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Afghan-coalition cooperation brings more electricity to Kandahar City residents

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Afghanistan's power utility, Da Breshna Sherkat, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Task Force Breshna Barq teamed up again; this time to bring more electricity to the Sabiqa area of Kandahar City May 2.

At a recent meeting between the Corps of Engineers and DABS, Engineer Samadi of the Kandahar Power Department mentioned a broken transformer in Sabiqa.

“The transformer was overloaded and failed,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Hopkins, who deployed to Afghanistan from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. “There was a replacement available at the Shurandam Industrial Park warehouse, so I offered it up.”

In the past, Task Force Breshna Barq made arrangements to procure, transport and repair many components of the Kandahar power system, said Hopkins. “So when the DABS representatives agreed to transport and fix the transformer, we were more than willing to help them requisition the transformer from one of the starter kits already in the DABS inventory.”

The SIP warehouse in Kandahar has medium-voltage starter kits that include distribution equipment and parts like transformers. The kits were purchased with the Regional Command South Commander's Emergency Response Program funds to rebuild existing Kandahar power distribution components that are aging and in disrepair, Hopkins said.

Engr. Samadi arranged to pick up the transformer at the warehouse and also oversaw the repairs.

“This was the first time that the entire effort was led and accomplished by the Afghan engineers without U.S. technical assistance,” said Hopkins. And they completed the task in just one day.”

Hopkins said the process went smoothly and that DABS engineers now know the process to draw equipment from the warehouse. “I have confidence that DABS will continue to take the lead in Kandahar City's electric needs,” he said.



Staff Sgt. James Gray, deployed from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, inspects the failed transformer at Breshna Kot in Kandahar City in late April. Gray is assigned to Task Force Breshna Barq, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers electrical power team in Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)

One of the future goals of Task Force Bresha Barq is to ensure that DABS employees can staff the warehouse and fill orders. According to Hopkins, “once these guys learn a process, they’ve got it and sooner rather than later they will be running the warehouse, too.”

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Sgt. Danna Beard, deployed from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, looks on as DABS electrical technicians load a transformer, bound for the Sabiqa district of Kandahar City May 2. Beard is assigned to Task Force Breshna Barq, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers electrical power team in Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)