



The Freedom

BUILDER

MAGAZINE

March 2009



Area Office
focuses on
constructing,
mentoring



U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers®
Afghanistan Engineer District



The Freedom BUILDER MAGAZINE

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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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Cover Image:

Construction Representative Michael Conner (right) and Engineer Technician Trudy Templeton (left) inspect temporary power for construction at Kandahar Regional Logistics Center. (See story on page 10. Photo by Brenda L. Beasley)



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Postcards from Afghanistan

The Public Affairs Office is expanding AED's Internal Communications Program with "Postcards from Afghanistan."

The postcards will appear on AED's Internet Site in PDF format and a copy will be sent to your home District Public Affairs Office.

The postcards consist of a 3 to 4 paragraph write up along with 2 to 3 photos with a photo caption describing what is happening in each photo. The write-up is similar to a personal note from you to your family and friends, that focuses on a specific project or event, or that provides an overview of your total experience here in Afghanistan.

The Public Affairs Office will provide help needed to write these.

If you would like to be featured on one of these postcards, please contact the Public Affairs Office at 540-662-6578 or come visit us in the basement of the Azadi House, room 7, or e-mail Brenda.L.Beasley@usace.army.mil.

Thanks in advance for helping AED's Internal Communications Program.



From the Commander ...

In 1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Since then, the National Women's History Month Resolution has been approved with bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. Each year, programs and activities in schools, workplaces and communities have become more extensive as information and program ideas have been developed and shared.

AED has its own heritage of woman leaders. In the five years we have been a district, we have had Deputy Commander Kari Otto provide strong leadership, as well as Deborah Duncan who served in the capacity of the Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management. In this position, she was responsible for making District commitments to customers and ensuring those commitments were met through project management. She also directed the formulation of the District's program and budget, and oversaw and approved the operations budget. Duncan served in this capacity from March-October 2007. Her favorite and proudest accomplishment came within her first week at AED. The project was the New Kabul Compound phase III. U.S. Central Command wanted to support it as their number one supplement project but there were challenges getting the 1391 validated and the PA was fluctuating wildly. The CSTC-A commander turned to Duncan for assistance. She was able to use her relationships from TAC, her knowledge from her previous DPW experience and network at CENTCOM C7 to get the 1391 revised and validated within a few hours to meet the CENTCOM suspense, and to support the U.S. servicemen and women.

Currently AED has superior women leadership all around the District. Once again we have a female Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, Kris Mullins. She has 13 years experience with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She comes from the Little Rock District in Arkansas, where she served the last two years as the chief of the Project Management Branch, and the assistant chief of Programs, successfully executing more than \$175 million for the FY06 and FY07 military, civil and SFO Programs. Prior to that, she was a

team leader and program manager with USACE Southwestern Division in Dallas for about two years, leading a team of professional engineers, scientists, planners, operations and real estate experts assigned to the LRD Support Team.

She served two years with USACE Operations Division in Tampa as a liaison officer to CENTCOM, providing engineering and construction expertise and serving as the USACE single point of contact.

AED also has great prospects for future women leaders. Currently the Afghan National Police program has an Afghan woman project engineer. Nilufar Jami graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Civil Engineering College Herat University. Jami's professional goals are to pursue a master's degree in project construction management. She is also the founder and president of the first Afghan Women Engineering Society stood up November 2008. Jami was instrumental in the process of the Society's constitution submitted to the Ministry of Justice and endorsed by the Afghan Government. Currently there are about 20 members (Kabul and Herat). Jami has applied for the Goldman Sachs Business Women's Training Program in the United States. She is also training in business practices to ensure sustainment of AWES (strategic planning, marketing, website development, recruitment, etc.). We believe that some day she will be the first Afghan DDPM.

Thanks to all of our AED women for your dedication and selfless service. 🇺🇸

BUILDING STRONGSM
Essayons!



Col. Thomas E. O'Donovan



James A. Bodron (left) and Kurt J. Reppe (right) take a look at the additional land that will need to be acquired at South Park for the Class One Yard expansion project in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

AED stands up Kandahar Program Office to handle project surge By Brenda L. Beasley

In the next few months, a new Corps of Engineers office is scheduled to be fully operational at Kandahar Airfield, 10 miles south-east of Kandahar City in Afghanistan. Organized to handle the major buildup of work in Afghanistan Engineer District's Regional Commands South and West, its main role will be to support military forces flowing in to KAF.

“With the surge in U.S. forces, AED is standing up an office in RC-S and RC-W area of coverage to meet

the military construction requirements,” said James A. Bodron, deputy for Programs and Project Management who is also serving as the acting director of the new Kandahar Program Office.

Bodron and J. Andy Adams, the deputy for Engineering and Construction Division, are the first two people who arrived in Kandahar to stand up the new KPO. Although Bodron, the chief of Operations Division in the Memphis District, arrived at AED headquarters in Kabul,

Afghanistan, in late November 2008, he didn't physically begin standing up the KPO until his move to Kandahar in mid-January.

Since that time, five more Corps employees have been added, which includes a real estate specialist, two project managers, one program manager, and one administrative assistant. About 120 personnel are expected to be onboard by the end of September to help oversee the construction of the multitude of temporary and

permanent expansion projects. By the end of February, \$200 million worth of MILCON is being awarded and another \$500 million is expected to be awarded this summer, said Bodron.

KPO will coordinate its MILCON mission through AED, who in turn coordinates through the U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, which was activated by the Department of Defense in October 2008 as a functioning command and control headquarters for U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan.

Projects will include a two-phase Rotary-wing Ramp and Taxiway; a Close Air Support and Intelligence Surveillance & Reconnaissance ramp; an upgrade to the current Ammunition Supply Point; an ASP Bomb Building Pad; a Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration expansion; an upgrade to the existing Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Administration areas; and a relocation of the Class One Yard, according to Bodron.

