sangin Qala AUP district headquarters compound is secured with a force protection wall, guard towers and can accommodate 60 persons. The compound includes a dining facility, berthing areas, offices, an armory and jail cells plus the required electrical, plumbing and water infrastructure and entry control points.

Working with an Afghan contracting

company, Ariana Popal, USACE built the Sangin Qala facility in a very dangerous environment, which prolonged the construction time. Dubbed “the most dangerous place in Afghanistan” by many, Sangin was a insurgent and drug-trafficking stronghold until just recently.

The Sangin area was patrolled by British troops for four years until September 2010, when Marines from the 5th Marine Regiment deployed to the area.

A troop surge and fierce fighting between the U.S. Marines and the Taliban, which resulted in 24 Marine deaths and more than 140 injured in their first four

months, plus a concerted effort by the local elders to bring peace to the area earlier this year, resulted in a more secure area and enabled construction to resume at a quicker pace.

“The construction of Sangin Qala was expected to be completed within a year,” Chang said. “But the contractor had challenges with the location due to security issues. Ongoing drug eradication and combat operations further prolonged the construction period.”

The AUP is the only Afghan National Police presence in the northern Helmand province. The Sangin Qala district headquarters is the most northern and is responsible for a large geographic area. “It was critical to get this facility completed so that the coalition mentors could be co-located with the AUP,” Chang said. The ANP police officers are trained before they’re deployed to an area and once on-site, the coalition mentors work with them to establish the rule of law.

Providing the ANP with permanent structures is critical to developing a competent and trustworthy uniformed police presence in Helmand province. “If the ANSF, specifically the ANP, did not have their own structures, their dependence on the coalition would be prolonged,” stated Marine 1st Lt. Timothy Irish with the Regimental Combat Team-8, currently deployed in the Sangin area. “Our goal is to ensure that we have Afghans lead the area patrols and by doing so, opposition to coalition forces is reduced.”

Border police company HQs opens Story by Joan F. Kibler

It’s a long way from Kabul to the remote village of Khwaja Jeer near the Turkmenistan border.

Two members of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (NTM-A/CSTC-A) attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony April 24 for a border police company headquarters near the village of Khwaja Jeer close to the Turkmenistan border.

Navy Cmdr. Alex Stites, ANP Fielding Branch, and Col. Mario Trevino, CSTC-A deputy director, who are based in Kabul, traveled to Herat for three ribbon-cutting ceremonies for facilities that

Afghan National Police units will use. All three facilities were constructed by the Herat Area Office, Afghanistan Engineer District – South.

“We don’t get to personally see many of the sites that are turned over to the ANP,” Stites said. “Most of what we see is in pictures. Thank you for inviting us to these events. The pictures don’t give the same experience as being here. This facility has quality workmanship and functionality.”

Stites said the facility is in a strategically important location. “We will continue working with the ANP to help them build the capability to secure Afghanistan.”

Trevino said these events mark an important milestone in the NTM-A/CSTC-A journey toward security control by Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). “For every one of these facilities that are completed and passed to our ANSF partners, we are getting closer to reaching the level of operation that we want to see in their ranks in order to complete the transition.”

Lt. Col. Kenneth Safe, officer in charge, Herat area office, said that when the Afghan border police move in, “They will be proud to call this their home. The 4th [Police] Zone will be able to provide security along the border. The border police

force has a tough job, and this facility will help them fulfill their role.

“It is a pleasure to be part of a process to bring together a facility of this nature,” Safe said. He complimented the contractor, Technologists, Inc., for its dedication to completing the project in tough circumstances, particularly because of insurgent threats in the area.

“This has been a long project for Ti, calendar wise, but our employees persevered and completed the work,” said Dennis Freitas, Ti deputy vice president. “Ninety-nine percent of our employees are Afghan citizens. I want to thank them for bringing this

to completion.”

AED-South also worked with ISAF Regional Command West to accomplish the project.

“RC-West is responsible for fielding the ANP facilities in this region,” said Lt. Col. Tammy Alatorre, Regional Support Command West deputy commander. “We engage with the 4th Zone commander to make sure the facility meets his needs. We also work with the Corps of Engineers to pass along the requirements.”

The border police company headquarters is a \$10.5 million facility with an administration building, barracks, logistics building, dining facility, warehouse, life support facilities such as toilets and showers, roads, utilities and security features. ■



Photo by Joan F. Kibler

Left to right, Lt. Col. Kenneth Safe, Nabil Abourialy, and Kenny Pham participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Khwaja Jeer near the Turkmenistan border April 24.

