Serving the Afghanistan Engineer District - South

Engineering Freedom

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers®
Afghanistan Engineer District - South

KAF receives extreme makeover

Engineering Freedom

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Articles or photographic submissions are welcome and should arrive in PAO by the 20th of each month preceding publication. They can be mailed to the below address or they can be e-mailed. If electronically submitted, all stories should be in Word document format and all photographs should be high resolution (at least 5x7 inches and 300 dpi) and include photo caption information.

All photographs appearing herein are by the AES Public Affairs Office unless otherwise accredited.

The mission of Engineering Freedom is to support the Commander's Internal Communication Program for AES. It also serves as the Commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies, operations, technical developments, and command philosophy to AES.

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http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Army-Corps-of-Engineers-Afghanistan-Engineer-District-South/199033262376?ref=ts

On the cover ...

Doug Foster (center) and Jesse Allen (right) discuss the Entry Control Point project at Kandahar Airfield with contractor Kaan Kokturk, a civil engineer. See story beginning on page 14. (Photo by Patricia Ryan)

Commander's message ...

AES Team,

We've come a long way since we unfurled our colors and officially activated the Afghanistan Engineer District South (AES) in August 2009. We've begun to make a positive impact on the future stability of Afghanistan – executing our steadily growing workload in a challenging and sometimes daunting environment. We have established our own District magazine to tell our story, to highlight the great people who make AES what it is and to document our historic mission and accomplishments – something we can show our grandchildren.

Critical to the successful execution of our mission, our work in the areas of real estate management and water, electrical and road infrastructure development are paramount in the engineering support we provide operational commanders throughout the region while at the same time building our District capacity to execute a program in excess of $1 billion. Our expectations are high as we strive to be a lean and capable organization with the agility and technical competence to execute whatever program or projects come our way.

Here in Southern Afghanistan, we're part of a larger engineering community. By working with our partners through disciplined thought and action to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions we are fast becoming the engineering experts in this theater of operations. By getting the job done, we're inspiring confidence and earning respect in our organizations' technical abilities. In a planning process that includes 17 different nations with varying approaches and needs, people are looking to AES for sustainable solutions. Together with our partners in Kabul, USAID, NATO and Regional Commands South and West (RC-S and RC-W) – we will forge ahead to meet the challenges we encounter in the coming months.

... people are looking to AES for sustainable solutions.

Col. Kevin J. Wilson

We're synchronizing Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) project management and construction execution with battle space owners, trainers, mentors and other ANSF leadership to better provide critical facilities for the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. We're developing support to the Warfighter Program by identifying and executing specific projects that will support a Coalition Forces' Counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy in areas where there are no maneuver battle space owners such as in sparsely populated regions throughout our area of operation. We are also surging AES elements in military construction efforts for RC-W expansion to support the planning and execution process for building critical military infrastructure, as well as supporting the needs of the troop uplift in the coming months.

We're working together with our NATO, Coalition Forces, USAID and inter-agency partners to build this country from the ground up. While supporting combat operations is a key part of that, we also need to build the Afghan economy. That means we've got to generate power and build roads so local populations can get their agricultural products to market for processing and forwarding on to the global economy. That's one way the Corps and AES is going to help connect Afghanistan, and in my opinion, that's an essential element to winning this war.

We're living in an exciting and challenging time and I am honored to serve with each of you as we take on the challenges ahead. ESSAYONS!

Command Sergeant Major's message ...

Now that we are starting a new year and kicking off our first District magazine, I want to talk about something that should be second nature to all of us, especially in this hostile environment.

Operational Security (OPSEC) should be first and foremost on everyone's mind 24/7. No matter what job you hold here in the District, where you are or what you are doing, it is your responsibility to exercise OPSEC at all times.

I am always amazed at what I hear both Soldiers and Civilians talking about. Whether in the dining facility, the Boardwalk, sitting in the barber shop, or standing around the flight line, I hear discussion on sensitive information, enemy tactics, troop movements, projected visitors coming to the area of operation and other things that violate our OPSEC rules and responsibilities.

Remember, the walls have ears. In most cases they are paper thin and you never know who may be listening. You can answer a question politely and discreetly and in some cases deflect the question if necessary without divulging sensitive information which we all handle daily in our jobs.

Another practice I find alarming is the ever increasing improper handling of personal information and data. Ask yourself this question, what do you do with all the boxes, letters, bills, cards and envelopes etc. that contain or have attached personal or family information? If your answer is "I just throw them in the trash can," I will tell you that what you are doing is wrong and could be in violation of OPSEC procedures. Before you throw out those holiday care package boxes, cards and letters from back home, cut-off all identifying information and personally burn it in your burn barrel. Also personally shred all the documents, envelopes and papers in the office that contain or have attached identifiable data.

Command Sgt. Maj. John S. Werner

I can't tell you how many times I have taken boxes from the dumpster and envelopes, letters, bills and other papers from office trash cans that contain personal or work related data. I could shred or burn them, but instead I personally hand deliver them to whomever they were addressed to or identified in the paperwork and let them know how valuable that data could be to someone outside the wire. Then I tell them how they should properly dispose of it.