The RSOI encompasses all of the activities needed to receive a unit's equipment and personnel. Arriving personnel are assembled and organized into coherent units and forces with the primary purpose of incrementally building combat power, he added. They are then moved through the theater of operations and integrated into the combatant commander's command and control, and logistics structures.

To handle the influx of



Relocatable buildings sit ready for use as billeting or offices at South Park for the Class One Yard expansion project. RLBs are designed to be readily moved, erected, disassembled, stored and reused.

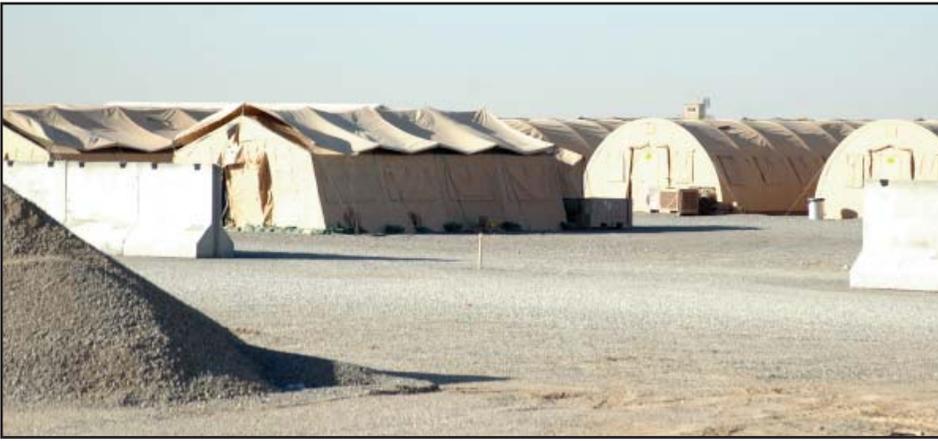
military personnel, the Class One Yard is being relocated to South Park, said Bodron. This will also include building a new Entry Control Point and access road to ensure security measures are in place to support the additional operational mission. This new work will also involve coordination with the existing South Park Infrastructure Project.

Because there is no lag time, all of the Corps' contracted projects at KAF are Design-Build versus Design-Bid-Build. This helps to get the projects completed faster since the design doesn't have to be completed until construction starts and changes can be made up to the last minute. Although some of the projects are vastly different, the housing designs are all the same and can be easily replicated. "We're in a fluid situation and things are changing fast," said Bodron. "Using Design-Build contracts takes less time and increases flexibility."

However, the process of

building is not as easy as it seems. Whether the facilities are temporary or permanent, or whether the design and construction is flexible or not, nothing can be built unless there is land to build it on. "Land for projects in Afghanistan is at a premium," said Kurt J. Reppe, chief of the Real Estate Office at the KPO. "Everybody wants their little piece of it." Each country's military force may want to build a dining facility or billeting unique to their service members. It's up to the Real Estate Office to make sure enough land is acquired for U.S. forces to accomplish their mission.

"We can't spend MILCON dollars on land that we [the United States] don't have an interest in," said Reppe, a realty specialist from the St. Paul District who is delegated with the authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Army to sign documents to secure lands for MILCON projects. The two required lease agreements are the Department of the Army Permit to Use and



Soldiers currently staying in tents at South Park will move to their new relocatable buildings once construction of the Class One Yard expansion project is complete.

Occupy International Security Assistance Force Land and Facilities at KAF and the Operating Agreement between ISAF and the United States of America.

These documents basically ask for permission to use the land, said Reppe. After these are completed, the contracts are awarded. By using Design-Build, the contractor may move the grid based on the actual space needed for the project and a new map reflecting the revision based on the actual design can be added to the lease agreements.

To help meet some of these challenges, the KPO ensures early involvement with all parties involved in the coordination of acquiring the land so that an agreement can be reached between all parties. The agreements can be amended later if acceptable to all parties. "It seems like everybody is coming together and wants to see this surge," said Reppe.

However, no matter what projects are built on KAF they all have to be reviewed and

approved by the KAF Base Camp Planning Board, which is similar to a neighborhood planning committee. "If we want to lease temporary billeting, we have to take that plan to the BCPB to get approval for a certain amount of months," said Reppe, who's now on his third six-month tour in Afghanistan, this time at Kandahar. "Successfully acquiring the land for MILCON projects to the tune of \$170 million and being able to execute all of the agreements in the first two weeks of being deployed here was a very rewarding experience."

In managing and overseeing leases, the Real Estate Office must monitor and amend them as necessary, and deal with land issues as they come up, said Reppe. When the land is no longer needed or has to be turned back over, they have to do disposal or transfer from the United States to the other party.