Facility doubles ANP training capacity Story by Joan F. Kibler

A facility that will double the capacity to train Afghan National Police recruits in the Herat province was turned over in a ceremony April 25 in Adraskan.

“After their training, these recruits will go on the streets to provide security for this great country – security that underpins the future of Afghanistan,” said Col. Bradley W. Booth, commander, ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) Regional Support Command West. “This facility is vitally important. Herat is one of the first transition locations as Afghan

National Security Forces take the lead for security in this region.”

The Afghanistan Engineer District – South supervised construction of the \$12.4 million compound that provides a command and control campus for the staff of the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) as well as additional facilities for training Afghan police recruits.

“This facility enhances the capability of the Adraskan National Training Center (ANTC),” said Lt. Col. Steve Park, the on-site coalition commander, during the ceremony.

“In one week, the command and staff of the ANTC will begin moving into the new headquarters building ... In three weeks, the first students will be housed in the five barracks to participate in the Afghan Uniformed Police course.”

Both Uniformed Police and Civil Order Police forces are trained at this facility.

Park said the facility will enable the consolidation of operations for the ANTC training department, administrative personnel and logistics staff. Each will have a large room to operate from.

Park expressed his appreciation to the Corps of Engineers for the quality of construction. “My hope is that the quality of the buildings represents the quality of output month after month from this training facility. Most important are the trainees: after four months, they will enforce the rule of law to provide for a stable and secure future for Afghanistan.”

Col. Fazi Ahmad Khalili, ANTC base commander, recited a poem that carried the theme of all humanity being one, according to the translator. He said that he was happy to see the expansion of the Adraskan training center and that more than 1,000 recruits will be trained at the facility. When they come in, “they know nothing; here they will learn everything,” he said through a translator.

He concluded his remarks, likening the training center to the Chinese proverb: “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” He said he wants to make the Afghan police the best in the world.

During his remarks, Col. Anthony Funkhouser, AED-South commander, commended Technologists, Inc. (Ti), the

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Photo by Joan F. Kibler

Herat Area Engineer Donny Davidson signs the necessary documents to turn over the facility to the Ministry of Interior.

AES Team

Helmand Area Office



USACE AED-South Helmand Area Office employees include: (kneeling left to right) Kristin Long, realty specialist; and Brian Johns, engineering technician. Standing, left to right, are Jose Apodaca, engineering technician; Maxine Crosby, safety officer; Anne Crenshaw, administrative assistant; Jeffrey Johnson, area engineer; and Lt. Col. Ronald Bahr, officer-in-charge.

Story and photo by Karla K. Marshall

There is never a shortage of work at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South's Helmand Area Office where the current work load is 26 projects equaling more than \$250 million.

Located on Camp Shorabak, an Afghan National Army camp in Helmand province and adjacent to the U.S. Marine's Camp Leatherneck and Great Britain's Camp Bastion, the Helmand Area Office is responsible for constructing facilities for the Afghan National Army's 215th Corps headquartered at Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province.

"Between the Tombstone, Dwyer and Delaram Resident Offices, we are projected to increase our project load to more than 50 projects at a cost of \$600-650 million in the next six months," said Lt. Col. Ronald Bahr, Helmand Area Office officer in charge.

One of the biggest construction initiatives to be undertaken by the Helmand Area Office is the construction of more than 100 K-Span buildings

for the three brigades that comprise the 215th Corps. "We're expecting 400 shipping containers containing approximately 6,600 meters of steel each to construct the K-Span structures," said Bahr, who is an Army National Guardsman from Washington State and on his fourth deployment.

The structures will be constructed using the K-Span design because the cost is less than traditional bricks and mortar construction and the design is scalable to meet the various needs of the ANA brigades. "Our contractors can expedite the construction process and construct more cheaply with this type of structure because the United States provides the steel and the design is constant," stated Jeffrey Johnson, the Helmand Area Office area engineer who is deployed from USACE's Savannah District. "When our contractors are done constructing the ANA facilities, all that the Afghans will need to bring is food and fuel," said Johnson. "We are also negotiating a contract that will include training the

Afghans to operate and maintain the structures once the United States leaves Afghanistan."

