



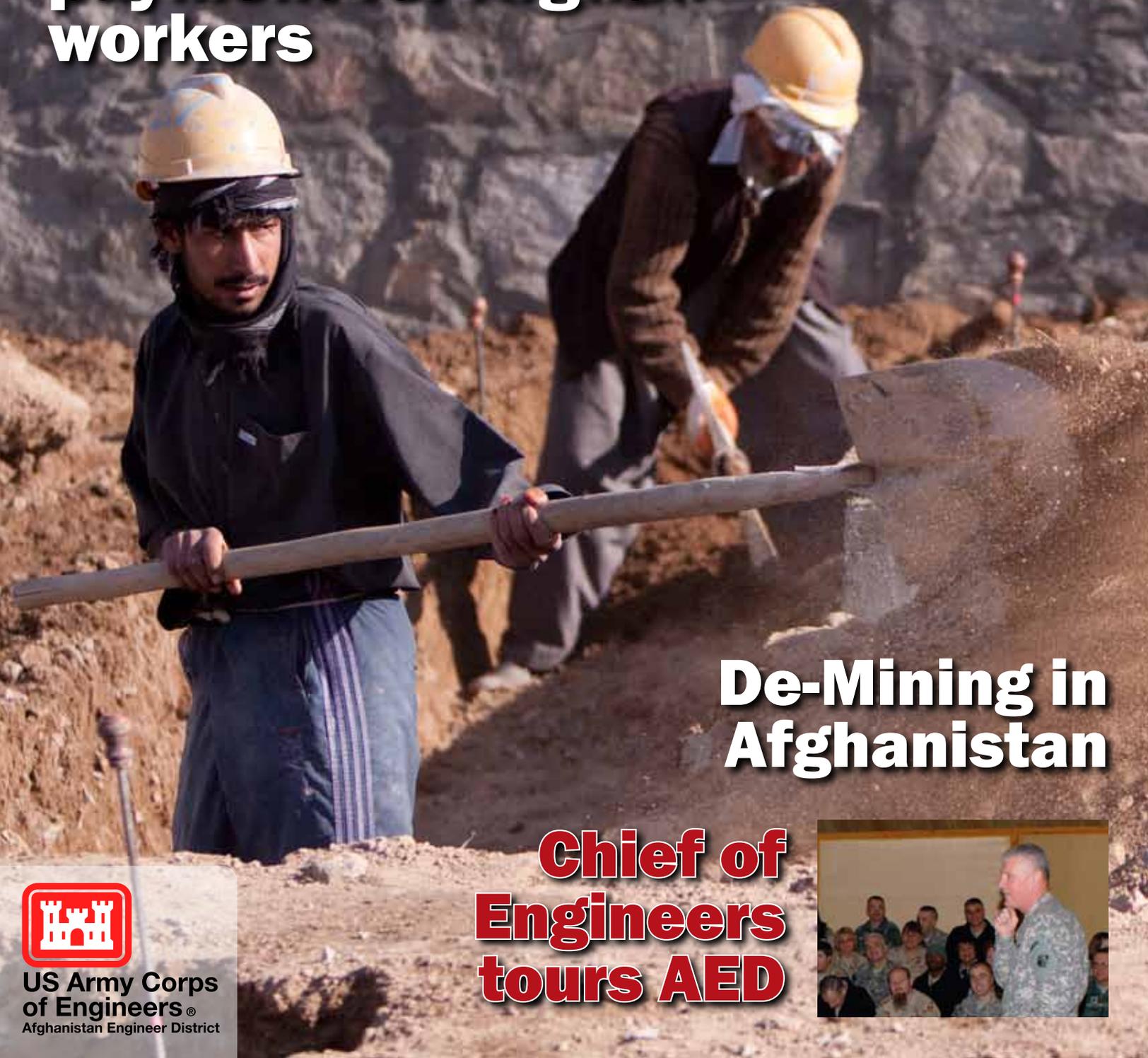
FREEDOM **BUILDER**



MAGAZINE

December 2009

AED enforces wage payment for Afghan workers



De-Mining in Afghanistan

Chief of Engineers tours AED



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Afghanistan Engineer District

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Afghan workers digging a trench for water and power to.
(Full story on pg. 4)

Photo by Joe Marek



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All photographs appearing herein are by the Afghanistan Engineer District Public Affairs Office unless otherwise accredited.

The mission of The Freedom Builder is to support the Commander's Internal Communication Program for the Afghanistan Engineer District. It also serves as the Commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies, operations, technical developments, and command philosophy to the Afghanistan Engineer District.

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From the Commander ...

AES Team:

The Holiday Season provides a great opportunity for reflection, as we take stock in what we have accomplished and look back with a sense of satisfaction on how far we have come since we started last August. You are part of a greater calling as "plank holders" in Afghanistan Engineer District – South (AES). When our Chief Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp made the decision to stand up a second district in Afghanistan last spring, it was based on the projected growth in the southern and western part of the country. At the time there was an estimated work load of about \$ 1 billion spanning three to four years. No one really had an appreciation for how the workload would grow as U.S. and Coalition Forces began to move into RC-South and RC-West.

In the past 10 months, RC-South and RC-West have seen major growth. U.S. forces have built eight cities, two that house more than 10,000 service members while the other six have populations near two to three thousand each. This growth does not happen without major engineering effort and deliberate planning. In AES the planning process also includes 17 different nations, each with varying approaches to troop mission, movement and integration into the holistic picture of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander's counter insurgency strategy.

AES has had the unique opportunity of providing critical engineering support to operational commanders through-

out the region. While building our own capacity to execute a program of over \$1 billion in FY10 alone – AES also has the potential to increase by more than \$500 million with additional military construction (MILCON) and Afghanistan National Security Forces work. This potential work includes a civil/infrastructure program for the Helmand River Valley Refurbishment and the Kajiki Dam Power Generation and Transmission System. There is a lot of work to be done and the AES team is answering the call. AES continues to be tenacious in efforts to impel the Afghan contractors through the struggles and challenges they confront with construction execution in Afghanistan. We are recognized for our engineering expertise, providing critical support to the garrisons and the war fighters at Kandahar Air Field and across the entire South and West Regions of Afghanistan. The AES staff is beginning to see growth and increased productivity as we take on an increased work load. This is truly an exciting time to be a member of the newest USACE District. Thank you to all of the dedicated employees serving here in Afghanistan, and to your supporting families and friends back in the states.

Happy Holidays.
Colonel Kevin J. Wilson



COL Kevin J. Wilson

From the Command Sergeant Major ...

I have been on four short assignments to Afghanistan since 9/11 visiting my deployed units, however this is my first long tour in support of OEF. Up until now my entire military career was dedicated to troop units, this is my first tour with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and I look forward to the assignment and the challenges that come with it. I continue to marvel at the uniqueness of the Corps – a military organization comprised mostly of civilians with diverse backgrounds and a myriad of professional skills.

Since I arrived at AES last August, I have traveled throughout this large new District, visiting Corps Resident Offices and the FOBs where we maintain offices. I have spoken to most of you, one-on-one as often as possible. Your selfless service and willingness to contribute and support our mission is admirable and greatly appreciated.

As your CSM, it is my responsibility to ensure that the entire organization, both our military and civilian are mission ready! I take great pride in this responsibility and I do not bear it lightly. Your personal well being, career progression, and contribution to duty is of top priority. I want to remind all of you, military and civilian - as you perform your duties you are the face of the Corps to our NATO partners, Coalition Forces allies, Afghan partners and the people of Afghanistan. I expect you to maintain

professionalism 24/7 – there are no days off in a combat zone. Your expertise, professionalism and the work you do will have lasting and positive impacts on the stability of this country – I applaud your volunteerism and am very proud to serve with you! If you have an issue or concern you feel requires my attention, I have an open door policy and I welcome every opportunity to help you achieve mission success. My personal expectations are professionalism, military bearing, customs and courtesies – these are all critical if we are to be the ambassadors for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the people of the United States.

