



An aerial view of the Afghan Border Police Company Headquarters under construction in the Village of Tanar.

Tightening the border in Kunar Province

By Bruce J. Huffman

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is nearly 80% complete with construction of a \$6.5 million Afghan Border Police Company Headquarters in the Village of Tanar, located in northeastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan border.

The forested terrain and network of caves in this mountainous region of the Kunar Province makes this a favored spot for insurgent traffic. The presence of the Afghan Border Police in this area is essential to stopping the flow of insurgents crossing the border into Afghanistan in this area. The new ABP HQ is being built about 12 kilometers from the border at a choke point in a valley called the Silara Pass, a small walking trail through the mountains. When finished, Afghan Border Police will launch patrols from here out to observation points along the pass to watch for and intercept insurgents crossing the border.

The 135 meter rectangle ABP HQ is a self sustaining compound with a perimeter wall, four guard towers featuring ballistic glass, and a heavily fortified entry control point. It has two 275 KBA Cummings Diesel generators with four fuel tanks; two for the generators, and two for fueling vehicles. It has its own well and water storage tank, an ablution unit with latrines, showers and a laundry facility, and



Afghan workers from the Village of Tanar place curb stones along the service drive inside the ABP compound.

a warehouse and ammo supply point. It also has an administrative building, a dining facility, and two barracks buildings; one with individual rooms for officers and senior enlisted and another open bay facility for junior enlisted. When finished, the compound will provide adequate living and workspace for 93 Afghan Border Police.

“The Tanar project is just one of three ABP HQ’s currently under construction in a 50 kilometer stretch along this portion of the border in Kunar, and a fourth is planned for the region,” said Capt. William Lewis, Officer in Charge of the Corps of Engineers Resident Engineer Office in nearby Asadabad. The three that are currently under construction are being built by the Road and Roof Construction Company, an Afghan firm from Kabul, for \$19.5 million. “Two of the projects are not as far along as the one in Tanar, because of Real Estate problems that caused delays.” According to Lewis, getting supplies in the more remote areas can be a challenge too, but Road and Roof Construction implemented some innovative ideas to speed the process. “The generators and the pre-engineered metal dining facility building were shipped in, but almost everything else was either purchased locally or made on-site,” said Lewis.

“They set up a batch plant and made about 75% of the CMU block on-site, using raw materials and local labor from the Village of Tanar.” According to Lewis, one of the biggest delays was waiting for lumber permits from the local Afghan government. Criminals are known to smuggle lumber and other natural resources from this area across the border into Pakistan to finance terrorist activity, so the local government has imposed tight sanctions on the sale and transport of lumber in the region.

According to Duke Loney, AED Project Engineer, Asadabad Resident Office,

it’s tough to get ‘American eyes’ on the projects in the more remote areas too. “We have Local National Quality Assurance Representatives who inspect the projects and report back to us,” said Loney. “It’s easier for them to get to the project sites unnoticed than it is for Americans. Because of the enemy threat, we have to travel in Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPS) everywhere we go. Consequently we only get to the Tanar site about twice a month,” said Loney, “but things are progressing along.” The gravel base road that leads to the ABP HQ was built by the Corps of Engineers about six months ago, and now the Provincial Reconstruction Team is applying a Phosphate Buffered Saline with Tween (PBST) layer, a compacted mixture similar to, but not quite as good as asphalt. “This is an agricultural area, and building roads is one of the best ways you can stimulate the economy,” said Lewis. “I’ve worked for civilian companies back in the United States, and their focus is always on the bottom line. I think I’m here for a higher purpose, and I’m contributing to the country’s security. This project is bringing better security and stability to the Kunar Province, which in turn brings better security and stability to all of Afghanistan.”



About 75% of the CMU block used to construct the ABP Co. HQ in Tanar was manufactured on-site using raw materials and local labor from Tanar.