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## USACE: Building Strong for Afghan National Security Forces

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Since 2002, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been in Afghanistan building facilities for Afghan National Security Forces. Every day, project managers, project engineers, architects, schedulers, quality assurance representatives and others do their part to help the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan achieve its goal of long-term security and stability.

In USACE's Afghanistan Engineer District-South, this current \$1.8 billion ANSF program is carried out across 10 provinces and increases the capability for the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, and regional and local security forces to protect the people of Afghanistan.

“After decades of internal strife and Soviet occupation, the infrastructure of Afghanistan was in terrible shape,” said Lt. Col. John Carpenter, the South District's intelligence chief. “Afghanistan's military was weak and its government had very little money to develop military and police forces capable of providing adequate security for the people.”

As the facility requirements for the ANA expanded under GIRoA, USACE found itself designing complete military bases, including roads, wastewater treatment facilities, power supply points, barracks, dining facilities, offices, storage buildings and more.

In Herat province, for example, the South District is expanding the Shindand Airbase so that Afghanistan's nascent Air Force can be trained. “Near Herat City, we are building an entire base for the 9th Commando Kandak and extending Camp Zafar by some 481,000 square meters for several facilities that will become a Corps Support Battalion campus,” said Jennifer Zimmerman, a South District project manager deployed from USACE Portland District. “We are also constructing a wastewater treatment facility on Camp Zafar and additional facilities for the 207th Brigade.”

In Helmand province, garrison facilities are under construction for the 215th Brigade at Delaram and Garmsir along with phases one and two of the headquarters facilities on Camp Shorabak. Bunker construction is also ongoing at Camp Shorabak, as are facilities for a combat logistics battalion, a forward support depot, a regional military training center and transient garrison facilities.

### *Afghanistan Engineer District-South mission:*

*Execute quality and timely construction and engineering operations in the RC-South, RC-Southwest and RC-West regions of Afghanistan in support of the U.S. Forces-Afghanistan mission and the integrated Afghan National Security/Coalition Forces' counter-insurgency operations aimed at protecting the population and defeating the Insurgency Forces. On order, provide sustainable development projects for the Afghan people that employ the populace, build skilled human capital and promote the future stability of Afghanistan.*

In Farah province, the South District is building a brigade compound for seven battalions that will include utilities infrastructure, a helicopter pad, and recreational and maintenance facilities. Many of these structures will be arch-span construction techniques — a lower-cost method compared to traditional concrete masonry techniques.

Two garrison compounds that will accommodate 5,600 soldiers, a corps support battalion compound for 1,600 soldiers, a military training center, a small-arms range and a power plant are under construction at Camp Hero, in Kandahar province.

The final garrison construction project, awarded in November and scheduled for completion in 2013, is in Zabul province, just outside Tarin Kowt. When finished, the garrison complex, consisting of primarily arch-span construction will accommodate 4,700 soldiers.

In addition to multi-million dollar base creation and expansion, the South District also builds Ministry of Interior regional office buildings, border patrol headquarters compounds and crossing points, remote district police headquarters compounds, regional law enforcement centers and training facilities.

“We currently have 18 Afghan Uniform Police district headquarters under construction throughout the district’s area of responsibility,” said Jeff Usavage, the program manager for all Afghan National Police construction projects in southern Afghanistan. “We’ve completed and turned over 29 AUP district headquarters compounds and we anticipate turning over another 12 before the United States withdraws from Afghanistan.”

The South District also turned over six provincial headquarters compounds and three regional command centers to the AUP.

For the border police, USACE has constructed about 20 brigade, battalion and company headquarters compounds.

The total cost of the ANP program to date is about \$522 million with more than 150 projects awarded. Some of those projects were awarded before the district stood up in 2009 and have already been turned over to the Afghans. “Those inherited projects came with many challenges due to their remote locations,” Usavage said. “Often, construction was interrupted because of security issues or supply shortages. There were times when getting heavy construction equipment to the project sites was incredibly difficult and resulted in extended schedules.”

When challenges are insurmountable, the South District terminates projects. “Sometimes contractors can’t perform or comply with their contract requirements for various reasons, so we have to terminate the projects,” said Usavage. “At times we are able to re-solicit the projects and re-award them. Obviously this adds to the total construction time, but we do all we can to keep viable projects going.”

The South District has completed about 62 ANSF projects since the district stood up in 2009 said Mike Scarano, the deputy district engineer for programs and project management. “We have 63 ANSF projects ongoing and we anticipate awarding another 80 contracts in the next couple of years. Those new awards will have a potential program cost of about \$1.2 billion.”

When U.S. and coalition forces fully transfer the mission of providing security to Afghan forces, those forces will inherit a tremendous amount of capacity said South District Commander Air Force Col. Benjamin Wham. “We have an incredible mission, we are doing an unbelievable amount of work, and USACE is making a huge investment on behalf of the American people.

“Our legacy, in addition to constructing quality buildings throughout the country, includes developing the skills and competencies of those Afghan engineers who joined the USACE team as quality assurance representatives and stayed with us through promotions to project engineers and senior project engineers,” Wham continued. “Because of the professionalism of these men, Afghanistan will inherit a strong engineering capability.”

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Work progresses on the ANP headquarters for Nawa district, Helmand province. (USACE photo by Mark Ray)



On-going construction at the 9th Commando Kandak near Herat City. (USACE photo by Karla Marshall)