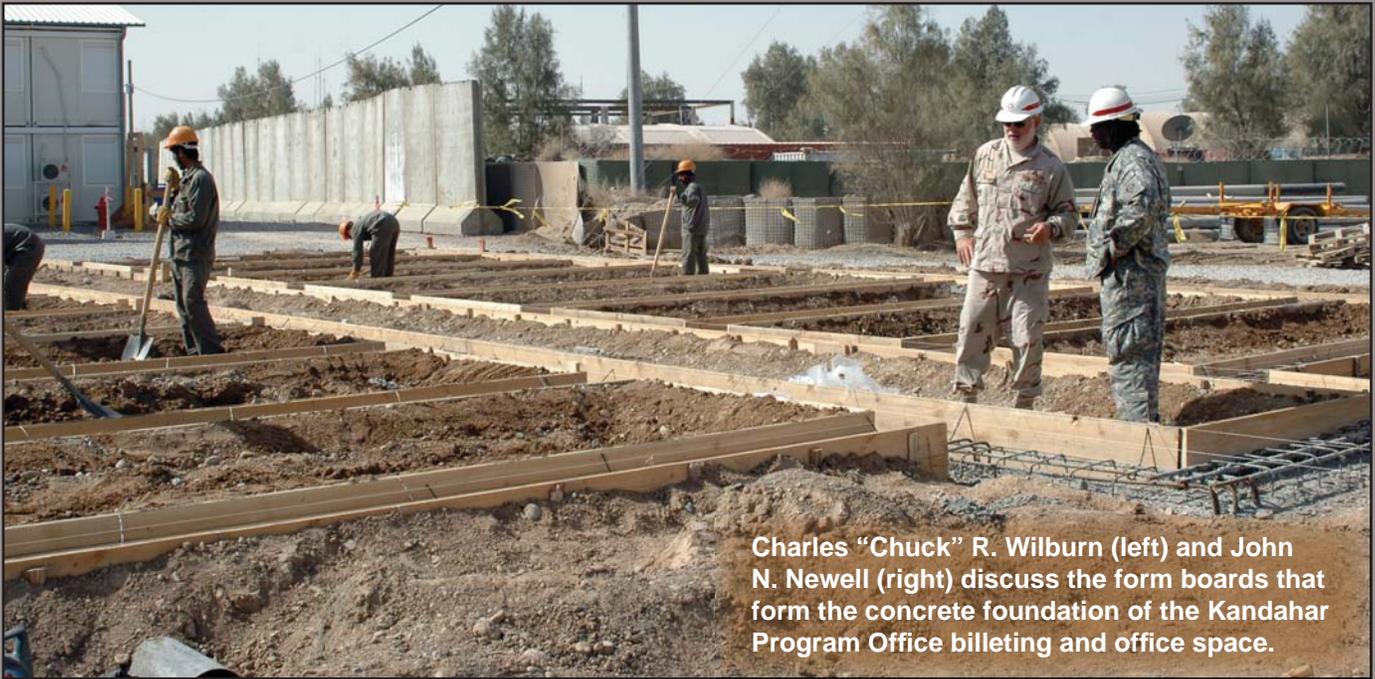
A lot of good changes are happening now that ISAF is becoming involved in land

acquisition. Processes are in place now that provide continuity with a good standard and procedure for all to follow. "Everyone involved is going in the same direction," said Reppe.

By acquiring land for projects, the KPO is also helping to improve the quality of life for the Afghan people. Previously, local nationals were told they were going to get paid for allowing the Russians to use their land, but they didn't because their government was too poor to do so. "They're getting paid now," said Reppe. "We compensate them with fair market value."

More land will soon need to be acquired when a contract is awarded for the Forward Arming and Refueling Point at KAF. The KPO project manager will oversee the work with the Transatlantic Programs Center in Winchester, Va., providing reach back support.

With a slew of projects coming in fast and furious, the KPO is working hard to get their new office up and running. They're hiring people to fill the numerous job positions that it'll take to successfully meet the construction schedules, while also coordinating the MILCON projects that are currently being awarded. "Our main focus here is trying to get the project done as quickly as possible to meet the surge of forces," said Bodron. "And to coordinate with all of the interest groups to help the Soldiers meet their mission." 🇺🇸



Charles “Chuck” R. Wilburn (left) and John N. Newell (right) discuss the form boards that form the concrete foundation of the Kandahar Program Office billeting and office space.



Left: From L to R: John N. Newell, Fernando Sosa-Reyes, and Bobby W. Lingerfelt at the Kandahar Area Office. Above: An Afghan carpenter uses a handsaw to cut form boards to fit the next section of the building footer.

Kandahar Program Office gets billeting

By Brenda L. Beasley

With 120 people expected to be onboard by the end of September, the Kandahar Airfield Resident Office is busy overseeing the construction of five billeting and office space facilities for the new Kandahar Program Office.

The first two-story facility is scheduled to be completed by the end of April, said KARO Construction Representative John N. Newell, an electronics mechanic from the Omaha District. Each facility will consist of 32 Conex’s (Container Express — a military shipping container) that will be framed, insulated and finished with gypsum board.

Office spaces will be located on the second floor, while the first floor will be used for living

quarters. Each one-person room will have tile floors, a bed, a desk, a telephone, a computer, an amour, a small refrigerator, and a Chigo heating and cooling unit. Community showers and laundry facilities will be located at the end of the hall on the first floor.

In addition to the five new two-story facilities, KPO employees have a facility they are currently using which has a great room with a 47-inch television, a leather sofa and chairs, and coffee tables; a full-service kitchen; a laundry room; and 16 billeting rooms in which every two rooms share a full-service bathroom. They also have the use of two other buildings. 🇰🇷

AED hosts Industry Day

By Bruce J. Huffman

Representatives from more than 200 construction companies braved the cold and waited in line for almost an hour to clear security to attend the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District Industry Day event held Feb. 17 at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Kabul. “There were three reasons for this conference,” said AED Commander Col. Thomas E. O’Donovan. “The first was to inform contractors about upcoming construction missions that we have for the District. The second was so our technical experts could explain different aspects about working with the Corps of Engineers, and the third reason was to give the construction companies an opportunity to meet and learn each others capabilities and create business opportunities for them to work together.”

In his opening remarks, O’Donovan explained that ongoing projects from 2008 combined with new contract awards in 2009 would total about \$4 billion in construction and that there would be even more work for AED in Afghanistan in 2010. “Our workload is growing by a factor of four because of the U.S. forces expansion in southern Afghanistan and also because of the U.S. decision to divert funds from Iraq,” O’Donovan told the crowd.

A buzz of excitement filled the room and each contractor listened closely as Corps personnel



AED Contract Specialist Jesusa “Suzette” Labial checks-in two Afghan contractors at the AED Industry Day event held Feb. 17 at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Kabul.

briefed about AED’s various construction programs. The Corps staff also gave the attendees tips on proposal preparation and quality assurance management. Guest speaker Naeem Yassin, president of the Afghanistan Builders Association, gave a presentation urging Afghan construction companies to come together and establish unified business practices and construction standards. “As one, the ABA can be very powerful and influential at all levels,” said Yassin. “Only you as company directors can make that happen.”