Here at AES we are a small organization and I ask that we all look out for each other. Always remember it is the small things that we think are insignificant that can add up and result in a much bigger negative outcome.

I want everyone across the AES footprint to take ownership of and participate in our new District magazine. E-mail your items of interest to Public Affairs and submit ideas, photos, stories and graphics for publication so we can make this magazine our own.

Command Sgt. Maj. Werner (left) discusses the service life of a Cat 3512 generator with Col. Wilson (right) while on a site visit in Qalat, Afghanistan.

Afghanistan Safety 101

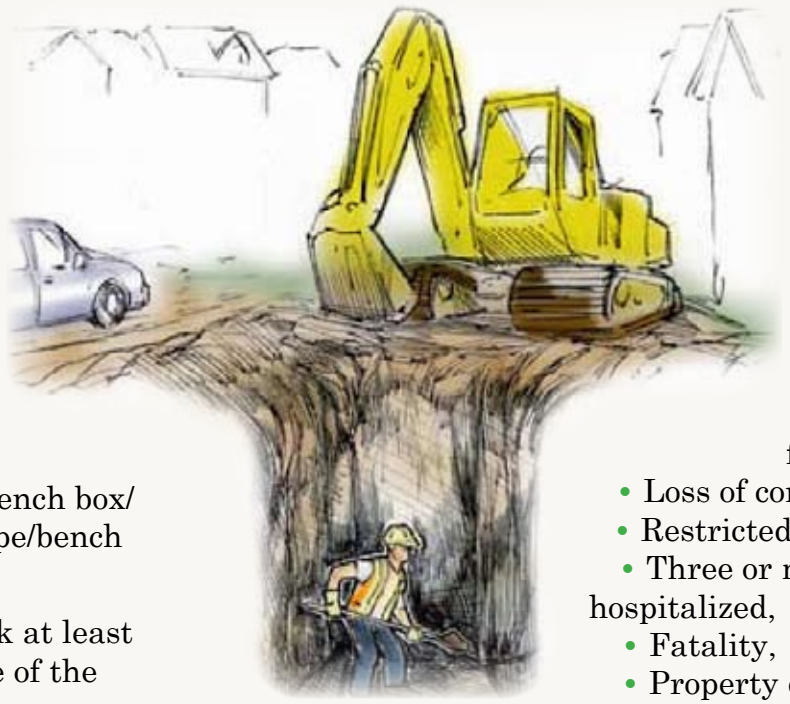
by Cedric Pelt, Safety Manager

Trenching Hazards

Cave-ins are perhaps the most feared trenching hazard. But other potentially fatal hazards exist, including asphyxiation due to lack of oxygen in a confined space, inhalation of toxic fumes, drowning, etc. Electrocution or explosions can occur when workers contact underground utilities. EM 385-1-1 Safety & Occupational Health Requirements Manual section 25 requires that workers in trenches and excavations be protected, and that safety and health programs address the variety of hazards they face.

Excavated material (spoils) at your site are hazardous if they are set too close to the edge of a trench/excavation. The weight of the spoils can cause a cave-in, or spoils and equipment can roll back on top of workers, causing serious injuries or death.

To avoid accidents in excavations, here are some of the basic tips:



- Use proper protective systems (trench box/ shoring or use the slope/bench technique).
- Set spoil pile back at least two feet from the edge of the excavation.
- Have a competent person onsite who is trained in excavations.
- For access, place a ladder in the excavation which extends three feet from the landing.
- Conduct daily inspections to check for hazards.
- Contractor must complete an Activity Hazard Analysis.

Accident Reporting Procedures

What to do in the event of an Accident?

For reporting purposes, first notify your immediate supervisor, and then the supervisor is to notify the Safety Office within 24 hours of a recordable accident.

Two forms are required to be completed: 1st - ENG 3394 Accident Investigation Report; 2nd - Preliminary Accident Notification (PAN) located in ENG Link.

The Safety Office is available to help you complete the form. Also, contact the J1 Office (Human Resources) to complete other required forms such as the CA-1 & CA-2.

Recordable accidents are accidents that involve the following:

- Days away from work,
- Loss of consciousness,
- Restricted duty,
- Three or more employees hospitalized,
- Fatality,
- Property damage that results in $2,000 or greater,
- Motor vehicle accident, and
- Medical treatment (government).

If in doubt, contact the Safety Office at 540-678-1980 or cell number 079-948-6844.

Capt. Berndsen with the 777th Expeditionary Squadron briefs Joint Forces Engineer Commander Brig. Gen. William Buckler, Joint Program Integration Office Director Witt Anderson and AES team members on construction at FOB Wolverine.

Corps preps for Afghanistan surge while looking long-term

Story by Donna Miles, Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, and photos by Patricia Ryan

As 30,000 additional troops move into what admittedly will be "pretty austere conditions" in Afghanistan, the Army Corps of Engineers is working in partnership with unit-level engineers and contractors to provide basic creature comforts – while focusing heavily on longer-term projects considered critical to their ultimate success there.

