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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Afghanistan District gets New Commander

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Afghanistan Engineer District

Kabul, Afghanistan – Colonel Miroslav P. Kurka assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) from outgoing Commander Colonel William E. Bulen during a change of command ceremony here today.

Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan's (CSTC-A) Commander Major General Robert E. Durbin presided over the transfer of leadership while AED's Sergeant Major, Thomas C. Fenton, oversaw the exchange of colors.

“As a commander, presiding over these types of occasions is always bittersweet - I am saddened to see such a great leader depart, but at the same time, I'm happy to know there is another capable leader ready to take over the reins,” MG Durbin said.



Members of the 82nd Airborne Division Band await the next selection as MG Durbin addresses the commanders, guests and U.S. Army Corps of Engineer team members. Seated to his right (nearest to furthest) are COL Bulen, COL Kurka and Sergeant Major Fenton.

MG Durbin went on to praise Colonel Bulen for his success as the commander of AED during difficult times over the past year. "I want to thank you for your tireless work ethic, your can-do attitude, and your masterful management of an incredibly challenging mission. Your leadership has made a huge difference in improving the future of this country, and for that you should be very proud."

The general welcomed Colonel Kurka to the team noting "as we transfer responsibility for this critical mission to you, I know you will build upon the great work accomplished by your predecessors. I am confident you and your team will reach even greater heights as development in Afghanistan progresses."

He continued "It will be challenging, and at times, frustrating, but I promise you, your command here will be the most rewarding experience of your military career. Remember, be patient, but be persistent."

As commander of the Afghanistan Engineer District, Colonel Kurka is responsible for AED's projects and programs covering a full spectrum of construction and engineering support. Support falls into four major areas. Afghan National Security Forces (Afghanistan National Army and Afghanistan National Police), US/Coalition Forces support, Counter Narcotics and Border Management, and Strategic Reconstruction which includes support to US Agency for International Development (USAID), Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) and Pakistan. To date, the total AED program is valued at over \$ 2 billion. Besides Afghanistan, his geographical area of responsibility is the Central Asian Republics which include: Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In this role, he oversees engineering activities for the construction of roads, bridges and forward operating bases for military, Department of Defense, Non-Governmental Organizations and donor nations.

"Not only am I getting to do the best job in the Army, but I am now part of the Afghanistan Engineer District, an organization that is known throughout CENTCOM and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for its excellence," said Kurka.

"Command is an honor that carries great responsibility. I take this responsibility seriously and will work hard to maintain the District's excellent reputation as it responds to our nation's, our Soldiers' and our Allies' needs in this theater of war."

"We have many challenges ahead. But there is no other place I would rather be, no other command I'd rather have, no other Soldiers and Army Civilians I'd rather work with. I am here to serve our country, our Soldiers, and you, the members of the Afghanistan Engineer District," he concluded.

"Fighting the Global War on Terrorism is truly one of the greatest challenges of our generation" said Col. Bulen. "This is going to be a long fight. Steady progress is very apparent, with our coalition's assistance and partnerships, the Government of Afghanistan is steadily gaining the long term capability to care for its people."

"In my last few jobs, one of my major objectives for success was to give more than I have received in that job. Well, if I had to judge the last 12 months in AED by that philosophy, then I need to tell you: I have failed drastically. Because I have received so much more in friendship, kindness and support than I could ever have dreamed of giving back to you all, and for that, I thank you."