



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Army divers support South District work at critical Afghan dams

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—Six members of a unique Army unit — engineer divers from the 569th Engineer Dive Detachment — recently spent 30 days in southern Afghanistan, conducting underwater surveys to help the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South prepare for major repair projects at Kajaki and Dahla dams.

“We basically conducted two missions at each dam,” said 1st Lt. Michael Jappe, who led the team. “We conducted hydrographic surveys, mapping the underwater contours of the reservoirs, and we used a remotely operated vehicle — essentially, an underwater drone — to check the condition of various submerged structures, such as trash racks and inlets for irrigation tunnels.”

“The team deployed with an inflatable Zodiac boat,” added Staff Sgt. Andrew Miltenberger, the senior non-commissioned officer on the team. “On the Zodiac, we have a sonar system that is linked to a global-positioning system which can produce very accurate underwater topographical maps of the reservoirs.”

“The hydrographic surveys allow us to estimate the current volume of the reservoir,” explained Nader Noori, project manager for Kajaki Dam. “We have the original survey maps from when the dams were constructed. By comparing the original topography with the dive team’s products, we can determine how much sedimentation has occurred and how much reservoir capacity has been lost since the dam was built.”

“We try not to dive around dams, if possible,” Miltenberger said. “The turbulence and currents can make it pretty hazardous. The remotely operated vehicle allowed us to safely inspect various underwater features — the dam face, the trash racks and their guide rails, the inlets of the irrigation tunnels.”



*Spc. Matthew Tommaso (left), Staff Sgt. Bryan Crowley (center), and 1st Lt. Michael Jappe (right) conduct a hydrographic survey at Kajaki Dam. (U.S. Army photo)*

“This mission was a great experience,” Miltenberger said. “The planning, preparation and coordination with the district were superb. We are only the second group of Army divers to work in Afghanistan and support Operation Enduring Freedom. We’ve had the chance to go where few Army divers go.”

*You can find more news and features about the district on our [homepage](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and find interesting photos about the district on our [Flickr page](#).*



*Staff Sgt. Andrew Miltenberger operates a remote-controlled submersible at Dahla Dam. (USACE photo, Mark Ray)*