"Another K-Span construction project right outside the Helmand Area Office doors will be complete in about two weeks," said Bahr. "We are building additional billets for our new MRAP (mine resistant ambush protected) vehicle teams that will be assigned here due to the increase in workload." The current number of MRAP team members is five, but that number will ultimately reach 10.

"The thing about working at remote sites is that we actually get to see the appreciation on the faces of our customers," said Johnson. While that certainly may be true, the Helmand Area Office team members will also smile when they see a new baseball field on their compound that is near completion. "We work hard and we play hard," said Bahr "and our new baseball field will give us another outlet for fun." 🇺🇸

WINDS OF CHANGE

Renewable power begins generating interest in Afghanistan

Story by
Joan F. Kibler

Herat province is known for a wind so predictable that it has been named the 120-day wind. The whole of western Afghanistan experiences good wind velocity throughout the year, prompting Lt. Col. Kenneth Safe to begin working with U.S. and Afghan partners to promote wind power as an alternative energy source for development.

“Afghanistan has little electrical power infrastructure in many parts of the country,” said Safe, officer in charge, Herat Area Office. “Typically, only the major towns or cities have any form of electrical grid, and often the power that does exist is unreliable or in limited supply. In Herat City, for example, power lines from Iran and Turkmenistan supply the city with electricity, but there isn’t enough for everyone, especially for a rapidly growing population.

“As I look at the infrastructure that’s being built in Afghanistan and at what’s needed, renewable energy is an excellent alternative for this region.”

One component of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy identifies renewable energy resource development in rural and remote areas. The document sets forth a vision that includes environmental sustainability for the nation’s future.

The report said that the traditional power sources in western Afghanistan are hydropower and coal, with potential gas reserves as well. Renewable sources include solar and wind.

“The capacity for wind power is even greater than that offered by hydropower,” Safe said. “This is a golden opportunity to make a real difference with such a valuable untapped resource – a resource that could be tapped into and used forever because it’s completely renewable.”

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (a U.S. Department of Energy laboratory), working with the U.S. Agency for International Development, there is approximately 158,000 megawatts of untapped potential wind energy predominantly located in western Afghanistan.

“USAID has done groundbreaking work on developing clean, renewable energy in Afghanistan,” Safe said. “Installing wind turbine farms could electrify much of western Afghanistan.”

Wind power could become the primary power source in many areas of western Afghanistan in a role reversal. “Wind power is normally used as back-up power,” Safe said. “Since there is no power in many areas in Afghanistan, wind farms could provide the primary power. Small diesel generators could potentially be synchronized for back up,” Safe continued.

Safe began exploring options for wind power as he witnessed the large number of facilities being built for Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police forces with nearly all these facilities requiring on-site diesel power generation. This prompted the interest in sustainability and security since the fuel is dependent on foreign supply.

“As an example, Camp Zafar, the ANA base near Herat City, uses an average of 2,270 gallons of diesel fuel per day. The power plant consists of six one-megawatt diesel generators. Outside the

power plant sits a fuel farm with several large diesel tanks filled regularly from fuel purchased from Iran and Turkmenistan. Literally hundreds of fuel tankers drive into Herat everyday from across the borders. This example is repeated in various facilities of different sizes all across the country,” Safe explained.

“The demand for diesel fuel has skyrocketed during the last several years, and although it solves the power demand, it is an ever-increasing burden to sustain,” he said.

Diesel power generation is not a viable or sustainable long-term solution: the fuel cost is not stable, the fuel supply is not guaranteed, and the nation’s security is at stake since it is subject to foreign control of fuel, Safe surmised.

He has promoted exploring wind farms as an energy source with engineering professors at both Herat and Farah Universities, with the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) building projects that benefit the local populations in those provinces, and with USAID and other government agencies.

While Safe said his primary goal is to influence others to look at using wind farms, the Herat Area Office is working with its PRT partners on a few small projects using wind power.

“We are proposing projects that use wind power to provide primary energy for clinics and district centers,” Safe said. “These small projects will have immediate impact to the communities for improved health care and governance. We’re excited to include these wind towers in the design of projects, knowing they’ll provide a sustainable power supply, supplemented by diesel generators instead of diesel being the primary resource.”

Using wind power as a sustainable resource requires much more research to launch a successful program. “Existing reports show the best wind areas in general, but specific wind data has to be gathered to get the proper turbine design for the sites where wind turbines will be located,” Safe said.