Currently more than 70 percent of AED’s construction contracts are awarded to Afghan firms, and nearly 90 percent of all workers on AED projects are Afghan. “With our increased workload, we will need even more qualified firms to accomplish our mission,” said AED Contract Specialist Tim Robbins. “Events like this are designed to help Afghan and international construction firms navigate the intricate solicitation process.”

According to Robbins, the response to the Industry Day event was so great that some companies had to be turned away. “To meet this demand, more Industry Day events are planned for the near future,” said Robbins.

For information on upcoming Industry Day events: aed.contracting@usace.army.mil

For information about the Afghanistan Engineer District: www.aed.usace.army.mil. 



Representatives from more than 200 construction companies attended the AED Industry Day event. During the event, a traditional Afghan lunch was served inside the auditorium, allowing participants to remain in-place and network with each other.

OJT program builds futures

Story and photos
by Jack J. Pagano

The Afghanistan Engineer District is building more than military bases, police facilities and schools in Afghanistan; it's building futures. Especially for eight Afghan National Army Engineer Cadets from the National Military Academy of Afghanistan who participated in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sponsored on-the-job-training program. For two weeks in February these bright-eyed, motivated Cadets watched, listened and learned first-hand from Corps' personnel what it takes to be engineers in action.

With more than \$4 billion in construction projects planned for Afghanistan this year, it's no wonder AED is investing the time and resources to mentor and train these young Cadets. They will be the top engineers in Afghanistan. Leslie Wright, chief of the AED Capacity Development Program, says these types of programs are



Afghan Cadets on a tour of Camp Commando's new Soldier facility inspect a side window.

critical to the sustainment of the U.S. and Afghan Government's infrastructure investments.

Wright provided encouragement and advice throughout the program. "This program adds tremendous value to the overall capacity development mission and I am honored to assist in shaping the minds of the future leaders and

engineers of Afghanistan."

During a trip to Afghanistan's Commando compound, the Afghan equivalent to the U.S. Army's Ranger school, three Cadets walked the grounds with Tony Beene, the Corps of Engineers project manager there. "They were in awe," said Beene. "We gave them real-world problem solving tasks and asked them to come back with answers and solutions not in days but in hours. This was no walkabout."

According to Beene, one of the problem-solving exercises came at the base of two huge water tanks. The Cadets were asked how much water it would take to sustain 2,500 Soldiers. Each Cadet whipped out a notepad and pen, and started calculating, asking additional questions in English, Dari and Pashto.

As snow blanketed the compound and temperatures dipped below the freezing mark, the Cadets were guided to each



AED's Johnnie P. Saunders showing three Afghan National Academy Cadets the schedule for Camp Commando. Staff Sgt. Dale Race (far left) looks on.

— see CADETS page 18

Area Office focuses on constructing, mentoring

By Brenda L. Beasley

Building with the end in mind is how the Kandahar Area Office views the projects they're constructing in Afghanistan Engineer District's Regional Command South. They're not only working toward completing projects for Afghans to use and maintain, they're teaching a trade to enable Afghans to stand on their own.

Through projects to build infrastructure, military housing on KAF, Afghan National Army facilities, Afghan National Police facilities and roads, the KAO is hoping the Afghans walk away with the experience and knowledge they can use to get a good job building some where else.

"We're mentoring as much as we're constructing," said Charles "Chuck" R. Wilburn, the acting area engineer of KAO and the resident engineer of the KAF Resident Office. "We want them to be able to have a craft when they're through with building a wall or pouring concrete."



Construction Representative Michael Conner (center) and Engineer Technician Trudy Templeton (right) discuss construction progress with Quality Control Manager Afzali Nassir (left).

Providing quality, responsive engineering and construction services to a variety of customers in Afghanistan is one of AED's missions under the Strategic Reconstruction Program, according to Corps officials. Through this effort, the Corps performs a crucial role in the international efforts to facilitate establishing a secure and stable environment in Afghanistan while promoting reconstruction and infrastructure development.

KAO achieves this mission while facing a multitude of daily challenges that include the lack of quality construction materials and skilled craftsmen, the language barriers, a high employee turn over rate, and building in remote hard-to-access locations.

Together with Resident Offices in Lashkar Gah, Tirin Kowt, Qalat, Kandahar proper, and Kandahar Airfield, in Afghanistan, KAO completed \$380 million in military construction projects last fiscal year and is expecting to complete \$980 million this year, said Wilburn.

Getting good quality materials is an obstacle in building ANA and ANP sites. "We make a conscious effort to use local products," said Wilburn. When materials aren't available, the Afghans improvise using anything from a stick to a tree trunk, which is how they have done construction for generations and generations.

At some locations the



An Afghan worker assembles scaffolding for construction of a two-story barracks at a Border Patrol site.

workers work under duress. Their construction supplies are stolen or destroyed by the Taliban and other criminals. Some of this occurs because the supplies are valuable, while some of it is done to inhibit the reconstruction effort. To combat this, contractors have had to become ingenious on how they get supplies to the job site. Sometimes they use a lot of

security, sometimes they use less to be more inconspicuous. They change up their routes and some deliveries are even clandestine. "Materials show up by car, truck, bus, and sometimes even by tractor trailer or a flat-bed truck," said Wilburn.

Although new to Afghanistan, Wilburn's not new to construction projects. He served as the resident

engineer of the Sebring Resident Office for the Gulf Coast Area Office under the Jacksonville District for about 14 years before transferring to Mobile District's Red Stone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala., as a project engineer.

Ensuring the contractor is adequate is part of being a quality assurance inspector. In the remote provinces, contractors are further removed from technology and education. Some of the locations are so remote that the KAO has to rely more on the onsite craftsmen when they're unable to get there. When the contractor has a limited number of craftsmen, it's more difficult to get the standard construction quality in an underdeveloped nation. "Most of the time you'll see very sophisticated construction," said Wilburn, "but not at the remote sites."