Army Col. Kevin Wilson, commander of Afghanistan Engineer District – South, told American Forces Press Service he expects as many as two-thirds of the surge troops to move into Regional Commands South and West, his area of responsibility.

Initially, they should expect "some tough conditions," Wilson admitted, bedding down in tent cities both at their arrival point and at the forward operating bases they move out to. "That means it is going to be cold in the winter, and really hot in the summer," he said.

U.S. Forces Afghanistan has geared up the entire engineering community to provide the incoming troops the support facilities they'll require. Troop engineers and the contractor-supported LOGCAP program – Logistics Civil Augmentation Program – will provide amenities such as dining, laundry and post exchanges.

Meanwhile, the Corps

The "Old City" of Qalat can be seen here behind construction of the new Afghanistan National Police facility, another AES managed project.

will focus on the "enduring facilities" – larger, permanent projects aimed not just at accommodating the troop buildup, but also at supporting security and economic growth in Afghanistan long after they leave.

These include permanent facilities for the Afghan National Security Forces. They range from administrative, barracks and training buildings to accommodate 600-man Afghan army battalions, known as Kandaks, to smaller Afghan National Police outposts in some of the country's most remote and inaccessible regions.

Meanwhile, the Corps is also overseeing multiple infrastructure and development projects that promote economic development and stability.

"This really boils down to roads, power and water," Wilson said. Roads will promote commerce within Afghanistan and with its neighbors. Power generation facilities, water and wastewater facilities will improve quality of life, while driving other economic and political efforts.

Wilson said he expects these projects to increase as more U.S. and NATO forces roll into Afghanistan. That's because there's wide recognition that the collective impact of these efforts will be U.S. forces' "ticket home" from Afghanistan.

"The sooner we are able to stand up a functioning [Afghan] army and police force, and the sooner that we are able to get them on the road to economic growth and prosperity, the sooner we get to leave," he said. "We have a piece to play in helping create an Afghanistan that is a stable, moderate Islamic republic, and that is our intent."

But accomplishing engineering success in Afghanistan is no easy task. Wilson pointed to one of the most important infrastructure efforts under way – the Ring Road highway – as an example of the challenges being faced.

The road, when completed, will connect Afghanistan's major cities and villages, opening more Afghan markets and enabling Afghan manufacturers and entrepreneurs to increase their trade with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other neighbors.

But with just 145 miles not yet built, the project is still four to five years from completion, Wilson said. That's because it cuts through some of the most inhospitable terrain imaginable, from both geologic and security standpoints.

And, like every other U.S. supported infrastructure project under way in Afghanistan not directly related to U.S. troop support, it's being built almost entirely by Afghan workers.

"Could you build the road much quicker? Yes," Wilson said. "But is it better to break it down into segments, and provide the jobs that are needed here and foster that good will? Yes."

As Afghanistan Engineer District – South takes the more deliberate approach to most of its projects, Wilson said it's moving as quickly as

Contractor answers Brig. Gen. Buckler's questions during a site tour of the ANP facility at Qalat.

Maj. John Raso briefs Brig. Gen. Buckler and AES team on future plans at Tarin Kowt.

possible to accommodate the incoming U.S. forces.

He admitted he felt a bit like "a duck on a pond" earlier this week when President Barack Obama announced the new troop commitment, and a six-month timetable for getting the new forces on the ground.

"Up above, everything is nice and calm," Wilson said, a broad grin projecting through the telephone lines from his headquarters in Kandahar. "But underneath the water, its feet are paddling like crazy."

For the Corps of Engineers, the paddling actually started this spring when Obama announced plans to send an additional 20,000 Marines to Southern Afghanistan. Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp recognized the "tidal wave of work coming in" as a result, Wilson said, and stood up a second engineering district in Afghanistan to concentrate on operations in the south and west.

Nowhere is the fruit of those efforts more evident than at Kandahar Air Base, which has grown from 9,000 predominantly NATO forces in September 2007 to its current 25,000-troop population. Wilson estimated that it could grow to as much as 35,000 when the additional troops begin arriving, before they fan out to other parts of the region.

When the 20,000 Marines arrived in Afghanistan this past spring and summer, the big push was to "get them out of tents and out of the dirt" and into housing, Wilson said. The Marines also required infrastructure support: electricity, potable water, waste facilities, as well as headquarters buildings, aircraft facilities, ramp space and refueling and cargo sites to support their operations.

Wilson recognizes the challenges in preparing for the next wave of incoming troops. "We understand what has to be done," he said. "It adds a new dimension to what we're already doing here, but we will figure it out."

It's not unfamiliar territory for Wilson, who served with the Army Corps of Engineers in Baghdad in 2003. But even that mission can't hold a candle to the challenges faced in Afghanistan, he said. Iraq had highway networks and a basic infrastructure, albeit crippled at the time. In many cases, Afghanistan lacks both.

