



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers trains and mentors Afghan soldiers

KABUL - Afghan soldiers from the National Military Academy of Afghanistan got a different kind of learning experience while working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during a six month long engineering internship that culminated with a graduation ceremony, March 17.

The internship program is intended to build upon the knowledge and training that the Afghanistan National Army soldiers, who are engineers by trade, receive at NMAA through a hands-on learning experience.

As part of the internship, Afghan Lts. Khalid Amin and Mir Firozuddin were mentored by several Afghanistan Engineer District-North employees and went through several modules including construction scheduling, engineering, project management and on- the- job field experience. Each module is administered by experts at AED-N in each respective field.

“Here at AED it is our mission to be a positive influence and contributor to the prosperity and the future of Afghanistan, and these two fine lieutenants represent the bright future that I know is ahead for this country,” said Lt. Col. Jon Chytka, AED-N deputy commander.

During the program, the lieutenants worked side-by-side with experts in contracting, project management, engineering, quality assurance, construction scheduling and construction management so that they could become familiar with the Corps processes. They accompanied district personnel on missions to project sites, explained USACE requirements to the Afghan contractors and served as interpreters for district employees.

The NMAA internship program is part of the AED-N capacity development program. The purpose of capacity development is to train and teach Afghan engineers and employees how to build, maintain and sustain the projects that USACE has invested in so that they can run the facilities once USACE leaves the country. In the future, the capacity development program is looking to extend the NMAA program to a summer facility engineering internship where Afghan’s will work during the summer at completed USACE project sites learning how to run the facilities and fix and maintain the systems in them.

“I can confidently say that today we are graduating soldiers from NMAA that are capable of solving the problems of Afghanistan as part of the Afghan army,” said Afghan Maj. Gen. Mohammad Zazai, the superintendent of NMAA. “We are very grateful to AED-N for creating this internship program and training these soldiers in a very practical way.”

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KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

Upon completion of the program, the two Afghan National Army officers will use their newly honed skills to educate future army engineer officers by going on to become professors of engineering at NMAA.

“I have to teach the cadets, the future engineers that are graduating from NMAA,” said Amin. “I have to transfer all of this knowledge that I have learned here. I feel better today that I know the way to learn, I know how to deal with problems, and I know how to learn from engineers, how to speak, and how to stand. I am very grateful to everyone here at AED, in this environment, in this compound.”

The NMAA school is designed similar to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point whereas Afghan soldiers choose a field of study while training for the military. Amin and Firozuddin mark the 9th and 10th students to graduate from the Corps internship program and the fourth graduation since the internship program started. Next year the Corps will welcome three more soldiers from NMAA that will be participating as interns.

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National Military Academy of Afghanistan Afghan Lts. Mir Firozuddin, left, and Khalid Amin stand tall during their graduation ceremony from the six month long engineering internship at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineering District-North. (USACE photo by LaDonna Davis)