In traveling to remote project sites, KAO relies heavily on NATO forces to get them there and back safely. Wilburn recalls his first experience on a long mission that involved traveling in the dark to a construction site that was outside the wire after being in Afghanistan for only two months. "We left about 4 a.m. to go to the site. It was still dark out. There were no power lines and no street lights. To get there, we had to join up with a Danish convoy. They would shoot off flares just to see as we traveled. We drove in the middle of the road and the other motorists would pull off to the side. On the way there, we noticed



Afghan workers construct one of the buildings at the Joint Regional Afghanistan National Security Forces Compound.

a burned-out sport utility vehicle on the side of the road, but we didn't stop. Once at the site, we checked on the project, but we stayed so long, that it was dark when we left. When we got back to where the burned-out SUV was, the Danish convoy pulled over and stopped. We listened to them talking on the radio, but since none of us new Danish we didn't know what they were saying or why they had stopped. Finally, after about 15 minutes, they got back in their vehicle and we proceeded back to the base. Although we were never fearful, we did start to feel a little uneasy sitting in the middle of the road for that long."

Coordinating the timing of construction activities with Coalition Partners is a very important aspect of KAO's mission. "Using the theater model of 'Shape, Clear, Hold, Build', we work very closely with Coalition Maneuver



Concentration is necessary as Afghan workers smooth the grout between building cinders.

forces to synchronize our contracts to follow the 'Hold' stage," said KAO Officer in Charge Maj. K. Weedon Gallagher. "This reduces our 'flash to bang' time so Afghans can see tangible results very shortly following combat operations."

Safety practices are



Teamwork helps productivity as two Afghan workers pour concrete for spacers that are needed for rebar placement.

an important aspect of construction inspection oversight. Situational awareness is a must when working in land mine areas. “Virtually every project site has to be demined before we can begin construction,” said Wilburn.

Local nationals are used to making and building things the way they have for generations. KAO stays vigilant to ensure OSHA standards are being followed. They check to make sure the scaffolding is properly built and that the workers are

wearing hardhats and safety shoes. They check the work site for fall protection and ensure the contractor has the right cables to lift the weight they’re lifting. “Although many Afghan contractors don’t know current construction practices, they want to learn,” said Trudy R. Templeton, an engineering technician for KAO.

The Afghan people are steadfast, said Templeton. They work toward completing the project even during Kandahar’s extremely hot temperatures. She ensures

that the contractor is building according to the plans and specifications and reviews the pay estimates with the contractor’s project manager for completed work.

Unlike the United States, families living in tribal areas typically spend their entire lives living together in one small community. With the new roads being built, Afghans will be able to travel easier which may create a change in culture. “Instead of taking days and days to travel by cart and donkey,” said Templeton, “they’ll be able to use more vehicles.”

Deployed from the Kansas City District, Templeton’s been working at the Kandahar Airfield for almost two years.

Kandahar Airfield is located 10 miles southeast of Kandahar City in Afghanistan and was built by the United States in the 1960s, under the U.S. Agency for International Development program.

It was rebuilt in 2007, and is used for both military and civilian flights. “We’re on a NATO base and have a lot of amenities offered to us,” she said. “We’re very fortunate to be deployed here.”

Seeing a project from start to finish is a reward in itself. Being able to show the Afghan workers U.S. construction standards and us learning their way is an interesting combination. “Because our way might not necessarily be the best way, there’s give and take,” said Wilburn. “You have to know what they’re good at and not take them out of their element.” 📷

Corps of Engineers honors wounded hero

By Bruce J. Huffman

Corps of Engineers personnel from the Engineer Research and Development Centers in Illinois, Virginia, New Hampshire and Mississippi joined with members of the Transatlantic Programs Center in Winchester, Va., the Afghanistan Engineer District in Kabul, and the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Sharana, Afghanistan, via a live video teleconference Feb. 17 to witness Maj. Gen. Bo Temple, Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Civil Works and Emergency Operations, present the Defense of Freedom Medal to Louis “Webb” Mason for serious injuries he sustained during an enemy rocket attack in the Paktika Province of Afghanistan June 18, 2008.

Mason, a 25-year employee and civil engineering technician at the ERDC in Vicksburg, had already deployed twice to Iraq before deploying to Afghanistan in December 2007 with the Sharana PRT in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. At the PRT, he worked closely with Afghan villagers building roads, clinics, schools and other desperately needed infrastructure projects. Ironically, weeks before the attack, Mason extended his six-month tour which was to end in May 2008 so he could finish a few of the construction projects he was working on.

On the day of the rocket attack, which happened to be Mason’s 56th birthday, he was conducting a site inspection in a remote village. After the impact, and despite his injuries, Mason crawled



Louis “Webb” Mason, an AED construction representative assigned to the Sharana Provincial Reconstruction Team, poses with a small child from an Afghan village in the Paktika Province. Mason was presented the Defense of Freedom Medal Feb. 17 for serious wounds he sustained during an enemy rocket attack in summer of 2008.

to his first aid kit and applied his own tourniquet to his left arm then waited for Coalition Quick Response Forces to arrive. He was airlifted to a military hospital in Salerno, Afghanistan, where doctors amputated his left arm above the elbow and treated his badly injured left leg. Tragically two U.S. Navy Corpsmen from the Sharana PRT were killed in the same attack. Mason was stabilized and later transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington where he began months of painstaking recuperation from his injuries.

During the award ceremony in Mason’s honor, AED Commander Col. Thomas E. O’Donovan expressed words of gratitude on behalf of the District personnel for Mason’s selfless service and sacrifice. Then AED PRT Engineer Representative Sonny Jadun who was Mason’s close friend and roommate in Sharana, showed a slideshow with photos of Mason in action. “It’s been an honor knowing you, working with you and following you,” said Jadun. “You have been one tough guy who makes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the nation proud, and you are truly an American hero.” Navy Cmdr. William Wheeler, Sharana PRT commander, then presented Mason with a shadowbox plaque.