As we continue to forge ahead, you will see new District policies and Standard Operating Procedures. I ask that you read these carefully and fully comply. With the steady influx of personnel, the constant transition of staff along with our growing operational capabilities, we need these tools to assist us in the integration of structure and discipline into all of our work processes - this will enable us to work smarter.

I am proud to be here serving next to all of you and I thank you again for your loyal and committed service. I wish all of you, your families and loved ones back home a happy and joyous Holiday Season.



CSM John S. Werner

AED enforces wage payment for Afghan workers



Story by Paul Giblin

Afghan laborers like this one, working on a Corps project, can now rely on receiving their pay in a timely manner, thank to a new Afghanistan Engineer District policy. (Photo by Joe Marek)

KABUL, Afghanistan – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is rolling out a new policy intended to ensure Afghan contractors pay their Afghan construction workers for labor associated with U.S.-funded construction projects.

Starting in fiscal year 2010, all new contracts awarded by the Corps of Engineers' regional office in Kabul will contain provisions that require contractors to prove they are actually paying their employees, subcontractors and suppliers.

The intent is to prevent Afghan and other foreign contractors from skimming wages or simply not paying workers and suppliers, a wide-spread practice in a country marred by corruption.

"We're trying to find ways to enforce payment to these individuals," said Darrel Johnson, the chief of contracting for the Corps' Engineer District-North. "We're here to win the hearts and minds of these folks. We've got to win that battle."

The initiative will be in effect for more than 300 contracts for developments with

a combined value exceeding \$3.2 billion in 2010 alone. The scope of work includes Afghanistan National Police stations, Afghanistan National Army complexes, roads, dams and other infrastructure projects across the country.

The matter is important because Afghan workers often mistakenly blame U.S. officials when their Afghan employers withhold wages for weeks or even months, Johnson said. "They're upset at the American government because they think we didn't pay them. That's what started these initiatives – to try to enforce the payment of the subcontractors and the suppliers and the employees of these contractors," he said.

The initiative bolsters the Corps' zero-tolerance posture toward fraud, said Col. Michael McCormick, the commander for the Corps' operations in northern Afghanistan. "Workers not being paid for the work that they do is a form of corruption. And we will take whatever measures we can to help counter any form of corruption with our contracts and our projects," he said.

In addition, Corps officials expect the policy will reduce the occurrence of labor disputes that have led to work stoppages.

For instance, construction came to a halt for nearly a month on an Afghan National Police district headquarters building in a remote area near the northern city of Mazari-i-Sharif because of pay issues. Workers walked off the site on Nov. 1 complaining that their Afghan employers hadn't paid them for three months, according to an initial investigation by Corps officials.

U.S. officials visited the location, and by Nov. 25 they had negotiated an agreement from the Afghan contractor to provide the workers their back-pay, said Tyrone Crear, the area engineer in the Corps' Mazari-i-Sharif Area Office. The workers agreed to return to the project after the Eid Al-Adha holiday in late November.

“Our people, they are very poor people and they need to get paid in order to feed their family”

All new contracts issued by the Corps mandate that Afghan and foreign contractors specify their procedures to make prompt payment to their subcontractors, workers and suppliers. Furthermore, contractors are required to make their payroll records available to U.S. officials for inspection. In addition, they must allow U.S. officials or their representatives to survey workers on construction sites to verify the workers' pay status.

The new policy falls within Afghan labor law, said Dale Holmes, district counsel for the Corps in Kabul.

The country's law states that employers must pay their employees with 30 days of work performed, but the Afghan government's enforcement efforts are weak, and contractors too often ignore the law, Holmes said. Exact figures are unobtainable, but U.S. officials believe non-payment issues arose at 10 percent to 25 percent of Corps' projects before the initiative was launched in late November.

Shafi Sirat, the owner of the Afghan company Shafi Sirat Inc., which provides con-

struction inspection services to the Corps, believes non-payment is a frequent issue. "It happens most of the time on the projects," he said. "Our people have heard this when they are on sites. We have heard this too many times."

Sometimes, contractors withhold wages on U.S.-funded projects to cover expenses at other projects, Sirat said. Other times, they withhold wages believing the practice serves an incentive to keep workers from quitting until a project is complete.

Sirat believes workers should be paid regularly. "Our people, they are very poor people and they need to get paid in order to feed their family. If they don't get paid for months, then how they can feed their family?" he asked. "Probably they will quit the job. They will never come back to any other construction company to work for because of having a

bad experience."

In some instances, unpaid workers tried to address the matter themselves. They staged walkouts, threatened and held their employers hostage, and disassembled their projects in protest. "Sometimes the workers will come back and they will rip out the



Afghan workers installing supports into place. (Photo by David Salazar)

work that they did, saying, 'If you're not going to pay me, then I'm going to take back the fruits of my labor.' Or they'll take materials," Holmes said.

Corps officials hope the new initiative will resolve non-payment issues before they

escalate to that level.

In addition, Corps attorneys have devised a strategy to counter the practice on existing contracts. They drafted a demand letter citing provisions in Afghan law that requires timely payments to employees and suppliers. The letter states that the Corps will withhold payments to contractors if wages to workers are delinquent.

The Corps was prepared late last month to issue the demand letter for the first time to Krima Construction Corp., the primary contractor for an array of work at the Afghanistan Ministry of Defense headquarters compound in Kabul. A subcontractor, Jamshid Tahiri Group, hadn't paid more than 100 workers at the Kabul site in more than a month, according to a Corps investigation.

Corps officials told Krima executives to expect the demand letter, but before the Corps delivered it, Krima paid the workers. The workers were so grateful, they offered to slaughter and prepare a lamb in tribute to Corrie Veenstra, the Corps engineer who first identified the problem. She declined the offer.

"What happened is a great example," said Michelle Barczak, another attorney in the

Corps' Kabul office who helped devise the strategy. "We didn't withhold anything. What we did is say we would if they didn't fix it."

The enforcement policy also should help improve pay rates for Afghan workers by eliminating the incentive for Afghan and other foreign contractors who operate in Afghanistan to hire non-Afghans, Johnson said. "It's cheaper for an Afghan company to hire a Pakistani or an Indian to do the work, because they'll work cheaper than the Afghans will," he said.

Afghan construction workers generally earn between \$6 to \$14 a day, depending on their specialties and years of experience, Johnson said. In comparison, some foreign workers will accept half as much.

By enforcing contractors pay their employees in full, pay grades are more likely to reflect workers' abilities, rather than their nationalities, Johnson said. The new contracts also will require Afghan companies to prove that more than 50 percent of their employees are Afghan nationals.

Corps officials have been in contact with other U.S. and coalition agencies about the new contract initiatives and hope the other agencies will follow suit. 📧



Afghan worker putting the finishing touches on the roof which will house a power generator for ANA compound. (Photo by Joe Marek)



Corps reworks signs to support Afghan government

Story by: Paul Giblin

Previous construction sites signs such as the one above, highlighted the Corps' involvement in a project. That will change thanks to a new policy AED has adopted. (File Photo)

KABUL, Afghanistan - Corps of Engineers is doing its part to provide visible signs of life for the emerging Afghan national government.

The Corps is introducing a new practice to its operations in the war-torn country, requiring informational signs to be posted at hundreds of construction sites that highlight the Afghan government's involvement in the developments.

"We're going to tie the projects into one of the local Afghan ministries and put a sign up that says 'Done by the Ministry of the Interior' or 'Ministry of Defense,' or whatever," said Darrel Johnson, the chief of contracting for the Corps of Engineers' northern Afghanistan district, which is based in Kabul. "It's sort of like, 'Your tax dollars at work,'" he said.

The construction billboards are roughly four feet tall and six feet wide, and are

intended for Afghan audiences.

The signs are written in Dari, which is one of two official languages in Afghanistan, and English. The color scheme features black, red and green, the colors of Afghanistan's flag. The redesigned signs



USACE signage used for the new Qalaa House dining facility. (Photo by Joe Marek)

omit any reference to the United States or the Corps.

The strategy is to provide visibility and credibility to the Afghan national government for a populace that is largely tribal and clan oriented, Johnson said.

