



James A. Bodron (left) and Kurt J. Reppe (right) take a look at the additional land that will need to be acquired at South Park for the Class One Yard expansion project in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

AED stands up Kandahar Program Office to handle project surge By Brenda L. Beasley

In the next few months, a new Corps of Engineers office is scheduled to be fully operational at Kandahar Airfield, 10 miles south-east of Kandahar City in Afghanistan. Organized to handle the major buildup of work in Afghanistan Engineer District's Regional Commands South and West, its main role will be to support military forces flowing in to KAF.

"With the surge in U.S. forces, AED is standing up an office in RC-S and RC-W area of coverage to meet

the military construction requirements," said James A. Bodron, deputy for Programs and Project Management who is also serving as the acting director of the new Kandahar Program Office.

Bodron and J. Andy Adams, the deputy for Engineering and Construction Division, are the first two people who arrived in Kandahar to stand up the new KPO. Although Bodron, the chief of Operations Division in the Memphis District, arrived at AED headquarters in Kabul,

Afghanistan, in late November 2008, he didn't physically begin standing up the KPO until his move to Kandahar in mid-January.

Since that time, five more Corps employees have been added, which includes a real estate specialist, two project managers, one program manager, and one administrative assistant. About 120 personnel are expected to be onboard by the end of September to help oversee the construction of the multitude of temporary and

permanent expansion projects. By the end of February, \$200 million worth of MILCON is being awarded and another \$500 million is expected to be awarded this summer, said Bodron.

KPO will coordinate its MILCON mission through AED, who in turn coordinates through the U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, which was activated by the Department of Defense in October 2008 as a functioning command and control headquarters for U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan.

Projects will include a two-phase Rotary-wing Ramp and Taxiway; a Close Air Support and Intelligence Surveillance & Reconnaissance ramp; an upgrade to the current Ammunition Supply Point; an ASP Bomb Building Pad; a Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration expansion; an upgrade to the existing Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Administration areas; and a relocation of the Class One Yard, according to Bodron.

The RSOI encompasses all of the activities needed to receive a unit's equipment and personnel. Arriving personnel are assembled and organized into coherent units and forces with the primary purpose of incrementally building combat power, he added. They are then moved through the theater of operations and integrated into the combatant commander's command and control, and logistics structures.

To handle the influx of



Relocatable buildings sit ready for use as billeting or offices at South Park for the Class One Yard expansion project. RLBs are designed to be readily moved, erected, disassembled, stored and reused.

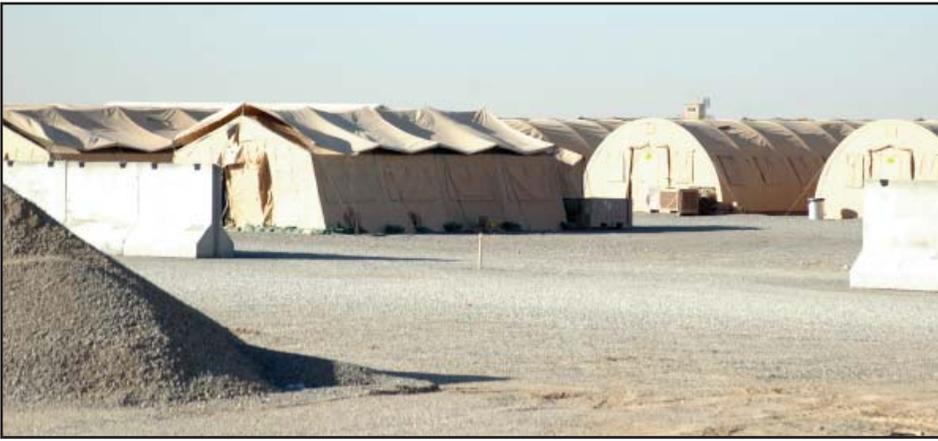
military personnel, the Class One Yard is being relocated to South Park, said Bodron. This will also include building a new Entry Control Point and access road to ensure security measures are in place to support the additional operational mission. This new work will also involve coordination with the existing South Park Infrastructure Project.