According to Temple, Corps of Engineers personnel, some serving multiple tours like Mason,



AED Commander Col. Thomas E. O’Donovan and Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Bryan Pratt sit front and center with a group of AED personnel gathered to watch the award presentation via VTC.

have completed over 9,000 individual deployments, either overseas in support of the Global War on Terror or here at home for domestic emergencies. “Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had the Defense of Freedom Medal created within weeks after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to honor Civilians serving in defense of our country during times of war and challenge,” said Temple. “It is my honor and a privilege at this time, on behalf of Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp the Chief of Engineers, to present this well deserved award in recognition for your tremendous service to our country.” The crowd stood to their feet as Temple presented the

medal to Mason.

Fighting back the tears, Mason stood at the podium and addressed the crowd. He put his note cards aside and began thanking his family and various members of the audience for their support through the rough times. “My ERDC people have helped me the most,” said Mason. “The entire chain of command was there. Your outpouring of support, I would say, is unbelievable. I can’t explain to you how much its meant.”

The ceremony was followed by a reception and meal with family and friends. Mason is scheduled to return to his job at ERDC March 2. 🇺🇸

FEST-A Team master plans for U.S. forces surge

Members from a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rapid Response Team arrived in southern Afghanistan October 2008 to help master plan Forward Operating Bases to get ready for a surge in U.S. forces. The Forward Engineer Support Team – Advanced Team, which usually deploys for emergency response to natural disasters, is using their engineering capabilities to meet Afghanistan Engineer District’s new mission.

Originally this task was given to a three-man FEST from the Army’s 802nd Facility Engineer Detachment, who arrived in July 2008 to do the base camp master planning and infrastructure design for FOBs in Regional Command – South for an estimated 17 to 30 thousand Solders and Marines, and their equipment. After realizing the magnitude of the work, they asked AED for help. “It was too much work for just three people,” said Lt. Col. John C. Uptmor, commander of 802nd FED.

The Corps responded by providing a FEST-A Team of six employees from the

Europe District, with reach back support for electrical and drainage design work. Their combined engineering, architectural, and project management skills went to work helping the FEST in October 2008. Five more FEST-A Team members are assisting in Jalalabad and Sharana. “With the Corps’ help, we’re almost 80 percent done,” said Uptmor.

Work begins by identifying where the unit needs to go, said Uptmor. Once the unit defines their needs, the FEST finds a location based on the terrain and the type of base needed. Then they help fit the unit’s needs into the location. “Once we find a spot,” said Uptmor, “we determine the square footage needed and how all that fits together.”

In identifying FOBs that are suitable for accommodating the surge in forces, the FEST-A Team must first conduct

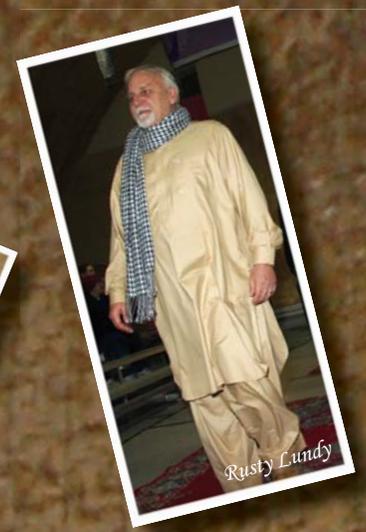


Testing the soil to see how suitable it is to place a runway on requires the use of special equipment by the FEST-A Team. Maj. Landon Raby, FEST-A Team OIC (second from left) checks the reading.

infrastructure assessments and determine feasible expansion and real estate requirements. Then they develop an expansion master site plan which includes detailed designs and drawings that support the master plan, writing the scopes and specifications for all planned construction, conducting environmental baseline surveys, and coordinating execution with the Integrated Planning Team, said Maj. Landon M. Raby, FEST-A Team officer in charge and FOB master planner.

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Fashion from the 'Front'



AED personnel at Qalaa House had a chance to toss their uniforms and act like models for a day when they participated in the second annual Qalaa House fashion show Feb. 6 in Kabul. "Fashion from the Front" featured fashions of Sarah Takesh from her local Kabul company, Tarsian and Blinky. "Most of the clothing is made of silk, hand embroidered and embellished," said Sai Sharp, fashion show coordinator and a program analyst in AED's Programs and Project Management Division. "They employ over 100 local women here in Kabul."

Each participant modeled three different outfits during the show which was held in the K-span using red carpets as the

runway. Spc. Carlos Benefield and Joyce Jackson helped the models perfect their struts, turns and facial expressions as they showed them how to walk the "catwalk."

A host of volunteers participated to include a show coordinator led by Tracy Hunter, a music coordinator, makeup artists led by Sheena Thompson, hairdressers led by Exelena Whitaker, clothes changing assistants, and photographer assistants led by Stephen Geppert.

"A true lady is recognized by the silence that falls upon an entire room filled with people upon her graceful entrance," said Benefield. "You all possess something that isn't really common in a War Zone. You

are all perfect examples of true ladies."

The volleyball game was even postponed to support the fashion show. "I wasn't too interested in going to the fashion show until I viewed some of the items online, said Chief Warrant Officer Jerry W. Carlson. "I would encourage you to take a look at the items and read a few of the stories about the women that are making this clothing. It will give you a different perspective. These items are very high quality and many items would be very fashionable and unique in the United States. I'm going to be looking for something for my wife. This is helping to support the local economy and the women that are struggling to make a difference."