“If we can give face time to the central government for doing these projects throughout the country, maybe people will start recognizing that they do have a central government that does do good things for them,” he said.

Corps officials consulted with Afghan construction executives to design the signs that are required at most construction projects awarded by the Corps of Engineers starting in fiscal year 2010. Within the next year, the signs are expected to be posted at hundreds of Afghanistan National Army complexes, Afghanistan National Police stations, roads, dams and other construction projects across the country.

Signs at some on-going construction projects will be replaced with the new signs as well. However, signs at construction sites on U.S. military installations in Afghanistan will retain their traditional look with the Corps’ red castle logo.

Brig. Gen. John R. McMahon, the former director of engineering for U.S. Forces in



Signs like this one designated the cooperative effort between USACE and the Afghan Government in the past. (File Photo)

Afghanistan, initiated the change in September after seeing a traditional construction sign along the Kabul International Airport Road, said Col. Michael McCormick, commander for the Corps’ operations in northern Afghanistan.

“He said, ‘Do you think it would be better if we weren’t advertising the Corps?’” McCormick recalled. “It took us a long time to get the sign down; it took us longer than he would have liked. But that was the genesis of the idea.”

Corps project engineer Steve Stello and Afghanistan national and Corps project manager Toryalai Alami led the redesign effort.



FARAH ANA GARRISON RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

OCTOBER 11, 2009

Story and Photos by: MAJ Thomas V. Giannini

Farah Provincial Governor Roohul and Coalition forces cut ribbon to officially open Farah ANA Garrison

FARAH, Afghanistan -- The Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineering District-South completed the new Afghanistan National Army Garrison in the Farah Province of Western Afghanistan.

The ANA garrison is large enough to house 2,000 soldiers and is located near the city of Farah. The Farah Resident Office oversaw construction of the Combined Support Transitional Command - Afghanistan funded, \$68 million project, constructed by FCEC/UI Projects, an Afghanistan general contractor.

The garrison will be home to Afghan soldiers, and an Embedded Training Team of U.S. & Italian soldiers who will mentor and conduct missions with Afghan soldiers.

The ETT facility feature three barracks buildings, a recreation center and a dining facility. The ANA facility includes 18 barracks buildings, laundries, recreation centers, a 1,000-person capacity dining facility and a bakery.

The facility also features sports fields, a gym-

nasium and a medical clinic. The complex is completely self-sufficient with water wells, a waste-water treatment facility and five generator houses containing 14 interconnected generators. A helicopter pad will allow visitors to fly directly to the garrison.

Roohul Amin, the governor of Farah Province said the new garrison will lead to “peace in Afghanistan.”

Capt. Baba Jaan, a company commander from the ANA unit in Farah, has watched the garrison grow from nothing to the massive complex that now exists.

“This is a good place for us to educate the soldiers,” he said. “We can teach them how to operate, how to fight. There are places for football, basketball and a gym. This is very good for the soldiers. They can play and feel relaxed after operations or training.” The soldiers are expected to arrive shortly.

Maj. Eltafullah, another company commander from Farah City, said the first step to building



The new sign design, above, will showcase the Afghanistan national government, the appropriate ministry, and the Afghan contractor. Mention of the Corps of Engineers or the U.S. Government will be omitted.



Audience Representing Farah Community, ANA & ANP; U.S. & Italian Military Leaders and General Contractor.

a strong army is to give soldiers a good facility where they can live and train and relax.

“If the army doesn’t have a place to stay, then they can’t fight the enemy, and they can’t fight to protect their country. With the new garrison, it will be easy to bring in Afghan soldiers from outside the province to take part in operations in Farah,” he said.

The opening ceremony for the new garrison was attended by the Provincial Governor, Provincial Council Members and line directors, local and regional ANA Commanders, Afghan National Police officials, Italian forces, soldiers from the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Regiment, U.S. Marines, Corps soldiers and civilians and Provincial Reconstruction Team soldiers.

The buildings for the project were built using innovative construction techniques. 3-D construction allows a building to be built more quickly than traditional construction methods. Walls and roof panels are pre-fabricated. A wire mesh encases a slab of foam. Concrete is sprayed directly onto the panel, creating a sandwich with the foam



Farah ANA Garrison Facility Tour After Ceremony By USACE AED-South Commander, COL Wilson with Farah Governor & ANA Commander

in the center. The panels provide good insulation and are easy to maintain.

The project consumed so much concrete that the contractor built a concrete batching plant inside the compound.

The men were able to perform quality control tests on concrete and reinforcement bar, and were able to check the gradation of the sand and gravel at an on-site laboratory.

The contractors set up an asphalt plant near the site in order to pave the roads inside the complex.



After the ceremony a lunch was served

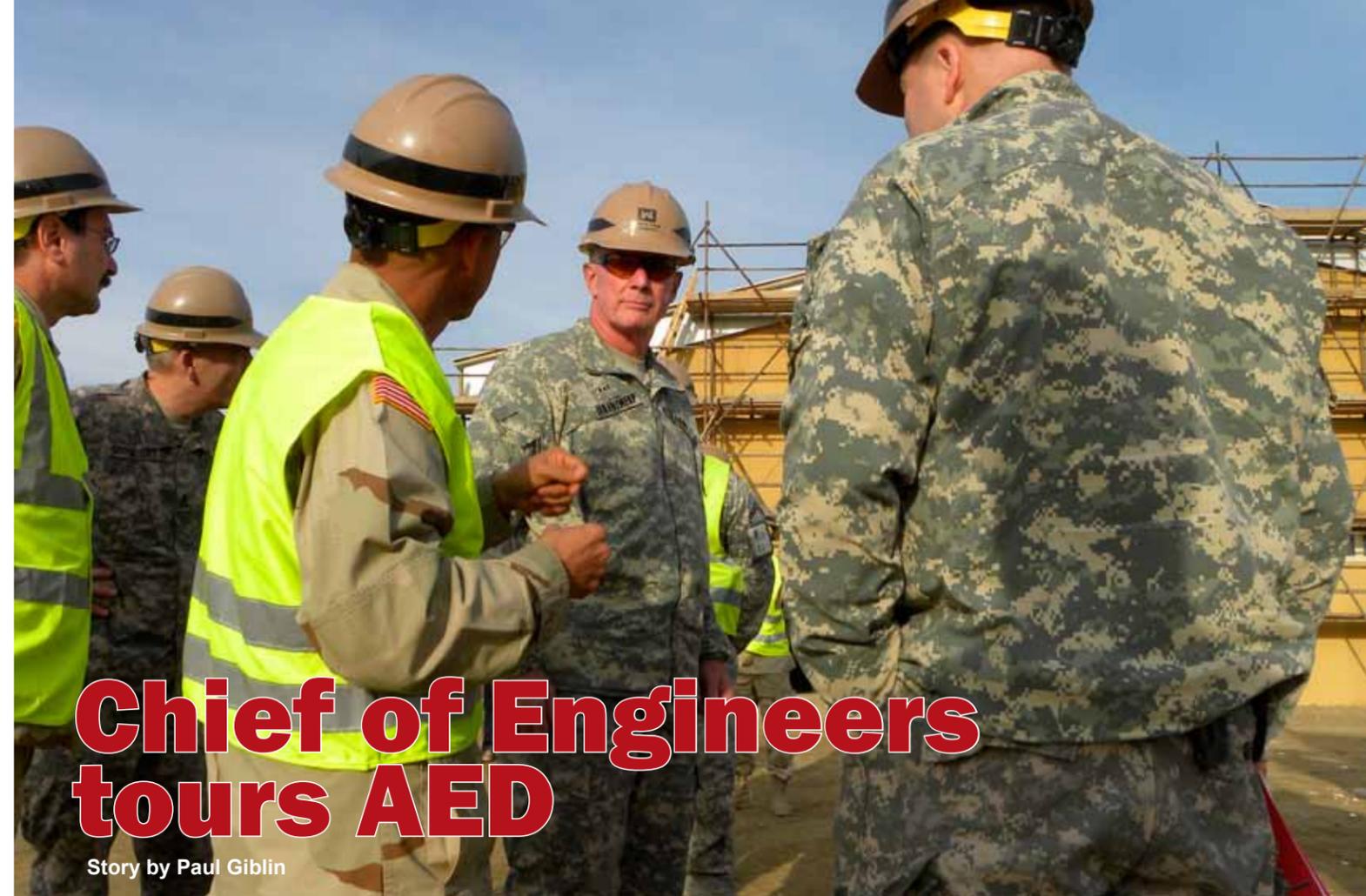
A road is also being built to connect the garrison to a location near the Farah PRT.