In fact, the Afghan National Development Strategy states that “not all the potential wind energy can be converted into electricity because of a number of factors such as distance from population centers and wind speed. However, the first initial survey indicates that there is significant potential.”

“There is much to be done to start these wind farms, but the results will have a dramatic impact,” Safe said. “By not relying on imported diesel fuel, Afghanistan can improve its security posture. The nation will achieve financial benefits by not paying for as much imported fuel. The installation of wind farms will create jobs and provide renewable, sustainable electricity, thus improving the lives of citizens. Wind farms will move the country toward environmental soundness, as well.”

According to the Afghanistan Ministry of Energy and Water, “the overall goal is to provide a sustainable power supply, at affordable prices, and in an environmentally sound manner.” Wind power can help meet this objective.

Safe believes that the small steps being taken through these initial projects will help Afghanistan make the most of wind as a reliable and renewable power source. ■



A wind turbine.

Courtesy Photo

FACILITY

—Continued from Page 17

construction firm, for its work on the project. Afghan citizens make up 99 percent of the firm.

“This compound was built by Afghan citizens – for Afghanistan – to make this country better,” Funkhouser said. “Afghan engineers are helping this country grow with new structures that help increase your security. We will continue working with you (our Afghan partners) to improve the infrastructure in

Afghanistan.”

Booth said, “To the Corps of Engineers, you have made a difference in the security of Afghanistan with this facility.

“To Ti, individually and collectively, you have made a difference in Afghanistan’s future,” Booth said. “On behalf of Gen. Caldwell, I want to thank all of you for your work here.” Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell is commander, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan/ Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (NTM-A/CSTC-A).

Ti members said they are proud to be part of this construction effort. “We built this place for a new generation. We are all in this together,” Mohammad Rafi, the administrative deputy director, said through a translator.

After the speeches, the facility was signed over to Khalili. Participating in the signing were Donny Davidson, Herat area

engineer; Dennis Freitas, Ti’s deputy vice president; and Navy Cmdr. Alex Stites, ANP Fielding Branch, NTM-A/CSTC-A.

“This training facility is now under the command of Col. Khalili,” Booth said. “This is a very important day for the coalition.”

Mentors to the ANCOP also attended the ceremony – a coalition effort that includes the Italian Carabinieri, U.S. Marines and a Polish contingent to help the ANCOP achieve a greater level of capability.

The construction contract was awarded in September 2008, with work completed this past March. According to AED-South project manager Frances Hinkley, when the contract was awarded, the facility was anticipated to house approximately 300 police officers. “Over time the mission focus changed to include its function as a regional training center,” she said.

The compound includes an administration building, barracks, dining facility, laundry, toilets and showers, training facility, vehicle parking, fuel storage and vehicle refuel point, utilities, roads and security features.

Adraskan is about 50 miles south of Herat City. 



Afghan National Civil Order Police training facility in Adraskan, Herat province.

Photo by Joan F. Kibler



Courtesy Photo

AED-South Herat Area Office meets with the National Training Mission-Afghanistan to discuss lessons learned and successes with the north expansion of the Adraskan Police training facility. Picture left to right, Jason Foust, Hassan Reza, Jawid Ahadi, Qudratullah Rahmany, Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph R. Beam (NTM-A), Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell (commander of NTM-A), Lt. Col. Kenneth Safe, and Nabil Abourialy.

MOI administration building opens

Story and photos
by Joan F. Kibler

In complimenting the quality and appearance of the new Ministry of Interior administration building in Herat, Brig. Gen. Ziauddin Mahmoudi said through an interpreter that “this building will be like our house. We will maintain it well.” Mahmoudi is commander of the 606th Zone Afghan National Police.

The building was turned over to the Ministry of Interior April 25 in a ceremony with representatives from MOI, the ANP, the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan/ Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Engineer District – South, and Technologists inc. (Ti).

The new regional administration building permits the Ministry of Interior to more effectively deliver services in Herat, according to Frances Hinkley, project manager. AED-South was responsible for design and construction of the \$4 million administration building.

“The Ministry uses this building to further its national vision of stability and civil order by providing resources to the ANP,” Hinkley said.

The facility is in the 606th Zone ANP and for the 3rd Brigade Afghan National Civil Order Police, according to Nabil Abourialy, the Herat resident engineer.