If there's one bullet on Wilson's resume that best prepared him for his current challenges, he said, it was his last assignment, with the Alaska Engineer District. There, he worked closely with native tribes in remote villages, just as he's doing now in Afghanistan.

"I probably learned more from working in Alaska that is applicable here than anywhere else," he said. "And it makes me able to ask the questions in advance."

Chief of Engineers builds morale during holiday visit

By Spc. Luke Rollins, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, thanked members of USACE Afghanistan Engineer District – South (AES) for their hard work, "during an exciting and challenging time," at a town hall meeting here Dec. 15, 2009.

AES, Afghanistan's second engineer district, was activitated in August to assist the Kabul office with the increasing number of construction projects in Southern Afghanistan.

Much of the construction is a result of troop increases in Southern Afghanistan which began in February, said AES Commander Col. Kevin J. Wilson.

"Currently we have over $3 billion worth of work going on in Afghanistan, and probably by the summer, when the dust settles from all the uplift, we'll have about $1.3 billion to $1.4 billion worth of that here," said Wilson.

"It's really warranted because of the dynamic, complex nature of [the situation] here," he said.

With President Barack Obama's announcement of another troop increase, the Engineers will be seeing a lot of work in the coming months, said Van Antwerp.

Photo by Patricia Ryan

Left to Right: Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp, Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko, Brig. Gen. William Buckler, Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, Brig. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson, commanding general of 2nd MEB, Witt Anderson and Col. Kevin Wilson review a news story on activity in Helmand during a visit to FOB Leatherneck December 2009.

Photo by Patricia Ryan

Van Antwerp (center) stops in to chat with AES resident and area engineers during their conference here.

Wilson agreed.

"Right now there are more than 20,000 troops at Kandahar Airfield alone and [all the incoming troops] are going to pass through here," Wilson said.

The work facing the Engineers is no small task, said Van Antwerp, because before work can even begin the materials have to survive a dangerous journey.

"Our business runs on materials. You have to bring in the lumber, you have to bring in the steel, you have to bring in the containers and all that. Transport isn't easy in this country – number one, the roads themselves, number two, coming through other countries to get here – there are just huge challenges in getting the materials here," said Van Antwerp.

However, he told the crowd of more than 100 people he was confident in USACE's ability to surmount the coming challenges.

The Engineers' virtues of leadership, disciplined thought and disciplined action are the keys to our success, he said.

ANA Garrison gets completed

Story by USAF 2nd Lt. Karl Wiest, Regional Command - West

Rahool Amin, governor of Farah Province, along with Afghan National Army (ANA) Gen. Besmullah Mohmanadi and Afghan National Police (ANP) Gen. Munier Mangal all participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially dedicate the ANA Garrison outside Farah City, Afghanistan, Dec. 16, 2009.

The garrison, a $67 million project, currently holds more than 1,000 ANA soldiers and has the capacity to house 5,000 soldiers.

The garrison features many new amenities including a large gym, a modern bakery and a dining facility big enough to support all ANA soldiers expected to be stationed there.

"There have been many outstanding efforts here in Farah and Shewan specifically," said Gen. David Rodriguez, commander of the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command. "Together we will continue to improve the security and we will continue to win the trust of the people of Farah."