“Our company has been using the 3-D system, building ANA and ANP compounds in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Kunar, Khost and Paktika,” said Zabihullah Qurishe, the project engineer from FCEC/UI Projects. The company currently is building a second garrison in the Delaram district of Nimroz province.

“While 500 to 600 construction workers were employed during the year-and-a-half-long construction phase, upon completion, the garrison will continue to pump money into the local economy through the purchase of food and supplies, in addition to providing employment for maintenance workers and supply-chain workers, among others,” said Michael D. Osborne, Farah Resident Engineer.

“The future Operations & Maintenance plan is to train the Afghan army commanders and soldiers to operate and maintain the garrison facilities themselves,” said Joseph Peter, O&M Facilitator.

“There is a good economic outcome from having a military base near a city. It helps create prosperity. That base will need to be regularly re-supplied with fuel, food, equipment, uniforms, you name it,” said Maj. Thomas V. Giannini, who oversees the project at the local level for the



Chief of Engineers tours AED

Story by Paul Giblin

The Chief of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp, speaks with Col. Michael McCormick, right, and others during a site visit to Bagram Airfield Dec. 18. (Photo by Paul Giblin)

KABUL, Afghanistan – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ mission in Afghanistan will become increasingly vital in 2010 with the buildup of both U.S. and Afghan military forces in the country, the Corps’ Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp Jr., told 250 Corps personnel stationed in the capitol city.

“As we go forward with the mission the three or four months here -- if you thought you’ve seen high adventure up until this time -- you’re going to see even higher adventure,” Van Antwerp said during a town hall meeting at the Corps’ northern Afghanistan district headquarters compound on Nov. 18.

The Corps will serve a critical function as the United States prepares to send 30,000 additional military troops to Afghanistan, bringing the total number of troops in the country to 100,000, the general said. Corps personnel are charged with designing and overseeing construction of barracks, offices, dining facilities and

other facilities to accommodate the surge. “If you have more forces, you have to have places for them,” he said.

Simultaneously, Corps personnel must handle an increase in development to support Afghanistan’s emerging government, and in particular, development of bases and training facilities for the country’s rapidly growing national army and police force, Van Antwerp said.

The general commended the 250 military and civilian Corps personnel at the meeting at the Qalaa House compound for their devotion to the mission in Afghanistan, which, he said, will be the Corps’ most important in the coming year.

Van Antwerp’s assessment followed a multi-day tour in the Afghanistan theater. Van Antwerp, along with Maj. Gens. Don T. Riley and Jeffrey J. Dorko, inspected a variety of Corps projects in both the southern and northern Afghanistan engineer districts. Corps officials



Earl R. Smith III, right, speaks with Van Antwerp during his tour of a facility in Bagram. (Photo by Paul Giblin)

briefed the generals on each site's successes and challenges.

In Bagram north of Kabul, the generals inspected several developments at Bagram Airfield, including fuel storage facilities, office buildings, barracks and other projects, speaking to engineers and construction managers at each location.

"I was here in July. I can't believe the place. It's just expanding by leaps and bounds," Van Antwerp said. "I'm impressed with the construction. We just walked through a barracks that was just really excellent, and a base ops facility that was first class. So I'm really proud of what the guys are doing."

Earl R. Smith III, a resident engineer for the Infrastructure Office at Bagram, guided the generals through two nearly complete residence buildings that are designed to accommodate 160 troops. Smith pointed out that the structures were being constructed largely by Afghan workers who were doing quality work.

"Right now we are ahead of schedule – and we plan to keep it that way. The completion date is going to Feb. 28 and I'm 100 percent sure they'll finish it

before then," Smith said.

The generals also toured a nearly finished dining facility. Miow Siow, the project manager for the facility, used the meeting to discuss the construction materials used on the project. He noted that the facility is made of concrete masonry blocks, a material that's sturdy, but labor intensive. He suggested that steel-frame pre-cast concrete panels could speed up delivery for similar developments in the future.

"It would cut in half the time to build it," Siow told the generals. Van Antwerp discussed the matter with the project manager and later noted that Corps personnel need to remain focused on quick turn-arounds in Afghanistan.

"We're really pressing to get aggressive timelines here, but we want quality in the end," Van Antwerp said. "What we're going to look at more and more is standard design that could go up quicker, that you don't have to go through the big design portion up front; you just site adapt them."

In Gamberi east of Kabul, the generals toured an Afghan National Army garrison that is being built to accommodate 4,200 Afghan troops. Upon completion in 2011, it will be one of the largest Afghan army complexes in the country. In comparison, most other Afghan army complexes will be built to handle 650 to 1,000 troops.



Van Antwerp speaks to personnel at an engineer conference in Kandahar during his tour of the Afghanistan Engineer District - South's area of operations. (Photo by Patricia Ryan)

Project engineer David Purdy led Van Antwerp, Riley and Dorko on a walking tour that featured a temporary helipad, U.S. and Afghan barracks buildings, office buildings, dining facilities, storage building and a power plant on the site that's approximately three-quarters of a square-mile in size.

Purdy highlighted several design details that have been tailored to meet Afghan expectations, including a kitchen annex with wood-burning stoves and wood storage facilities, and ceiling fans rather than air conditioning units in the barracks buildings. Riley called the complex a tremendous facility that will help achieve President Barack Obama's strategy of assisting the war-torn nation develop its own security forces.

"It probably will be much more than the Afghan army is used to. I think they're going to be in a little shock when they get here and find out how nice it really is," the general said.

"The challenge for them will be to take good care of it. We'll have a training challenge in making sure they know how to take care of the facility. It's worthy of them and I think they will feel a great deal of pride when they move into it," Riley said.

Corps officials also briefed the generals on two serious challenges at Gamberi – poor management practices by the prime contractor that led to construction delays during the first phase of development, and a network of normally dry river beds or "wadis" that flood during rainy seasons.

Concerning management issues, the prime contractor, DynCorp International, initially provided little oversight and brokered most of its work to other contracting firms, said Rex Goodnight, chief of engineering and construction in northern Afghanistan.

"They failed miserably and they had to terminate those contracts and restart," Goodnight said. "That's why we're more than a year behind in completing these facilities. It goes back to the fact that they come in here just thinking they're going to sub everything out and act as a broker, which is a recipe for failure in this country."

The Corps responded by developing its own Aggressive Schedule Management practice in an



Van Antwerp speaks to personnel during a town hall meeting at Qalaa House, Dec. 18. (Photo by David Salazar)

effort to influence contractors to invest more into the developments, and to incorporate better management and capacity development principals, he said. Since the intervention, DynCorp has upgraded its management strategy and currently is meeting its revised construction schedule, he said.

The wadis presented a different set of challenges on the nearly square-mile site.

"When the rains come in the spring, there's going to be a lot of water moving across that site and all that new construction. We've already experienced flooding and damage in excess of \$300,000 this past fall," Goodnight said. Flash floods damaged barracks and a dining facility.

Corps officials plan to analyze the site and devise diversion structures to divert water from the site to prevent future damage from a 50-year or even a 100-year flood, he said. Van Antwerp acknowledged the difficulties engineers and construction managers must confront with the Afghan landscape.

"When you just site a facility just because you have the space, it doesn't necessarily mean that's the best place to put it from a drainage standpoint or from a geo-tech standpoint," he said.