“As commander of this police zone, I appreciate the international effort to build projects all over Afghanistan to help us with security,” Mahmoudi said. He expressed appreciation to Ti for its efforts in designing and constructing the facility, citing the contributions of Afghan citizens to the project. “They have designed and built a quality project,” he said.

“It is our pleasure to help build the infrastructure in your country,” said Col. Anthony Funkhouser, AED-South commander. “We



The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Interior, Regional Administration building in Herat officially opened April 25.



Building interior.

have more than \$1 billion in construction for Afghan army and police forces. This Ministry of Interior facility is one of our most important projects. As a regional facility, it affects many people and many police officers. We hope it will help you do your job to provide security in this part of the country.”

In a ceremony earlier in the day to turn over police facilities at the Adraskan National Training Center, also constructed by Ti, Funkhouser echoed earlier comments

about the firm’s dedication. “The Corps of Engineers couldn’t do this mission without great support from contractors like Ti, which uses Afghan engineers to construct projects all over the country.”

AED-South and Ti worked closely to enhance the architectural and energy features of the administration building to make it aesthetically pleasing, practical and comfortable.

Many of the main doorways feature windows above them. “The design called for wooden doors but since Ti was having problems getting them, they recommended the use of metal doors that are available in Herat,” said Kenny Pham, project engineer, Herat Area Office.

“We collect samples of high quality products that have been approved by our Operations and Maintenance staff. So we worked with Ti to select this door,” Pham said.

The design also called for decorative floor tiles on the

second floor, with the Corps of Engineers and Ti working side by side to develop an outcome that met contract requirements.

Dennis Freitas, Ti’s deputy vice president, also said that “the selection of colors and materials was a collaborative effort. It was a great joy for us to build this facility for the people of Afghanistan.”

To increase energy efficiency, several features were incorporated into the design, Abourialy said. “First, we installed large custom windows to maximize the natural light. Next, we used an insulated concrete roof with a metal superstructure and a high interior ceiling, which retains heat during the winter months while staying cool in the summer. Heating and cooling are provided through wood stoves and ceiling fans.

“The total peak power requirement for this facility is less than 100 KVA (kilovolt-amps), which is relatively low and is approximately 50 percent when compared to a facility of this size accommodating 100 people,” Abourialy said.

AED-South also worked closely with the ANP to ensure the facility met their requirements. “We modified the contract to include providing a road from the main highway to the Ministry of Interior site and the adjoining ANP Regional Headquarters Facility,” Hinkley said. “When the commander of the Regional Headquarters Facility expressed concerns about the safety of this road, particularly because of IEDs (improvised explosive devices), we provided asphalt paving. We also increased water storage to accommodate both facilities since they share utilities.”

In his closing remarks, Mahmoudi said he appreciates the work that America has done in Afghanistan. ■

Afghanistan Safety 101

Combating heat-related injuries by James Ediger, safety and occupational health specialist

The hot days of summer are here. Throughout the country, hundreds of USACE and contract employees who work outdoors face the potential dangers associated with overexposure to heat. Factors such as working in direct sunlight, high temperature and humidity, physical exertion, and lack of sufficient water intake can lead to heat stress.

Exposure to heat can cause heat cramps and rashes. The most serious heat-related disorders are heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Symptoms include confusion; irrational behavior; loss of consciousness; hot, dry skin; and abnormally high body temperature. Drinking cool water, reducing physical exertion, wearing appropriate clothing, and regular rest periods in a cool recovery area can lessen the effects of working in summer heat.

Heat Stroke is the most serious heat-related health problem. Heat stroke occurs when the body's temperature regulating system fails and body temperature rises to critical levels (greater than 104°F). This is a medical emergency that may result in death! The signs of heat stroke are confusion, loss of consciousness and seizures. Workers experiencing heat stroke have a very high body temperature and may stop sweating. If a worker shows signs of possible heat stroke, get medical help immediately. It might be difficult in some of our remote

areas to have close medical facilities. Be pro-active and have the locations and contact numbers available BEFORE you need them. Supervisors can also provide them on their morning safety briefings. On KAF you can dial the JDOC at DSN; 7-318-841-2004 and they can dispatch Ambulance and the Fire Department. Until medical help arrives, move the worker to shady, cool area and remove as much clothing as possible. Wet the worker with cool water and circulate the air to speed cooling. Place cold wet cloths, wet towels or ice all over the body or soak the worker's clothing with cold water.

