

NMAA holds ribbon cutting

By Bruce Huffman

A crowd of Afghan Soldiers and their American mentors gathered with members of the Afghanistan Engineer District and representatives from the FCEC Construction Company for a ribbon cutting ceremony held Jan. 15 to celebrate the completion of two warehouses at the National Military Academy of Afghanistan in Kabul. AED's Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Bryan L. Pratt and NMAA's Commandant Brig. Gen. Sherif Yaktali cut the ribbon during the ceremony.

The 70-meter by 20-meter warehouses have drive-through doors on each end and are connected by an asphalt road. Their smooth concrete floors are slab on grade, and can support up to seven metric tons allowing large trucks to enter and exit the facilities with supplies. Each warehouse has a three meter high stem wall that supports a K-Span

roof, chain link fencing for storage bays and is temperature controlled with an HVAC system.

The NMAA is the Afghan equivalent to West Point, and one of the warehouses was even used for the inaugural graduation ceremony



One of the two finished K-spans that will be used as a warehouse for the NMAA and where a ribbon cutting ceremony was held Thursday, Jan. 15. This K-span was also used for the inaugural graduation for the NMAA.



Kabul Area Officer in Charge Maj. Leigh B. Ford delivers a speech on the overview of the project construction to the NMAA generals, contractors, mentors for the Academy, instructors and various guests at the ribbon cutting ceremony.



L to R: Hugo Betzwieser, AED construction representative; Jesoor Rahmani, AED Local National quality assurance representative; Col. Mahammad Kazem, NMAA Chief of Staff; NMAA engineering assistant; Maj. Gen. Mohammad Sharif Yaftali, NMAA Commander; Lt. Col. Bryan L. Pratt, AED Deputy Commander; Sgt. 1st Class Herbert, NMAA Support Team Facilities Mentor; Col. Hamdullah Yousafzai, NMAA Dean/Deputy Commander; and Lt. Col. Dave Jones, Senior Mentor/Team Chief, NMAA Support Team.



L to R: Ford; Pratt; and Andy Adams, AED chief of Engineering and Construction; Ray Tatro, AED deputy of Programs and Project Management; and Toryalai Alami, AED LN project manager have tea and cake with the general in his office which is traditional after an important ceremony.

of the NMAA cadets the following week. “It has been said that an Army marches on its stomach,” said Pratt. “Most people don’t think about it, but facilities like these are vital to the logistical support and overall success of the Afghan National Army.”

Currently there are about 80,000 ANA troops with a goal to expand to 134,000. The Corps of Engineers has already built nine ANA Garrisons and has five Garrisons and four Kandaks under construction.

Maj. Leigh B. Ford, Kabul Area Officer in Charge, says it’s more than building structures, it’s building a relationship with the people.

“I came over here to learn a little bit about the Afghan culture, to get to work with the Afghans, and to partner with the Corps and the Afghans,” said Ford. “Being in engineering, we build things and Afghanistan needs a lot of reconstruction. So while we’re here building relationships with the Afghan people, we’re also building engineers. We’re helping them so that they can start building their own country one day. And one day we hope that they can do it all themselves.” 🇦🇫