"What are the soil conditions that can support that construction? Normally in the States, we do all those tests first and make sure we have a plan for that. Here, you take the spot they've given you and you do the best you can. It's a different kind of construction," Van Antwerp said. 📷

Dealing with UXO in Afghanistan

Story by: Hank Heusinkveld



Ronco De-mining contractors use deep Ebinger Large Loop Detector to find unexploded ordnance. Ground must be cleared to a depth of one meter to fulfill de-mining specifications. (Photo by Hank Heusinkveld)

KABUL, Afghanistan -- At an Afghan National Army base just northwest of Kabul, new recruits are transitioning from civilian life to military life as Afghanistan increases its security forces to bolster the country's defense.

The influx of troops means existing training areas must be expanded and more structures must be built to accommodate the new soldiers. But before ground can be broken for construction, land needs to be cleared of unexploded ordnance and landmines left over from the Soviet occupation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is helping ensure those areas are safe by providing oversight for RONCO Consulting Corp., a Washington, D.C.-based company that performs unexploded ordnance clearance and de-mining services worldwide.

More than 20 years after Soviet forces left Afghanistan, a training area near the Afghan army base is littered with Soviet tanks, amphibious assault vehicles, various automobiles and large quantities of scrap metal – in addition to unexploded ordnance, which also is known as UXO.

“The site we’re working right now, the Kabul Military Training Center, is difficult because we have to remove all of the Russian vehicles and scrap metal first, before we can get to the actual UXO removal,” said Christopher Yonat, an ordnance and explosive safety specialist with the Corps’ division in northern Afghanistan.

“Our contractor has removed more than 600 vehicles, including tanks, armored personnel carriers and over 9,000 cubic meters of scrap metals from the site just to get to the buried UXO. So far, we’ve removed about 300 ordnance items from the site like small arms, unexploded projectiles, rockets and grenades,” he said. “Fortunately no mines or mine fields have been found.”



Sadar Wali and Chris Yonat inspects a 100mm high explosive projectile. (Photo by Joe Marek)

Yonat, a former explosives ordnance disposal technician for the U.S. Marines and U.S. Army, said the site has 1.7 million square meters of land that needs to be cleared. During the last nine months that he's been stationed in Afghanistan, Yonat has managed the clearance of roughly 21 million square meters of land for construction of Afghanistan National Army and Afghanistan National Police facilities.

"This country is one of the world's most contaminated for UXO and land mines," he said. "It's No. 1 on the United Nation's Mine Action Center Campaign for Clearance. The U.N.'s been working on clearing UXO and mines in this country for 18 years."

Corps personnel work in conjunction with the U.N. Mine Action Coordination Center of Afghanistan to ensure all areas that the Corps clears are fully documented in a U.N.

data base.

"The U.N. does humanitarian de-mining to keep people, especially children, from stepping on land mines and from picking up ordnance. We're in the business of clearing areas before we start construction to prevent injury and death," Yonat said.

Clearing an area is risky and there's no room for error.

Yonat ensures that contractors work safely and in strict accordance with international and Afghanistan de-mining standards. Furthermore, he ensures contracts meet U.S. Department of Defense and Corps requirements for investigating all metallic anomalies in the ground to the depth of more than a meter.

Contractors, he said, have to investigate all metal detected by their equipment to determine whether it's ordnance-related. If contractors determine an anomaly is a threat, they defuse the item, sometimes exploding it or detonating it in place.

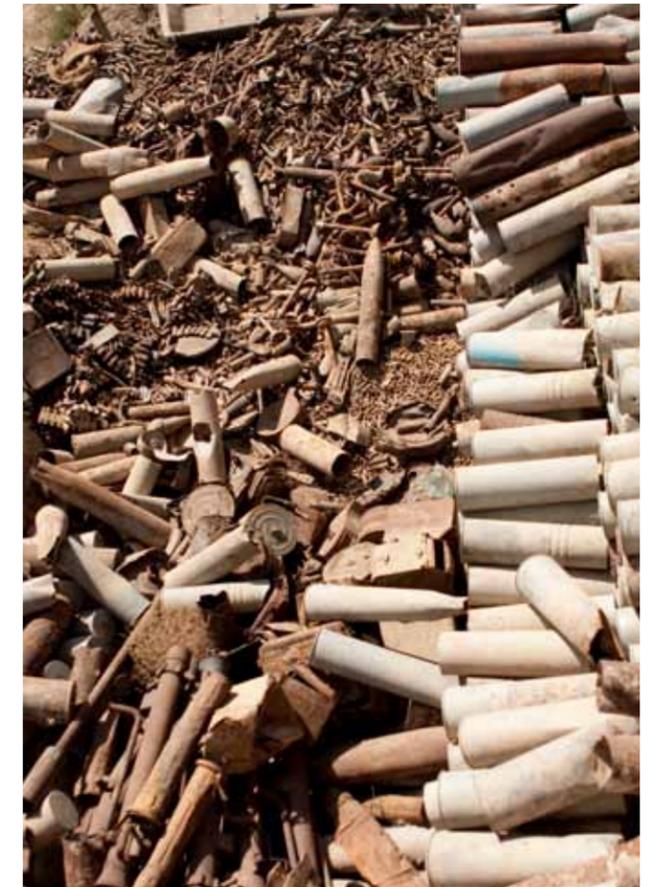


Chris Yonat and Scott Parker from RONCO Consulting Corp. examine ordnance found that day. (Photo by Hank Heusinkveld)

To date, RONCO de-miners have had no serious incidents involving unexploded ordnance or landmines, Yonat said. The company relies heavily on Afghan nationals who are highly trained and who have a reputation for being some of the best de-miners in the business.

"They are truly dedicated to their job and dedicated to cleaning up their country," Yonat said. "Safety is No. 1 on these sites, followed closely by quality assurance. RONCO has a multi-tier system which ensures checks and balances every step of the way, ensuring safety and quality. They also use mine dogs that can sniff out explosives as part of their quality control process."

As much as 95 percent of the contamination is unexploded ordnance, rather than land mines, Yonat said. Nearly all of it was left by the Soviets and nearly all of the people killed by it are Afghans. "Unfortunately, about 5 million civilians are affected by the UXO and mine threat in Afghanistan," he said. 🇺🇸



After inspection, items are segregated as UXO or Free From Explosives (FFE) as in this photo. (Photo by Joe Marek)





From America, with love...

USACE deployees, soldiers, friends and families, and OfficeMax reach out to Afghan children

Story by Mark Willis
Photos by Joe Marek

SSG Dominic Worthy greets local Afghan children at rural school where donated schoolbags were delivered

It all began with a package of gum. About once a week, whenever Gloristine Price, MSgt. Elvis Williams, Terry and Carol Steuart, or I make the short walk from AED's Qalaa House to nearby Camp Eggers, it nearly always happens. Afghan children will suddenly appear at our side - seemingly from out of nowhere - asking if we'd like to buy a pack of gum.

At other times, they'll tag along offering handmade bracelets or maybe tattered tourist magazines in exchange for a dollar.

Naturally, it always works, and we readily part with our spare dollars, but later on, we can't help but wonder about one aspect of the experience:

Why are these children -- many as young as 6 or 7 years old -- not out playing with little friends and having normal childhoods, instead of being out on the streets approaching strangers, trying to make a

little extra money to help support their families?

Needless to say, it didn't take long for us to figure out the answer: Life can be harsh in Afghanistan, and children have to grow up quickly here in the world's second-poorest country.

Their meager circumstances were brought to our attention yet again, when other AED employees and I drove through the remote villages en route to some of our construction work sites. As we made our way along the dirt roads of the villages, I'd sometimes notice little children standing out by the road as we drove by, holding out the palm of one hand and making a circular motion over it with the fingers of the other.

When I asked my interpreter what this gesture meant, he said that in the past some Corps workers had once donated a box of pencils and writing tablets to the village. The children, who were trying to make a



Afghan child can hardly wait to get a look at his new donated Office Max school backpacks.

writing motion, were hoping we'd brought some more writing paper and pencils on this visit, too. The interpreter then explained that most of these remote schools don't have the budget to supply paper and pencils for the children, and those were also things that many village families just can't afford.

The more we thought about it, the more it bothered us -- the Kabul street kids with their packages of gum or ragged magazines, desperately trying to help their families' circumstances, and the village children sitting in classrooms with no writing paper on their desks.