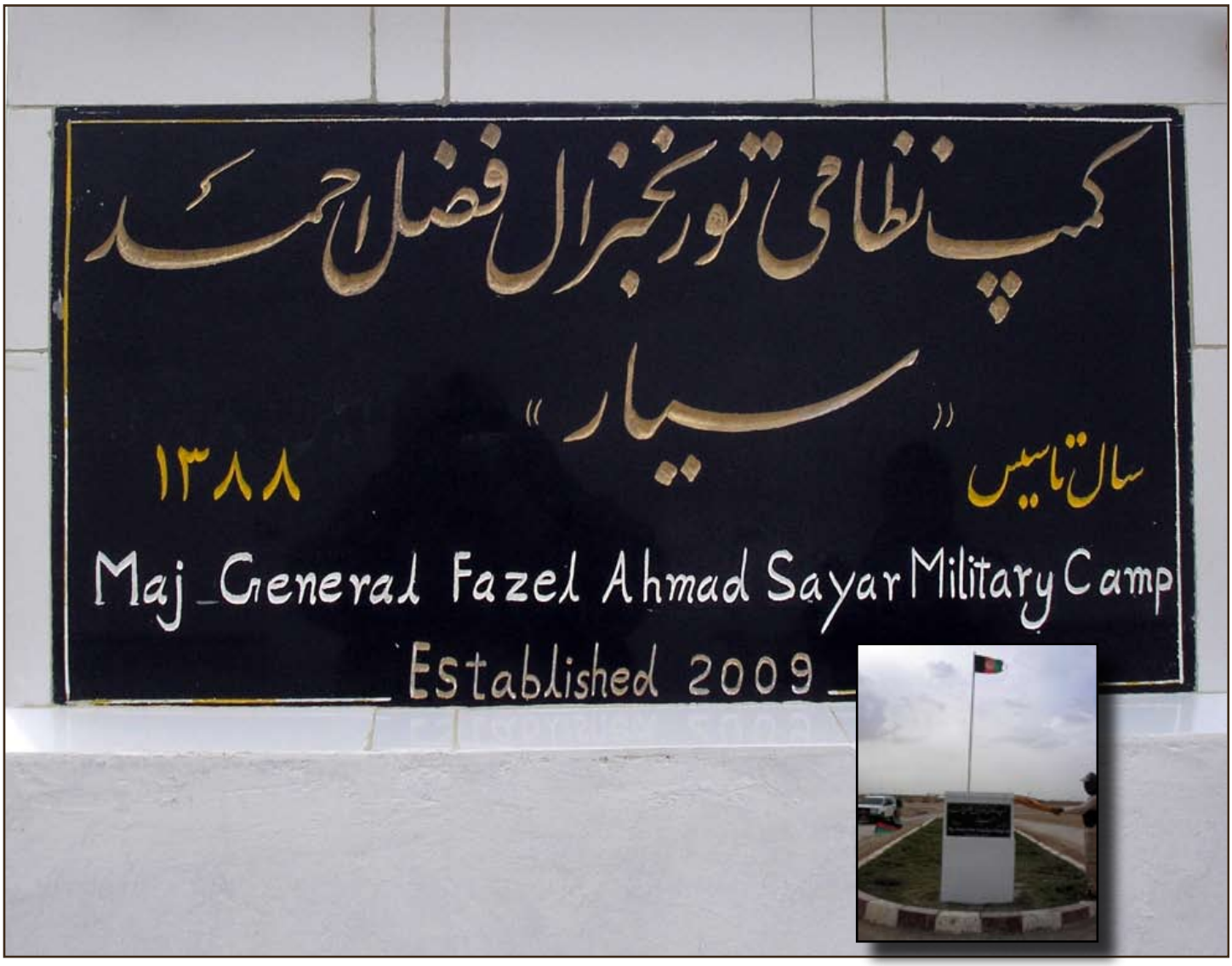


Photo by Sgt. Jeffery G. Stivason

Close up of plaque shown in insert that is in honor of ANA Maj. Gen. Fazel Ahmad Sayar, who was instrumental in providing the land for the facility and who was killed in a helicopter crash on a flight leaving the compound.

Photo by Sgt. Jeffery G. Stivason

For his one-year deployment Ron Gatlin (right) receives his end-of-tour certificate and a specially-made plaque from Maj. Giannini (center), as Farhad Waheedi (left) looks on.

Photo by Sgt. Jeffery G. Stivason

Flags fly for the first time at the new Corps compound on Camp Charlie in Farah, Afghanistan.

"The Afghan people are at the center of all this," said Gen. Mohmanadi. "We will continue to conduct operations in order to ensure that they feel secure and that their families and their livelihoods are protected – nothing could be more important to us."

Photo by Sgt. Jeffery G. Stivason

Corps employees at Camp Charlie pose for a photo during their Hail and Farewell, Open House and Recognition Ceremony. Top row (left to right): incoming PRT LNO Cecil "Skip" Brock, Farah Resident Office NCOIC Sgt. Jeffery G. Stivason, outgoing PRT LNO Ron Gatlin, Deputy Resident Engineer/Lead LNQA Farhad Waheedi, and Farah Resident Office OIC Maj. Giannini. Bottom Row (left to right): LNQA Eng. Shafiq, O&M Joe Peters, O&M Greg Miller, LNQA Eng. Ghani, and LNQA Eng. Nasif.

Corps employees adventure to an Afghanistan 'outback'

By Michael Bell

Many of us in Afghanistan Engineer District - South (AES) have had the opportunity to visit Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) such as Tarin Kowt, Wolverine, Dwyer and Farah. These FOBs typically have adequate housing with beds, showers, dining facilities (DFACs) and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) areas. However, fewer Civilian employees have the opportunity to work with COPs (Combat Out Posts). COPs are smaller than FOBs and extend further out into combat zones. Realty Specialist Damian Salazar and Environmental Specialist Michael Bell of the AES Real Estate Division had a recent mission to COP Sangar and were asked to share their experiences.

The mission involved meeting with the sub-governor of Shajoy (Abdul Quyum) and the village elders in the area to resolve possible land and building disputes between the local government and the existing U.S. Army Stryker base. One real estate function is to legally secure land for base operations to ensure that local Afghans are fairly compensated for land the United States needs and to comply with regulations to allow for expenditure of funds to the base.

Many of these real estate instruments are leases or "No Cost Land Use Agreements." One requirement for the lease or other real estate

Bell's and Salazar's tent housing at Sangar.

instrument is to conduct an Environmental Baseline Study (EBS) before or as soon as possible after the base opens. This study defines areas of environmental sensitivity and hazardous waste areas which could impact the health of the Soldiers. The area will be returned to this condition when the troops leave and the government resumes control over the land.