AED Runway Models



Sherry Gilbert



Sgt. Debra Kidd



Alicia Bustamante



Connie Parks



Kathryn Carpenter



Sai Sharp



Cynthia Bell



Linda Souza-Barney



Paris Embree



Josette Pullen



Safety Bits

Fire Prevention and Extinguishers

By Jon Fentress, safety specialist

In January 2009, 62 people were killed and 229 injured by a fire at the Santika Club in Bangkok. The club had just three exits, of which one was known only to staff and another locked. A number of people died in the stampede for the door. There was also only one fire extinguisher present that most likely was not usable anyway.

Though we do not spend much time in nightclubs here in Afghanistan, and I am sure there are some of us who wish we did, many of the lessons learned from the Santika Nightclub accident are applicable. If fires can be prevented or extinguished during the incipient stage with fire extinguishers and there are plenty of known fire exits available for escape, many lives and much property can be saved.

Some tips to remember are;

- Know when and how to use fire extinguishers- only fight incipient fires that can easily be put out and use the **PASS** technique (**P**ull the pin, **A**im the nozzle, **S**queeze the trigger, and **S**weep at the base of the fire).

- If you see a fire extinguisher is not fully charged or there is obvious damage to it, report it to the appropriate office where you are located.

- Fire extinguishers should be located every 75 feet in typical buildings without extreme fire hazards so if you feel that an additional extinguisher is needed, report that as well so it can be investigated.

- Know escape routes. If you are located where there is only one way in and out, check into procuring “throw-down ladders” that can be attached to windows. These can be stored and placed when an emergency occurs so that escape can be made.

- Minimize paper accumulation in office space and as possible, in sleeping quarters.

- Know what numbers to call in case of an emergency and ensure these are posted in conspicuous locations.

- Ensure that electrical cords are approved by either UL or CE and that these are in good condition without exposed wiring.

- Only smoke in designated areas.

Don't let yourself or your co-workers burn to death in fires that are preventable or that could have been extinguished early on simply by not having a plan in place or having the training you need. Be proactive and take responsibility to do your part to keep us all safe while we do the great work of rebuilding Afghanistan. 🇦🇫

CADETS from page 9—

building project by Beene and Johnnie P. Saunders, an AED construction representative in Kabul.

Saunders is from the Norfolk District and is on his third volunteer deployment to Afghanistan. He views the buildup of the Afghan National Security Forces as the best defense against the “enemy” and a decisive factor in bringing peace and security to the region. “What were doing here is so important,” said Saunders. “If I can help provide knowledge and a caring attitude to these young Soldiers, then the sacrifice of leaving my family and friends

back home will have been worth it.”

The Cadets, who speak some English, agreed with Saunders. They all expressed how thankful they were to participate in the OJT training program. “We cannot thank our America engineer friends and mentors enough,” said Hamee Dullah, a fourth-year Cadet at NMAA.

This AED Cadet OJT is building a future. A way ahead that will perhaps be the yardstick and measurement of Afghanistan's engineering success. For now, eight cadets and AED's mentors have an experience they'll never forget. 🇦🇫

TEAM from page 15—

Trying to determine design requirements gets frustrating since the number of troops, the type of troops or when and where the troops are coming in is not always known. “It's important to stay flexible,” said Raby.

The perimeter and where the Entry Control Point and guard towers will go is considered first when the designing begins. After that, all of the other needs go into the planning, such as a Life Support Area, a fuel storage area, a helicopter landing zone, a motor pool area, a maintenance area, security

bunkers, a dining facility, aid stations, and mortar pits (small field artillery firing positions).

Once the design is finalized, cost estimates are prepared and submitted to the Joint Facility Utilization Board. The last step is to have a construction hand-off meeting with whoever is handling the building of the facility. If the project is located at Kandahar Air Field, the FEST also works with AED's Kandahar Area Office.

Before planning a new FOB, the team looks at a current FOB to determine its suitability for expansion. They begin by inspecting the infrastructure and deciding on the number of units that can be put at FOBs that are accepting troops first. Once the team has expanded the logical foot print of a FOB, they move on to planning new ones. The team is very deliberate in their master

planning so that things don't have to be moved around once the unit arrives. "We don't want the Solders to just fall in the dirt and have to pour water to build a base," said Raby. "We want them to have a base when they get here."

During the master planning, none of the incoming units were identified for the surge. All bases had to be initially planned as generic, with flexible space for additional unit requirements. This was especially difficult for all of the Marine bases and their required rotary wing and tactical air bed-down planning, said Raby.

Since February 2009, the FEST-A Team has developed nine overall master plans for expansions, which consisted of more than 550 construction drawings and 250 specifications, scopes of

work and estimates. They created a theater design for a company outpost that is being used at five separate locations and a theater-wide standard design for ECPs, wastewater treatment plants, bunker re-designs, aviation bed-downs and Forward Arming and Refueling Pads, said Raby.

Innovative solutions to extensive environmental problems have been developed along with standard temporary and permanent solutions to environmental problems in the planned expansions, said Uptmor.

"They have done a tremendous amount of work for us," said Uptmor. "It's very rewarding to know that we're making a huge contribution to this expansion and it's great to work with such dedicated people." 🇺🇸

News briefs

Protective gear policy for AED

By Master Sgt. Terrence Allen

By mandatory mandate from the AED Commander, each time you leave Qalaa House you must properly wear your protective clothing (ballistic glasses, fire proof clothing and nomex gloves). Everyone should have a seatbelt cutter attached to their vest and they must wear a seatbelt while traveling in AED vehicles.

Military personnel, at a minimum, YOU MUST ALWAYS RIDE TWO PER VEHICLE (Military, PSD or Shooter). If you are unable to get one of the three, you must assign a Civilian driver and you will be the shooter.

Please remember that these mandates are in place for your safety and security.

UNHAS Airline requirement

By Maj. Clifford Conklin

Remember to bring 500 Afghani (\$11 U.S.) with you when you fly via UNHAS out of Kabul. This is an airport tax and they do not accept U.S. dollars. Please add this into your travel planning.