During phone calls back home to family members and co-workers, we'd often speak of the sad plight of the Afghan children, and it wasn't long before something totally unexpected and very special began to happen: Boxes began arriving.

The first to arrive were two boxes of notepaper and pencils sent to Ben Neely, resident engineer, from a friend back in the States. The supplies -- enough for two classrooms -- were soon delivered to the Gul Dura girl's school, and were received with looks of wonder and amazement.

Not long after that, my wife and sister-in-law followed up by sending boxes filled with Dum-Dum suckers and individually-wrapped peppermint candy to be distributed among Afghan street children, unaccustomed to the delight of after-school treats.

But that still wasn't the end; other boxes were still to arrive. During a phone

conversation with a co-worker in the Wilmington District, Gloristine Price, administrative assistant for the Kabul Area Office, mentioned the kids' school needs, and how excited the Afghan children were to receive candy or any other item. After hearing this, her co-worker, Gloria Cliff, went into action, and along with several other "angels" from her district, donated a number of boxes filled to their brims with pens, paper, pencils, coloring books, snacks, and other items for the needy children of Afghanistan.

Price's cousin, Gwen Mustaf, also decided to get involved, and joined the effort by mailing a large box of school supplies and



Mark Willis and local Afghan children pose with new donated Office Max school backpacks.

snacks for the children.

Helping kids and their families is something she and her husband, Shaar Mustaf, do on a year-round basis back in the United States, since they oversee the Take Charge Program in Maryland.

The program, founded by the Mustafs, specializes in family strengthening and intervention for at-risk youth.

At about the same time, MSgt. Elvis Williams made a call to his wife, who quickly responded by sending a large box of toothbrushes and toothpaste. These items, along with coloring books, crayons, and notepaper, were included in gift bags put together by the Kabul Area Office staff for young children of some of the AED Afghan workers.

About a week after that, Staff Sgt. Dominic Worthy decided it was time for him to do his part.

We'd just completed a second visit to one of the outlying village schools to drop off a couple more boxes of school supplies, and as we were departing, we learned that a total of 450 children attend the school.

Even though the supplies we'd just delivered would benefit several classrooms, we realized that the vast majority of the students attending the remote village school would still be doing without school supplies of any kind.

After returning to his room that night, Worthy began making phone calls to get prices on reams of notepaper, planning to buy more school supplies with his own money, if necessary.

It was then that an idea occurred to him, and so he made another call, and then yet another, and as he continued to follow through each of his leads, something remarkable began to happen. By the next day, he received the almost unbelievable news. An OfficeMax staff member confirmed that the company would be donating and shipping 463 children's backpacks, filled with notepaper, pencils, and other school supplies. The children at the impoverished school would no longer walk to and from school empty-handed; now they'll have school supplies and backpacks to carry them in.

During the next few weeks, the supplies and backpacks were due to arrive.

Oddly enough, this steadily-growing humanitarian campaign all began with those first few street children holding out

packages of gum.

This small act brought attention to the Afghan children's true needs, and people responded.

Corps of Engineers personnel and their families back in the States reached out to show they care.

As a result of their compassion, desperately needed school supplies made the transatlantic journey from America to Afghanistan, and into the hands of Kabul street kids and the children of remote villages.

In just a couple of months, the grass-roots effort had grown, spreading from family to family back home, and eventually culminating in the generous, public-spirited donation by OfficeMax, which will bring delighted smiles to young faces throughout an entire Afghan community. 📷



Mark Willis, SSG Dominic Worthy hand out donated Office Max school backpacks to local Afghan children.

AED-N welcomes new CSM

Story by David Salazar

KABUL, Afghanistan -- Members of the Afghanistan Engineer District – North welcomed a new command sergeant major Dec. 10.

Command Sergeant Major Calvin T. Williams assumed responsibilities as the command sergeant major of the district from Command Sergeant Major Harry Farris.

Farris, who served as command sergeant major for a year following a recall from military retirement to serve as the CSM of AED-N, will return to his home in Minnesota to resume his retirement from Active Duty. Farris was honored with a farewell dinner at Qalaa House Dec. 10, where he was presented with his second Bronze Star.

Williams, a native of Parkersburg, WV, served most recently as the command sergeant major of the 463rd Engineer Battalion based in Wheeling, WV. Williams also served as the command sergeant major of the Gulf Region Central District in Iraq from Jan. 2008 to Jan. 2009.

His personal awards include the Bronze Star Medal (2nd Award), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (3rd Award), Army Achievement Medal, Army Good conduct Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (5th Award), National Defense Service Medal (3rd Award), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with M Device & Silver Hourglass), NCO Professional Development Ribbon (with Numeral 4), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon Air Force Short Tour, Air Force NCO Professional Military Education Graduate Ribbon, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon (2nd Award), Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon, Air Force Training Ribbon, M-16 Expert Qualification Badge and the de Fleury Medal.

Williams has served a combined total of more than 33 years of service between his seven years of active duty in the U.S. Air Force and more than 25 years of service in the U.S. Army Reserve. Throughout his career as a Soldier and licensed welder, Williams has arrived at a very simple command philosophy: Do your job.

“When I come into a new assignment, I immediately tell folks that I’m looking for people who solve problems and solve those problems at the lowest levels. I want supervisors to get to know people better and to solve problems at their level,” he said. “Yes, my job is the health and well-being of the folks here and I’m very passionate and very adamant about that and I love doing it, but I don’t have time to solve everybody’s problems.”

Although succinct in his approach to his duties, Williams sees himself as both an agent of change and proponent of improvement for AED-N.

“This organization is a great organization with professional people. But greatness and professionalism can be improved upon, no matter where you’re at,” Williams said. “Wake up in the morning and ask yourself, ‘How can I make this organization better?’ There are two ways: By building better working relationships and through better communication.

“If you put those two practices to use a little each day and improve upon them, you have now made this organization better, because everything we do revolves around working relationships and communication.”

Williams also has a few goals in mind – all of them geared toward attracting and retaining quality personnel at AED-N. “If I can make this a better place for these folks, they’ll be more willing to come back,” Williams said. “Whether it’s improving the working conditions or living conditions, I’m a firm believer in investing in these folks. That’s the legacy that I want to leave here.”

Specifically, Williams sees room for improvement in the current living arrangements and morale. “We need to

See CSM, page 28



CSM Calvin T. Williams



AED-N helps get Kabul International Airport up and running

Story and photos by Hank Heusinkveld

(From left) Greg Grugett, Larry Bergmooser, Sayeed Hejazi and Glen McIntosh walk the tarmac to the site of the new construction at Kabul International Airport.

KABUL, Afghanistan -- In the spring of 2009, commercial airline traffic in Afghanistan was nearly non-existent. At Kabul International Airport (KIA) air traffic was mainly military fixed wing and rotary aircraft. But an international effort by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Afghanistan Engineer District-North and other organizations is helping to make KIA more accessible for international and domestic air traffic giving the Afghan economy a much-needed boost.

"When I first got here there were two or three airplanes arriving each day and there were no pedestrians at all after 10 AM," said former AED-North Project Manager Larry Bergmooser. "Now it's non-stop travel. Our goal and objective for what the Corps of Engineers is doing is to help the Afghans with their infrastructure needs. We've been assessing their buildings, and we've been communicating with the directors to find out what their needs are. The Afghans just haven't had any resources, and they've had no authority to develop their own organization. We've been empowering them to a large degree, and that's

helped to jumpstart the redevelopment."

KIA has two contrasting sections. The Japan-built international terminal is modern and attractive and was completed in August of 2008. The domestic terminal was built in two different periods more than 50 years ago. The Soviet Union built the foundation and the runways in the early 1950s, and the U.S. Agency for International Development built the air traffic control tower and annex a few years later. According to Bergmooser, the domestic terminal is well past its serviceable life, but the structure is solid and is being updated with modern electrical and sewage systems. In addition, Bergmooser said that the Corps of Engineers is working directly for the Federal Aviation Administration to install a ground approach radar system, improve security enhancements, and plan activities for building renovation. The Corps is helping to lead by example, but it's coaxing Afghan engineers to take the initiative to build for themselves.