Heat Exhaustion is the next most serious heat-related health problem. The signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion are headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, confusion, thirst, heavy sweating and a body temperature greater than 100.4°F. Workers with heat exhaustion should be removed from the hot area and given liquids to drink. Remove unnecessary clothing including shoes and socks.

The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine Health Information Operations Division or CHPPM, has developed a Work/Rest and Water Consumption table. Everyone should become familiar with this chart. In Afghanistan, we all work in Heat Category 5 (which is any temperature above 90 degrees F) for most of the year. What this means to us is that we should

all be on a work/rest cycle of 50 minutes working with a 10 minute rest for every hour outside. During this 60 minute cycle you should also be drinking one quart of water. This cycle is just for "easy work." The cycle changes as you work harder. This chart should be readily available to you and posted on your section "safety board" at your job site or work area.

Another factor that we all need to be aware of is over exposure to the sun. Sun exposure at any age can cause skin cancer. Be especially careful in the sun if you burn easily, spend a lot of time outdoors, or have any of the following physical features: numerous irregular or large moles, freckles, fair skin, or have blond, red or light brown hair. A few ways for us to protect ourselves and to block Out UV Rays are:

Cover up. Wear tightly-woven clothing that blocks out light. Try this test: Place your hand between a single layer of the clothing and a light source. If you can see your hand through the fabric, the garment offers little protection.

Use sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 percent of UV rays. You want to block both UVA and UVB rays to guard against skin cancer. Be sure to follow application directions on the bottle.

Wear a hat. A wide brim hat (not a baseball cap) is ideal because it protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.

Wear UV-absorbent shades. Sunglasses don't have to be expensive, but they should block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.

Limit exposure. UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you're unsure about the sun's intensity, take the shadow test: If your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are the day's strongest. ☀

Note: WBGT (Wet Bulb Globe Temperature) is a composite temperature used to estimate the effect of temperature, humidity, wind speed (wind chill) and solar radiation on humans. It is used by industrial hygienists, athletes, and the military (developed by the U.S. Marine Corps in 1956 to reduce heat stress injuries in recruits) to determine appropriate exposure levels to high temperatures.

Work/Rest and Water Consumption Table

Applies to average sized, heat-acclimated soldier wearing BDU, hot weather. (See TB MED 507 for further guidance.)

Easy Work		Moderate Work		Hard Work			
• Weapon Maintenance • Walking Hard Surface at 2.5 mph, < 30 lb Load • Marksmanship Training • Drill and Ceremony • Manual of Arms		• Walking Loose Sand at 2.5 mph, No Load • Walking Hard Surface at 3.5 mph, < 40 lb Load • Calisthenics • Patrolling • Individual Movement Techniques, i.e., Low Crawl or High Crawl • Defensive Position Construction		• Walking Hard Surface at 3.5 mph, > 40 lb Load • Walking Loose Sand at 2.5 mph with Load • Field Assaults			
Heat Category	WBGT Index, F°	Work/Rest (min)	Water Intake (qt/hr)	Work/Rest (min)	Water Intake (qt/hr)	Work/Rest (min)	Water Intake (qt/hr)
1	70° - 81.9°	NL	½	NL	¾	40/20 min	¾
2	82° - 84.9°	NL	¾	15/10 min	¾	30/30 min	1
3	85° - 87.9°	NL	¾	40/20 min	¾	30/30 min	1
4	88° - 93.9°	NL	¾	30/30 min	¾	20/40 min	1
5	> 90°	50/10 min	1	20/40 min	1	10/50 min	1

- The work/rest times and fluid replacement volumes will sustain performance and hydration for at least 4 hrs of work in the specified heat category. Fluid needs can vary based on individual differences (± ¼ qt/hr) and exposure to full sun or full shade (± ¼ qt/hr).
- NL = no limit to work time per hr.
- Rest = minimal physical activity (sitting or standing) accomplished in shade if possible.
- CAUTION: Hourly fluid intake should not exceed 1½ qts.
- Daily fluid intake should not exceed 12 qts.
- If wearing body armor, add 5°F to WBGT index in humid climates.
- If doing Easy Work and wearing NBC (MOPP 4) clothing, add 10°F to WBGT index.
- If doing Moderate or Hard Work and wearing NBC (MOPP 4) clothing, add 20°F to WBGT index.