In-country travel is a challenge and this trip was no different. The 82nd Airborne initiates the outbound travel and the trip starts smoothly. A Black Hawk helicopter transports Bell and Salazar to FOB Wolverine and they are met by a Stryker patrol. The next three hours are along country backroads and one highway. The trip was slow and deliberate as this particular Stryker had already been hit by an IED on its first patrol. They informed the Civilians that they were about to go camping. They were correct.

COP Sangar (formally known as Crazy Horse) is a compound surrounded by mud and straw walls. Tents with cots supplied the sleeping quarters and bathrooms were the same type as the 54-year-old Bell had used as a child in Tennessee. A medical, pharmacy and command post tent occupied the center of the COP, complete with a few computers with internet access and three primitive operating tables. Showers had just been installed with hot showers beginning when Bell and Salazar arrived, and they were only available from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Bell gets ready to board the stryker.

Hospital facilities at Sangar.

The majority of the troops were covered in dust and grime from patrolling and maintaining Stryker for months with only bottled water available for cleaning. A MWR tent was erected on Thanksgiving Day with an operating television; however, the tent was rarely used due to the cold. Most of the troops used a tent with Gym equipment for recreation. The tent had numerous shrapnel holes from a recent car bomb.

Recreation in the evenings involved writing letters, reading letters, guitar playing and reading … with an occasional water gun attack from a rival tent. A cook trailer provided a hot simple breakfast and supper. Lunch was MREs (meal ready to eat). Nights were pitch black with no outside lighting from the base or the city. Bell, Salazar and a reporter were the only Civilians on the post which prompted many "what are you doing here" questions from the troops.

Bell conducted the EBS and then joined Salazar, the sub-governor and tribal leaders in the MWR Tent. Salazar skillfully resolved the land issues and then toured the disputed area. An interpreter, who had been renamed Tom Cruise by the troops for his good looks, was the go between.

With the mission complete, several unsuccessful attempts were made to return, with success coming at 2 a.m. after reporting at 8 p.m. the day before for a possible convoy. Salazar caught a ride in a MRAP and Bell had the privilege of riding on an elevated middle seat of a 16 wheeler.

KAF receives extreme makeover

Story and photos by from Patricia Ryan, PAO

As the world listened to President Obama reveal his plans for the "troop uplift" in Afghanistan last December, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was already charging forward in Afghanistan Engineer District – South (AES) providing critical engineering support and oversight in partnership with NATO, Coalition Forces, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Afghan people.

One year ago there were about 9,000 people on Kandahar Airfield (KAF). The population has grown to more than 20,000 people now with an additional 25,000 or more expected to arrive in the coming months as American and NATO forces travel through KAF on their way to various Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) across Regional Command's South and West.

The KAF infrastructure development – water, wastewater management, power, troop housing, roads and infrastructure required to support the KAF population – is enormous and AES is leading the way as the engineering expert in this theater of operations. Projects are going full-steam ahead, starting around the KAF flight line and spreading to new areas outside the present KAF footprint in support of base expansion.

Project Engineers Mark Ruszczyk and D'Lorah Small are managing multi-million dollar projects around the flight line. Ruszczyk has worked on KAF for more than three years and joined AES March 2009. Small arrived from the Corps' Savannah District in December 2009 and hit the ground running.

"One of the reasons I wanted to work for the Corps here in Afghanistan is that it is so much more than just design and build," said Small. "Here we have the opportunity to do something really great, to support the mission and make a positive change in the lives of the Afghan people."

Some key AES projects underway around the flight line include Rotary Ramp Phase I

Quality Assurance Representative Derland Ellison (right) (from the Corps' Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Miss.) takes a turn at the paver controls.

($43.1 million), Rotary Phase II ($18.1 million), the Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) Ramp ($23.2 million), and construction at Oscar Ramp ($4.7 million), which is just breaking ground.

Moving away from the flight line, AES is managing the design/build contract for a new Command and Control Staff Facility on KAF near the existing Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) facility. Work is presently underway relocating tents and structures to make way for the project. The facility will include a headquarters building as well as office space for staff personnel, administrative areas, latrines and supporting infrastructure.

Project Engineer D'Lorah Small (right) discusses daily progress with a contractor.

Construction is finishing up on the third of three RSOI (Reception, Staging, Onward-Movement and Integration) buildings designed to house hundreds of troops. Soldiers already occupy the buildings as they are transiting through KAF. The reinforced concrete barracks meet International Building Code (IBC) seismic requirements and feature reinforced concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls. The upgraded buildings improve the health, safety and morale of the troops and are a vast improvement over tents built on dirt.

The AES Brigade (BDE) Housing, Water Treatment Plant, Water Wells and Utilities Distribution contract is under construction with a planned opening date of May 2010. This massive housing project includes design and construction of the facility as well as infrastructure for approximately 12 relocatable building (RLB) groups comprised of two floors each with 34 units on each floor, with shower and latrine facilities. These structures are

Afghan workers place concrete for the ISR ramp which is scheduled for completion in March.

based on the requirement to house hundreds of personnel.