"The Ministry of Transportation for Civil Aviation is just now bringing on its engineering team. The

individual engineers are quite qualified, but they haven't had the experience that they've needed or the money to do the projects. And they've not had the chance to develop their own experience. If you don't have money it's hard to do a project to get experience. If you don't have the authority to go in and build something or you don't have the resources to build it then you don't go to that next level of competence. That's what happens when you lose three generations of experience and training and the ability to manage your own affairs."

One thing that the Afghans are gravitating to is project management expertise provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Sayed Mujtaba is an Afghan civil engineer employed by AED-North as a project manager for the Support for Others Program.

"I'm getting a lot of experience from the Army Corps of Engineers, and it's helping me to guide the Afghan people for managing projects. Management in Afghanistan has been missing for a long time because we haven't been able to build anything. The Corps can help Afghan engineers not only build, but help with management which can improve construction and help provide more projects and more employment for people."

Developing working and mentoring relationships at KIA has been successful, Bergmooser said. The FAA is advising and mentoring the Minister of Transportation, and the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Organization which certifies airfields for international travel is helping directors and sub directors to understand their roles. Kabul International Airport President Dr. M.Y. Rassuli is grateful for the outpouring of international support.

"Kabul International Airport is the biggest in Afghanistan. It has been in very bad condition,

but now it has been improved with the help of our international colleagues. The World Bank provides for us tariff for the rehabilitation of the runway and the fencing of the airport and also for demining. The Corps of Engineers helped us for airport security with the perimeter fence around the operational area. They are rehabilitating the annex building and the tower and they have also built a gate for the crews. We are very thankful to our international colleagues, especially from the Corps of Engineers."

The big picture is simple, Bergmooser said. The more functional and well managed the airport, the more commerce can expand by commercial air traffic.

"The air highway within Afghanistan is secure. When you start building an airport center a society is going to grow from it. That's what's happening here. And once they get up to speed eventually they'll be all Afghans working and building. That's when we're really going to start making a difference for this country. That's what I've really been proud of is helping get that part started. The whole goal is to let them build, not build it for them because they know what to do. They want to do this. They just need us to give them the experience, the encouragement, money and the time to do it." 



AED personnel meet with Kabul International Airport officials.

BG Buckler visits AED-S

Photo essay by Patricia Ryan

Commander Joint Forces Engineer Command, Brig. Gen. William Buckler, Director Joint Program Integration Office Mr. Witt Anderson and Command Sgt. Maj. Guy Taylor visited AES Nov. 17 and joined AES Commander Col. Kevin Wilson, AES Command Sgt. Maj. John Werner and a team of lead AES engineers on a helo tour of several Resident Offices and FOBs in the AES footprint.

The group attended a briefing at FOB Wolverine, visited the construction site of an Afghan Police Department facility in Qalat, Zabul Province and as many other sites as time permitted.



AED-N NCO earns coveted de Fleury Medal

Story and photo by Hank Heusinkveld

KABUL, Afghanistan -- U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Tommy Tajalle, the Movement Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge for the Afghanistan Engineer District-North, received the coveted de Fleury Medal during a ceremony Nov. 30.

He was cited for being not only a competent and dedicated engineer Soldier, but an outstanding Non-Commissioned Officer who leads by example.

"I received the de Fleury Medal for what I've done in the past 10 years of my military service," he said. "But I have to credit a lot of my receiving it toward the Soldiers who I've served with. I get the medal, but it's more or less the Soldiers who actually put me where I'm currently at. I've been training Soldiers throughout my career in how to do

construction better."

Tajalle, a Military Occupation Skill (MOS) 21 Hotel Construction Engineer Supervisor based with the 506th Quartermaster Battalion in Okinawa, Japan, trains Soldiers in such jobs as rough framing, plumbing, electrical "and pretty much anything that deals with construction." A veteran of two deployments to Iraq and one to Afghanistan, he's had his share of construction jobs around the world. He's deployed to the Caribbean to help build schools, and he belonged to a Civil Action team to help with construction projects in Micronesia. One of his most interesting jobs was helping a Special Forces element in Iraq.

"I took 10 Soldiers with different MOS's and trained them how to be construction engineers in a short time. We built a 360-degree shoot house which was 70 by 100 feet with a built-in sniper tower. We also built the Central Issue Facility and some barracks areas, too."

Tajalle said that he had not planned to be in the Army for more than his initial four-year enlistment. But a young private under his charge convinced him that his greatest strength was his leadership abilities. That motivated Tajalle to continue his career and put just as much time in being a professional construction engineer as a dedicated leader. It's these attributes that earned him the de Fleury Medal.

"NCOs are the backbone of the Army. In order to get things done it's always that guy, that little guy inside the NCO Corps who makes things happen. He's going to push things through. He's going to motivate his Soldiers. That's where NCOs come in. We try to build Soldiers up and hope that they progress even further where we were when we were young troops to try to make the Army better. It's making the engineer branch a lot better."

The background of the de Fleury dates back to 1777 when a French engineer volunteered to serve with the American Army in its fight for independence from Britain. Francois Louis Tessedre de Fleury was trained as an engineer and served in the French Army during the Corsican Campaign.



Staff Sgt. Tommy Tajalle poses with the coveted Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal he earned.

See DE FLEURY, page 28

AED meets with ATVI to plan construction training program

Story and Photos by David A. Salazar



Weaver speaks with ATVI officials during a formal gathering on the school's campus. Sardar Roshan (far right) is ATVI's Executive Director.

KABUL, Afghanistan – In what is to become a landmark endeavor for the Afghanistan Engineer District-North, an AED official met with executives from the Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute in Kabul, Dec. 8.

Mike Weaver, Deputy Director of Afghanistan Small Business Development for AED-N, met with the executive director, senior engineer of the construction department, the operations manager and the administrative and finance manager of one of two of Afghanistan's remaining VOTECH schools.

The purpose for the meeting was to query institute officials of their receptiveness in helping develop a training program for Afghans who wish to work under contract on AED projects.

"What we're trying to do is put together a specialized construction-focused training program with the help of ATVI," said Weaver. "The purpose of the program would be to train eligible Afghan students who can

then be integrated into our projects workforce, thereby helping to improve their quality and skill level, which will in turn give us a quality product as far as our construction goes."

Afghan workers to date have come to work on projects with little or no experience or technical training on fundamental construction, concrete, plumbing, electrical or finishing work, said Weaver. The AED-N District Commander, Col. Michael McCormick, plans to utilize Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP) funds to help bolster the number of formally-trained Afghan workers on AED projects.

The lack of skilled workers is largely due to the oppression that Afghanistan faced throughout its history, said Sardar Roshan, the Executive Director of ATVI. "Afghanistan has been methodically destroyed over the past four decades," said Roshan, in reference to the terrorism that marred the country and curtailed education and litera-

cy. "Essentially, we've lost an entire generation of educated and technically trained people."

For the past three years, Roshan and his faculty have worked hard to bring the institute back to working condition with assistance from organizations such as the U.S. Agency for International Development. Roshan is considered by his peers the "Father of ATVI," since his efforts in securing funding to rebuild the campus and develop a curriculum were instrumental in the school's resurgence. Today, more than 10,000 students apply for one of 1,200 available school seats each semester.

This high interest in post-secondary education indicates to Roshan that this AED-funded program will receive lots of attention. "There is a demand and thirst for learning in Afghanistan," said Roshan. "I think there will be no shortage of demand and interest in a program like this. The question really is how much of an opportunity we will be able to provide to address the demand?"

With an already robust construction program, ATVI is equipped to teach students the basics in construction, electrical installation and plumbing. The Corps' involvement and funding will increase the number of students able to obtain this training, and will offer more specialized training packages, including the basics of Corps of Engineers construction standards as well as leadership training for potential construction foremen.

The program pilot program will focus on Kabul, but if it is successful, there are plans to expand the program to other regions of the country near Corps construction sites, including Jalalabad and Mazir-e-Sharif. "We would like to get this program underway by late Spring of 2010," Weaver said. "We're hoping by the end of this fiscal year, we will be able to put these trained students (to work)."