For additional copies, contact: U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine Health Information Operations Division at (800) 222-4888 or CHPPM, Health Information Operations Division (http://www.army.mil/health). For electronic versions, see: http://www.army.mil/health. Local reproduction is authorized. June 2004



CP-033-0404

NEWS BRIEFS

PAO relaunches postcard program

FROM BRENDA L. BEASLEY

What is a postcard from southern Afghanistan?

The “Postcard from southern Afghanistan” program is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South effort that complements the military Hometown News Release. Simply put, “Postcards from southern Afghanistan,” are a vehicle for members of AED-South to share a first-person account of their experience serving in this historic mission. The Public Affairs Office will assist you in preparing the postcard and in providing it to hometown media.

What’s involved in making a postcard?

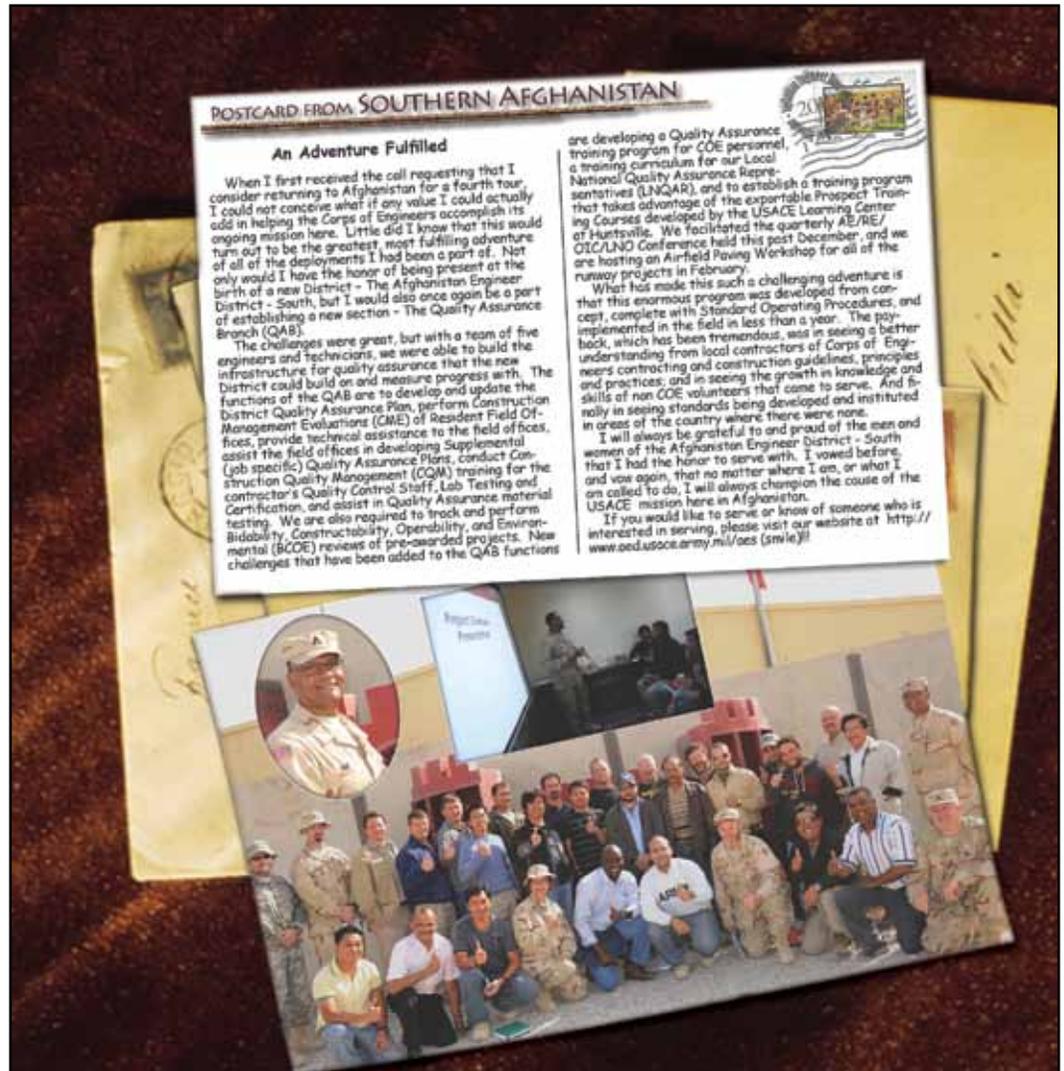
Just write 150-250 words (that’s about four paragraphs of two or three sentences each) about what you do here, your experiences and your impressions. You have a good story to tell, whether you’ve just arrived or re-upped for the nth time. You don’t have to wait until the end of your tour ... in fact, it’s best to write one by mid-tour. Send your words to TAS.AES.PAO@usace.army.mil along with one or more photographs of yourself in Afghanistan. PAO will create a composite draft for your review. You okay it after any changes, suggest a hometown media outlet (or several), and PAO will send it out.