Outside the existing perimeter of KAF, AES projects are underway to support the design and construction of structures required to extend the KAF footprint in anticipation of projected growth. MILCON (military construction) projects are also in full swing on KAF and surrounding areas.

The new Entry Control Point (ECP) project will provide a control portal for vehicles entering KAF including large trucks supporting construction efforts, as well as those bearing supplies and goods to sustain the population on base. Another vital role for this project is designing and building associated structures as part of the ECP to streamline and control the base pedestrian access. Turkish company Metag is the contractor for this project and they are employing Afghan "Turkmen" who are a minority population in Afghanistan with cultural and language roots that tie them to Turkmenistan as well as Turkey, thereby supporting the Afghan First work initiative and providing jobs for this ethnic group of Afghan citizens.

The new Deep South expansion area is adjacent to the existing KAF South Park area and presently home to troop support "tent cities" including the sleeping and dining facilities, roads, water and waste water treatment services associated with housing thousands of troops. AES is upgrading the tents to hard structures that will provide housing assembled from RLB components that will greatly improve the quality of life for troops stationed on KAF, as well as those transitioning through on their way to their combat destinations.

The South Park Drainage project encompasses the design and construction of roughly 4,500 meters of drainage culverts, 3,000 meters of open trenching, and approximately 11.5 acres of demining to prepare the land for construction. Other site improvements will include a storm sewer collection station, paving of walkways and installation of curbs and gutters. This project will include design and construction of wells, a water treatment facility, approximately 10,000

Construction Representative Jesse Allen checks on the progress of the perimeter fence for Deep South.

meters of sewer pipe, as well as sanitary sewer and underground electric lines.

Ground work preparation and demining work is underway in one area of Deep South making way for a Class 1 Warehouse project that will provide storage for frozen and refrigerated food and dry goods. The design and construction of fencing, guard towers, power generation, communications, parking, roads, bridges, and a drainage system are all critical to the expansion of KAF as the base and its operations continue to grow.

The foundations are underway for the AES Power Plant South Park Infrastructure project, which will deliver a power plant capable of generating 3,000 KW. Additionally, construction of concrete box culverts to provide access across a very large drainage ditch (referred to here as a "wa'di") between South Park and Deep South is underway now to improve access.

Project Engineer Mark Ruszczyk checks on Oscar Ramp progress.

Presently vehicles must drive several miles to get around the ditch.

"Working in AES is a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Victor Ross, AES Operations and Maintenance Branch, Programs and Project Management Division. "For over eight years the Corps construction and engineering groups have toiled to build facilities for the Afghan National Security Forces. I am proud to be a part of this legacy." Ross is from the Alaska District where he works in the Regulatory Division.

In the coming months, the AES Engineering Freedom monthly magazine will feature updates on the projects in this article and reach out into our AOs, ROs and FOB facilities to highlight the great work being done throughout the District.

AES is an area of operation that requires adaptability, flexibility and respect for Afghanistan's diverse culture and traditions – everyone is aware that avoiding small social mistakes can prevent huge misunderstandings and setbacks. AES employees say they are proud to be a member of the AES team and derive great personal satisfaction working together to build a better future for the people of Afghanistan.

Quality Assurance Representative Alan Eastridge (from the Corps' Seattle District) discusses ramp measurements with contractor to ensure compliance with construction drawings.

Corps hands over completed ANP barracks expansion project to the Afghan National Civil Order Police Brigade.

Corps completes ANA Barracks

By ISAF Public Affairs Office

The Afghan National Police regional command base in Herat, Afghanistan, inaugurated a new building Dec. 31, 2009, and Regional Command West Commander Brig. Gen. Alessandro Veltri participated in the ceremony.

The facility took a year to complete and will house the 3rd Afghan National Civil Order Police Brigade.

Afghan National Police and Afghan Border Police commanders attended the ceremony with representatives from the Herat government.

Commanding ANP General Ekramuddin addresses guests.

Herat Area Office, Officer-In-Charge Lt. Col. George LeBoeuf presents a USACE Certificate of Appreciation to the prime contractor.

Gen. Ekramuddin, ANP commander, thanked Veltri and his team for their continuous support, partnership and commitment to increase security.

The completion of this facility is evidence of the partnership the Italians and the Afghan National Security Forces have fostered. The building will help the ANSF achieve a greater capability to secure a better future for all Afghans.

Unsung Heros

1. J1 NCOIC Staff Sgt. "C" (Lloyd Canieso) works every day picking up the mail and personally delivering everything to everyone on the compound while making sure mail headed for the FOBs gets delivered as fast as possible. Always with a smile – he makes the job look easy – even during the holiday rush.
2. The GIS Gurus, Andy Mitzel and Eric Morrison, are key members of the GIS/Engineering Section team here at AES. They produce all the great maps seen in offices, presentations and publications, often working after midnight on top of their 10-hour work days to support all the AES sections that need their help.
3. Senior Master Sgt. Jack Bivens is truly a "Jack of all trades" here at AES J4. He is one of the first people AES arriving Civilian personnel see as he promptly and efficiently processes the required information for everyone to receive their mandatory ISAF badges. He is also most proficient at moving furniture, juggling supplies and goods in and out of conex containers and whatever other job comes his way – not glamorous work but vital to the mission.