To Roshan's colleague, Dr. Aminullah Amin, this program is exactly what the country needs to continue its slow but steady progress toward building an independent government and economy.

"I think that currently, considering the lack of job opportunities for young people,

this will be a very fruitful project because it will enhance the skills of the people who need jobs, especially the young people," said, Amin, ATVI's operations manager.

"The reconstruction and development of this country is not possible without being done by its own people," Roshan said. "The decades of destruction of the country requires extra efforts to reach in and provide skills to the workforce and to invest a lot in human capital."

Roshan also believes that the program fits in with the goals of Coalition Forces and his faculty at the institute.



Mike Weaver, Deputy Director of Afghanistan Small Business Development, takes a tour of ATVI's campus with Dr. Aminullah Amin (center), Noorulhaq Harrif, Senior Engineer of the school's Construction Department, and Ahmad Popal (behind Harrif), the school's Administration and Finance manager.

"The training and upgrading of the level of education and skills of the people – that itself is an essential ingredient of development (for this country)," Roshan said. "The efforts (of AED) are well focused in accordance with our common objective of helping the people of Afghanistan to help themselves."

The effects of the training program will not only help AED in its efforts to employ a largely Afghan workforce through the Afghan First Initiative, but also to address the country's long term needs.

"Hopefully through this training program, we'll be able to get these students into work, and through education, be able to improve the quality of our projects," Weaver said. "Long term, when we leave the country, we want these people we've trained to be able to move on and continue to help their coun-

Strangers aid to save life

Story by Hank Neusinkveld

Mikel Bullard lived too close to the edge. But he lived to tell about it.

The USACE Security Liaison Team member based at a German compound in Kunduz developed complications from medication he was taking for a skin disease.

He was unaware of how serious his condition became until a team member took him to a German medical facility.

He was being prepared for an emergency medical flight, but his condition worsened from severe hemorrhaging in his throat.

After losing eight units of blood, his

team leader made a call for emergency blood donations at a dining facility.

People representing six different countries came calling, and he received an emergency blood transfusion.

He eventually was transported to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany where he recovered after a 13-day stay and two days in a coma.

“It was a close call, but it had a perfect outcome. I’m living testament that it worked!”

Bullard later returned to Pembroke, NC, where he made a full recovery. 📷



Bullard above at his home in Pembroke, NC, days after returning home. (photo courtesy of Mikel Bullard)

CSM, from page 21

improve our living conditions – the food here is great – we need to improve our MWR. We have a great MWR, but we can improve it. It’s going to take a lot of working together, more people volunteering, and establishing by-laws,” he said.

Williams believes one improvement in particular would increase morale, improve productivity and keep people

coming back to serve the district.

“The ultimate goal in my mind is for everyone to have a single room,” Williams said. “That would be the best living conditions in theater that can be provided. Will we ever get there? It can be done, but it’s going to take time.”

One of the greatest challenges in his position is being able to manage and oversee the diverse mix of personnel at

AED-N.

“Everybody here is not military. Everybody here is not civilian. But we are one organization, we are one team, fighting one fight,” Williams said. “The caliber of folks here is just overwhelming. The professionalism here is above and beyond, which just makes my job easier.”

This is Williams’ second tour as the CSM of the Afghanistan Engineer

provided significant contributions to Army engineering.

The Army Regimental System was developed to emphasize the history, customs and traditions of the Corps. Then-Fort Leonard Wood Commanding General and Engineer School Commandant MG Daniel R. Schroeder wanted an award that would tie in with the beginnings of the Nation and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Engineer Regiment adopted the de Fleury Medal as an award because of the values demonstrated by de Fleury. Soldiers and Civilians, active and retired, from enlisted Soldiers to generals to the Chief of Staff of the French Army wear the de Fleury Medal. 📷

DE FLEURY, from page 25

The Continental Congress appointed de Fleury a captain of engineers. He was wounded at the battles of Fort Mifflin and Brandywine, and he soon became Lt. Col. de Fleury. But it was in the battle at Stony Point, N.Y. in 1779 that de Fleury’s courage under fire won him the accolades of Congress. For his service, the Continental Congress awarded a medal in his honor.

As the Corps of Engineers implemented the U.S. Army Regimental System, the senior engineer leadership sought a method for USACE to honor those individuals who have



Construction Quality Management Course Grads Sharpen Their Skills

Story & Photo provided By: AED-S Quality Assurance Branch

The graduating class gives a big “thumbs up” to the instructors of the Construction Quality Management Class.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- As many USACE employees know, Afghanistan is an extremely challenging environment for executing and managing USACE contracts.

Over the years, the Corps has developed and implemented many processes and controls to provide effective quality management and safety for its construction projects.

The Afghanistan Engineer Districts North and South Quality Assurance Branches (QAB) provide formal training and certification classes to familiarize contractors with USACE Construction Quality Management (CQM) processes and controls. The class provides a certification which is required by contract for the contractor’s quality control personnel to manage USACE construction projects.

QAB-South conducted CQM training classes in Helmand and Kandahar Area Offices in Nov. 2009.

The classes included 37 students from seven different firms working on USACE construction projects. The students consisted of various construction management personnel including quality control managers, project managers, schedulers, and site superintendents.

Many of the contracts executed by class attendees will support the Afghan First initiative by hiring Afghan workers, thereby supporting efforts to build organizational capacity and improve the job skills of the Afghan labor force.

USACE instructors included Milton Murphy (Chief QAB-South), Jeff Armstrong (QAB Civil Materials), Ross Warner (QAB Civil Engineering Tech), Laureen Vizcarra (RMS Data Manager-South), Doug Newton

(QAB Civil Structural) and Chris Clinton (Safety Officer). The students seemed eager to learn and provided an engaging atmosphere with many questions and comments.

Judging from feedback, the class was very successful in highlighting key USACE construction management and safety principles.

In addition to CQM principles, the training exposes students to the USACE Quality Control System (QCS) software.

The contractors must be able to use QCS to feed electronic data to the USACE Resident Management System (RMS).

While RMS is commonly used and understood throughout the Corps, many of the class participants were new to the system and learned that RMS is a comprehensive database used exclusively to track, develop, and record USACE contract administration documentation.

Now all of the class graduates are armed with the understanding and tools to utilize QCS/RMS to manage contract documentation for all of their USACE construction projects.

QAB-South is planning additional training classes in Kandahar and Herat in January. In conjunction with CQM training, the Contract Administration Branch will conduct Quality Control System (QCS) training on a bi-weekly basis at the USACE Kandahar compound.

Although CQM training is only one step in the execution of USACE contracts, it is a key factor in implementing USACE standards to build quality products and provide an improved standard of living for the people of

ON THE MOVE

Moving in

Debra Barresi	Paul Cravens	Diane Davis	Annette Dugger	Loan Harris	Okan Nalbant
Andrew Phillips	Fernando Sosa-Reyes	George Triggs	SGT Ricky Davis	SSgt Christopher Canady	
CSM Calvin Williams	Jennifer Butler	Catherine Gann	Mary Hix	Andrew Hovey	Tony Kirk
Deannda Knight	Bobby Roberts	William Swean	Charles Sontag	Nancy Towne	James Wang
PFC Michael Gieseler	SPC Timothy Miller	SGT Henry Russ			

Moving out

George Ofslager	Michael Aiello	Alex Almeida	Scott Doeden	Jerry McCall	Edwin Perdue
Frank Spears	A'Leisha Sorenson	Donald Thompson	Mark Willis	William Worrall	Louis Brackett
Gregory Hales	Dean Lang	Calvin Mashita	Chester Nakamura	Michael Pierce	Clifford Watkins
SSgt Joshua Dickinson					

CAC Cards at Qalaa House

Common Access Cards (CACs) can be processed at the Qalaa House J-1 Office

Monday through Thursday and Saturday from 0800 to 1600 hrs.

CACs will not be processed on Fridays and Sundays.

For more information, contact CPT Stacy Goodman, AED-N J-1 at 540-723-4995 or by e-mail at stacy.l.goodman@usace.army.mil.