This fee is reimbursable on your travel voucher and is a requirement to depart Kabul.

This fee does not apply to other airlines.

Please direct any additional questions you may have to e-mail address AED.Travel@usace.army.mil.

Qalaa House sign out

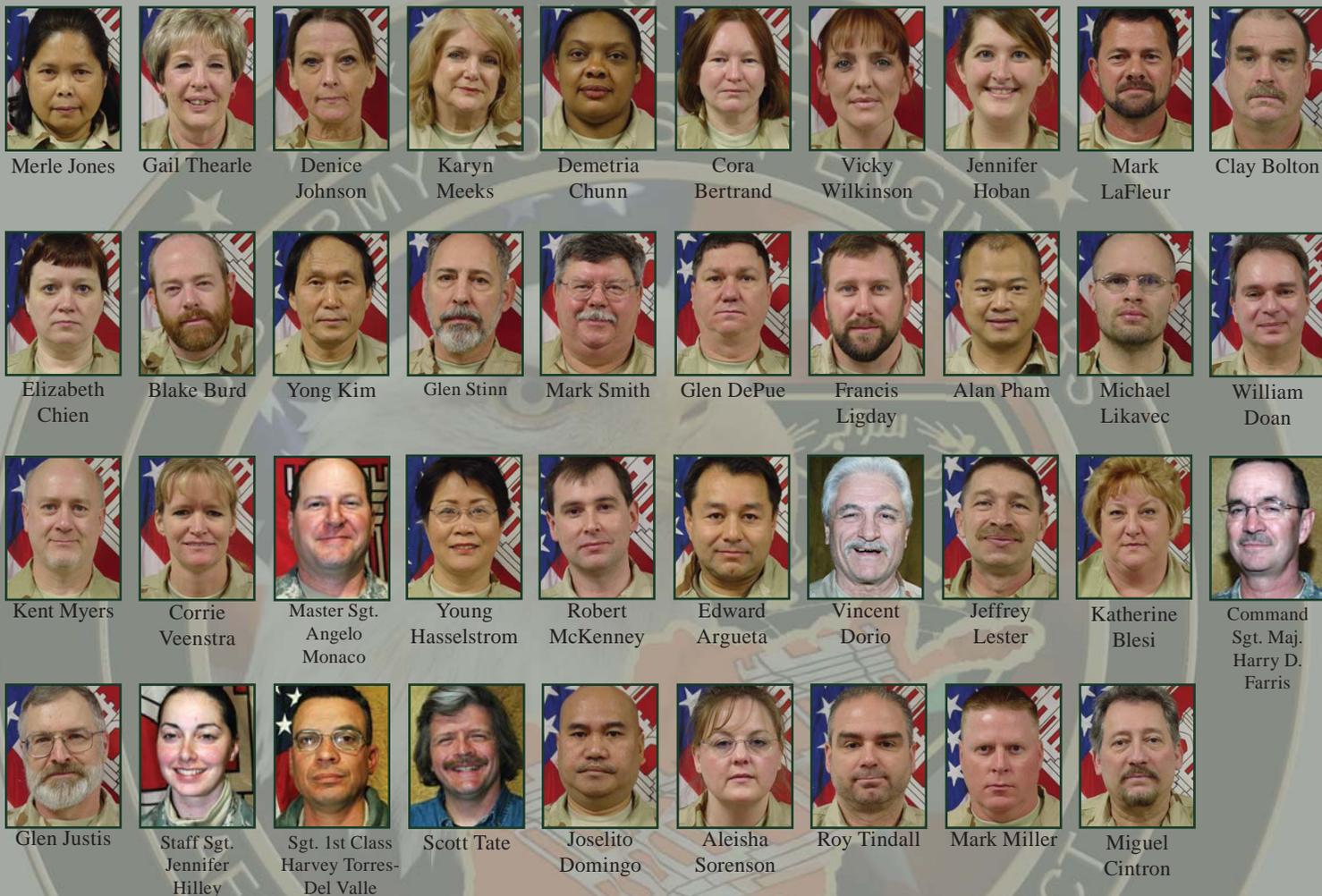
By Cpt. Stacy Goodman

Personnel accountability is the most important thing my office does. Each of you plays a part in making sure your status is accurately reflected. We live in a very serious and unpredictable environment. Part of ensuring we are protecting the force, is to know where each person is 24/7, no exceptions, no "almost is good enough." You must use the movement tracker on SharePoint or sign out at the gates every time you leave the compound for a short trip and remember to sign in when you return.

You must sign out at the J1 Office when you go on leave, pass, TDY or change duty locations in theater. Also, remember to sign in when you return to Qalaa House. Our sign-in/out clipboard is located inside the front door of the J1 during duty hours and is hung outside the office after duty hours. There is access to this document 24/7. This applies to all personnel (Military, Civilian and contractor). You need to help each other remember to use these tools; your safety or your buddy's safety may depend on it. 🇺🇸

ON THE MOVE

Moving in



Photos unavailable at press time: Jason Kim, Curt Murdock, Thomas Luzano, Tami Donaldson, Sgt. Derek Mesch, Sgt. Dennis Burke, Master Sgt. Brett Thompson, and Sgt. Maj. James Smetana.

Moving out

Arnold Lee
Mark Shore
Sarasha Schmeets
Thomas Basinger
Lourdes Pastrana
Alicia Bustamante
Gary Moore

Sgt. Major Jon Beaulieu
Maj. Scott McMahon
Sgt. 1st Class Barry Wilson
April Ward
Francis Clover
Hosam Dajani
John Eugino

William Harrison
Jesusa "Suzette" Labial
John Miller
Rebecca Miner
Joseph Moyer
Shareema Houston
Bruce Jordan

Eman Sundquist
Maj. Fredrick Kaehler
Spc. Brent McQueen
Sgt. 1st Class Eric Hailston