Because there is no lag time, all of the Corps' contracted projects at KAF are Design-Build versus Design-Bid-Build. This helps to get the projects completed faster since the design doesn't have to be completed until construction starts and changes can be made up to the last minute. Although some of the projects are vastly different, the housing designs are all the same and can be easily replicated. "We're in a fluid situation and things are changing fast," said Bodron. "Using Design-Build contracts takes less time and increases flexibility."

However, the process of

building is not as easy as it seems. Whether the facilities are temporary or permanent, or whether the design and construction is flexible or not, nothing can be built unless there is land to build it on. "Land for projects in Afghanistan is at a premium," said Kurt J. Reppe, chief of the Real Estate Office at the KPO. "Everybody wants their little piece of it." Each country's military force may want to build a dining facility or billeting unique to their service members. It's up to the Real Estate Office to make sure enough land is acquired for U.S. forces to accomplish their mission.

"We can't spend MILCON dollars on land that we [the United States] don't have an interest in," said Reppe, a realty specialist from the St. Paul District who is delegated with the authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Army to sign documents to secure lands for MILCON projects. The two required lease agreements are the Department of the Army Permit to Use and



Soldiers currently staying in tents at South Park will move to their new relocatable buildings once construction of the Class One Yard expansion project is complete.

Occupy International Security Assistance Force Land and Facilities at KAF and the Operating Agreement between ISAF and the United States of America.

These documents basically ask for permission to use the land, said Reppe. After these are completed, the contracts are awarded. By using Design-Build, the contractor may move the grid based on the actual space needed for the project and a new map reflecting the revision based on the actual design can be added to the lease agreements.

To help meet some of these challenges, the KPO ensures early involvement with all parties involved in the coordination of acquiring the land so that an agreement can be reached between all parties. The agreements can be amended later if acceptable to all parties. “It seems like everybody is coming together and wants to see this surge,” said Reppe.

However, no matter what projects are built on KAF they all have to be reviewed and

approved by the KAF Base Camp Planning Board, which is similar to a neighborhood planning committee. “If we want to lease temporary billeting, we have to take that plan to the BCPB to get approval for a certain amount of months,” said Reppe, who’s now on his third six-month tour in Afghanistan, this time at Kandahar. “Successfully acquiring the land for MILCON projects to the tune of \$170 million and being able to execute all of the agreements in the first two weeks of being deployed here was a very rewarding experience.”

In managing and overseeing leases, the Real Estate Office must monitor and amend them as necessary, and deal with land issues as they come up, said Reppe. When the land is no longer needed or has to be turned back over, they have to do disposal or transfer from the United States to the other party.

A lot of good changes are happening now that ISAF is becoming involved in land

acquisition. Processes are in place now that provide continuity with a good standard and procedure for all to follow. “Everyone involved is going in the same direction,” said Reppe.

By acquiring land for projects, the KPO is also helping to improve the quality of life for the Afghan people. Previously, local nationals were told they were going to get paid for allowing the Russians to use their land, but they didn’t because their government was too poor to do so. “They’re getting paid now,” said Reppe. “We compensate them with fair market value.”

More land will soon need to be acquired when a contract is awarded for the Forward Arming and Refueling Point at KAF. The KPO project manager will oversee the work with the Transatlantic Programs Center in Winchester, Va., providing reach back support.

With a slew of projects coming in fast and furious, the KPO is working hard to get their new office up and running. They’re hiring people to fill the numerous job positions that it’ll take to successfully meet the construction schedules, while also coordinating the MILCON projects that are currently being awarded. “Our main focus here is trying to get the project done as quickly as possible to meet the surge of forces,” said Bodron. “And to coordinate with all of the interest groups to help the Soldiers meet their mission.”