Why should I take the time?

You are unique in your hometown or neighborhood simply by virtue of your deployment here and the mission to which you are contributing. Help tell the reconstruction story, the one that we all know remains untold. America wants to know. The postcards have frequently led to local media interest and follow-on telephonic interviews with radio and newspapers. Postcards are a valuable avenue to reach the U.S. public with what is happening here. Your experience and a couple of comments on the overall reconstruction program, working with our Afghan associates and partners, and outlook for the future, are an honest, firsthand account your fellow citizens should hear.

How may I participate?

Contact the PAO staff by e-mail and they’ll be glad to assist you in getting started. Submit your photos (with you in them). If you need a portrait taken, PAO can do that too. Need ideas? PAO can help. Do it today.



Competitive Temporary Promotion

FROM GLORIA DYSON

When an employee is here on a competitive temporary promotion and goes off AED-South roles, the competitive temporary promotion also ends. If the employee is going on Leave Between Taskers (LBT) or taking a new tour and will return to AED-South on a new tasker, the employee will need to reapply for the position, make a new referral list, receive consideration with all other qualified applicants, be selected, and then receive an official job offer from the stateside Civilian Personnel Advisory Center before leaving Afghanistan to return at a higher grade than their permanent stateside position.

This is why it is very important for employees and managers to start the LBT or new tour request process early — a minimum of 90 days prior to your current tour end date.

Some employees are here in positions that are no longer advertised due to elimination of old vacancy announcements. LBT or new tour requests will now be submitted for the employee’s permanent stateside grade, not the in-theater promoted grade.

If you need additional information, please contact TAS.11@usace.army.mil.

ON THE MOVE

Moving in



Jose Apodaca



John Babon



SGT John Badger



LTC Gordon Bartley



Thomas Bender



Curtis Bragg



Loudres Caamano



Nancy Camp



Penny Coulon



Anne Crenshaw



Pedro Davila



Peter Delaney



Patrick Dougherty



Larry Drane



Charles Eberhardt



James Ediger



SSG Natazha Feliciano



Mark Foster



Richard Gonzalez



Jeff Helmick



James Henderson



SGT Thomas Johnsen



Ashley Kosmal



Steven Lee



Randall Lewis



Erik Lombard



Karla Marshall



SSG Chris Medeiros



Philip Merchant



Hans Miller



Andrew Phillips



Alfonso Quintero



Jeremy Rickard



Laura Rowland



Ayesha Saeed



Job Sayago



Frederick Schelby



Robert Snyder



Betty Jo Spiering



JL Summerlin



Hans Tolsdorf



Ruth Townley



Gerald Townsell



Jeffrey Usavage



Eric Valentine



Michael Vantzelfden



Adam Walker



Larry Weatherwax



Cherlion Whitfield



Sloane Wieber



LCDR Ennis Williams



Jeremy Wilson

Photos unavailable at press time: SGT Ryan Applegate, SPC Jeffrey Baxley, SSG Chris Binder, CPT Derek Bowen, SPC Stuart Chapman, SSG Andrew Hansen, SSG Paul Kelly, MSG Darrell McAllister, SSG Robert Moss, and CPT James Reed.

Moving on

SPC Ronny Alvarez
Michelle Bannister
MAJ Samantha Bebb
SSG David Bray
Connie Byer
SPC Jonathan Duncan
Rick Durham
Daniel Dykstra
George Flickner
Alden Foote

Deborah Gates
Shelby Jackson
Richard Kell
SSG Gregory Linker
Oscar Lopez
Walter McCracken
James McWilliams
Jason McWilliams
Greg Miller
James Myers

MAJ Oscar Portillo
John Richards
SSG Juan Rodriguez
Victor Ross
James Stephens
SGT Raymond Stewart
LT Mark Wadsworth
Billy Waites
Matthew Walden