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Contact:
Mark Ray, (540) 667-5705
mark.c.ray@usace.army.mil

On the border

USACE works with stakeholders to complete remote garrisons for Afghan Border Police

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—Protecting and controlling borders are key elements of statehood. To help the Afghan government control its borders, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South is building eight company garrisons for the Afghan Border Police.

On Jan. 27, a combined team of USACE engineers, border police senior leaders, mentors, battle space owner and contractor representatives visited nearly completed garrisons at Ala Jirga and Islamcha, near the Pakistan border.

“Installations like the ones we visited are strategically placed to give the Afghan Border Police a tactical advantage over the insurgency,” said Maj. Douglas Ingold, a U.S. mentor with the border police. “They provide a much higher standard of living compared to existing checkpoints, some of which are just mud huts and caves. The border police are developing into a professional force and these installations match that standard. They provide a professional setting where the border police can train and refit in remote locations.”

“When the border police leadership travels to these remote garrisons, it gives them a firsthand look at the capabilities on the ground, which greatly enhances their strategic operational planning,” Ingold continued. “It also is very important for morale. The policemen that man these installations spend months, sometimes years, out at these remote locations. These visits help show them that they are important and not forgotten.”

“These garrisons help establish respect for the border police among the local population,” said district intelligence chief Lt. Col. John Carpenter. “The border police have literally been living and working out of mud huts. Now, they have modern facilities that are physical proof that the government of Afghanistan is working to control their



Afghan Border Police leaders walk through open bay barracks at the Islamcha garrison. With them (in MultiCam uniform) is mentor Maj. Douglas Ingold. (USACE Photo/Mark Ray)



Maj. Christine Cook (left) from Afghanistan Engineer District-South discusses issues with Afghan Border Police Col. Mohammad Rasool Khan (right) during the inspection. (USACE Photo/Mark Ray)

on-site progress and discuss issues with the contractor right there. The contractor could see how his subcontractors were doing and immediately give them the supervision and guidance necessary to ensure they kept moving forward.

“The site visits made all the difference in the world,” Schelby said. “They allowed us to build trust and start working as a team with the prime contractor so we could turn the projects around and get them completed.”

“We have a great team,” Schelby said. “I think all of us who are involved with this effort here at the district have a great sense of accomplishment — we are working very hard with the contractor and stakeholders to overcome significant challenges and get these important facilities built.”

borders and their territory.”

Each of the company headquarters is a self-contained facility that will support about 100 personnel. The garrisons cost between \$7 million and \$7.5 million each, and include a perimeter fence, watch towers, housing, a dining facility, a fuel point for vehicles, and water, electrical and wastewater infrastructure.

“We have already completed and turned over three of the garrisons — at Lakaray, Mohammed Sayed, and Surosahan,” said Fred Schelby, a project manager in the South District’s Afghan National Police program. Schelby deployed from Albuquerque, N.M. “The garrisons at Ala Jirga and Islamcha should be turned over before the end of March. We expect that the final three garrisons — at Shady Khak, Sallamat and Senzala — will be ready for the border police to use by the end of the summer.

“Managing the construction of these facilities posed significant issues for the contractor and for the district team,” Schelby said. “The sites are extremely remote, close to the Pakistan border. Security is a continuous concern, and simply getting materials and workers to the site is a real challenge.”

To overcome the obstacles and get the projects moving, the district worked closely with the project’s stakeholders. “We started making joint visits to the sites with the prime contractor,” Schelby said. “The visits required a great deal of coordination with the battle space owners, with the border police and the mentors who work with them, and with the contractor. Visiting the projects allowed us to gauge



An overview of the garrison at Al Jirga. (USACE Photo/Mark Ray)

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USACE's Afghanistan Engineer District-South provides design and construction services throughout southern Afghanistan to support the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. The work is carried out in Regional Commands South, Southwest and West with the goal of achieving counterinsurgency effects and bolstering the Afghan Government's services to its people.

You can find more news and features about the district on our [homepage](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), and find photos of the district's work and people, including a photo essay on the visit to the border police garrisons, on our [Flickr page](#).

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