

# OJT program builds futures

Story and photos  
by Jack J. Pagano

The Afghanistan Engineer District is building more than military bases, police facilities and schools in Afghanistan; it's building futures. Especially for eight Afghan National Army Engineer Cadets from the National Military Academy of Afghanistan who participated in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sponsored on-the-job-training program. For two weeks in February these bright-eyed, motivated Cadets watched, listened and learned first-hand from Corps' personnel what it takes to be engineers in action.

With more than \$4 billion in construction projects planned for Afghanistan this year, it's no wonder AED is investing the time and resources to mentor and train these young Cadets. They will be the top engineers in Afghanistan. Leslie Wright, chief of the AED Capacity Development Program, says these types of programs are



**Afghan Cadets on a tour of Camp Commando's new Soldier facility inspect a side window.**

critical to the sustainment of the U.S. and Afghan Government's infrastructure investments.

Wright provided encouragement and advice throughout the program. "This program adds tremendous value to the overall capacity development mission and I am honored to assist in shaping the minds of the future leaders and

engineers of Afghanistan."

During a trip to Afghanistan's Commando compound, the Afghan equivalent to the U.S. Army's Ranger school, three Cadets walked the grounds with Tony Beene, the Corps of Engineers project manager there. "They were in awe," said Beene. "We gave them real-world problem solving tasks and asked them to come back with answers and solutions not in days but in hours. This was no walkabout."

According to Beene, one of the problem-solving exercises came at the base of two huge water tanks. The Cadets were asked how much water it would take to sustain 2,500 Soldiers. Each Cadet whipped out a notepad and pen, and started calculating, asking additional questions in English, Dari and Pashto.

As snow blanketed the compound and temperatures dipped below the freezing mark, the Cadets were guided to each



**AED's Johnnie P. Saunders showing three Afghan National Academy Cadets the schedule for Camp Commando. Staff Sgt. Dale Race (far left) looks on.**

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