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Capt. William J. Figueroa
J1 Officer-in-Charge
Afghanistan Engineer District South HQs

Experience of a Lifetime

Being the first person assigned to a particular position is no small task. On Aug. 3, 2009, I became the first J1 (Human Resources) Officer-in-Charge for the newly established Afghanistan Engineer District – South (AES), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, based in Kandahar, Afghanistan. With a staff of five personnel, we set out on a mission to establish new policies and procedures for the Commander and all personnel assigned to AES. Together we created several policies that have assisted with the various human resources issues dealt with in theater to include work schedule, equal opportunity issues, awards, evaluations, leave, rest and recuperation, and promotions.

Another important task is working with all AES division and section leaders to ensure the District is manned to meet the current workload and posture it for future success, especially with the increase in projects and personnel as we ramp up to full District strength. By using the various resources at our disposal, the District personnel strength (both Military and Civilian) has increased by 50 percent.

Along with meeting the challenge of staffing, we developed a Newcomer's Orientation Program designed to ease the transition process for our new employees. This program is a continuous work in progress, and all new employees appreciate this initiative to help bring them up to speed on our District's mission and business processes.

Finally, a huge part of our mission is to provide all human resources support to our various Resident and Area Offices in the various locations throughout the South and West Regions of Afghanistan. To accomplish this task, I was fortunate enough to accompany the AES Deputy Commander and other principal command staff representatives on Staff Assistance Visits to all of our field offices. This allowed me to get an inside look at the concerns and issues facing our employees in outlying areas, allowing the J1 staff to provide better services. This was also an excellent opportunity for me to see the country of Afghanistan and see how the people who we've been sent here to help live and spend their everyday lives. It definitely gave me an appreciation for the small things that we as U.S. citizens have, that others do not. This deployment has been an experience of a lifetime. I believe that my staff will continue to help those personnel assigned to our District, so that they can be successful in rebuilding and improving the lives of the people in Afghanistan.

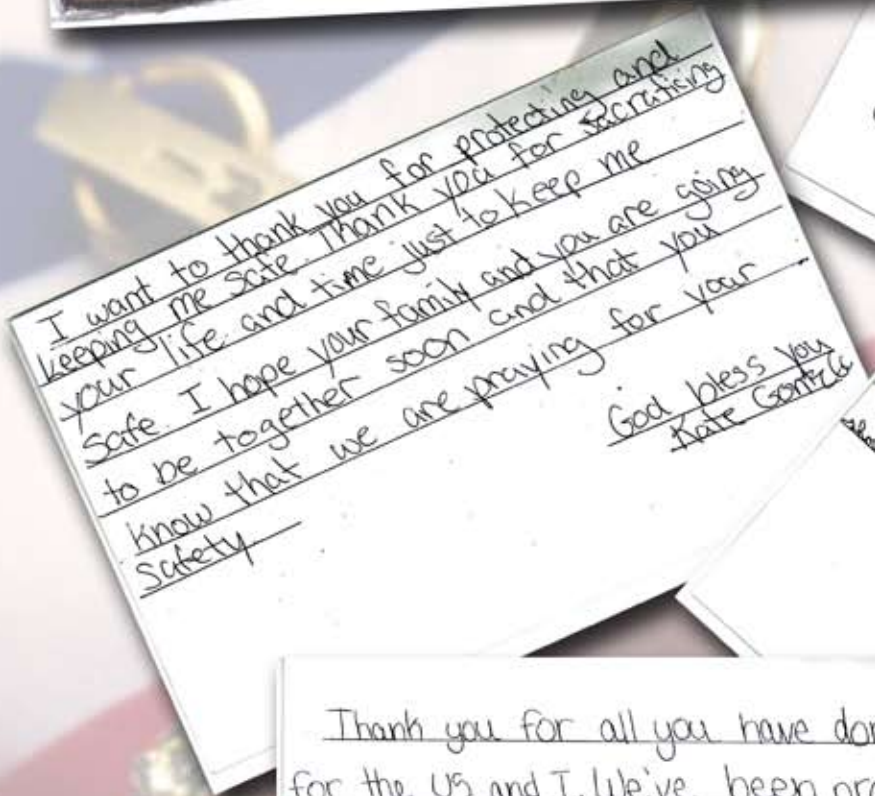
1st row, L to R: Avril "Mimi" Jones, Staff Sgt. Lloyd "C" Canieso, and Judy Britton-Curry. 2nd row, L to R: Patricia Lora, Capt. Figueroa, and Gail Thearle.

Students send pocket angels

A family friend of Capt. William Figueroa, AES J1, recently sent a package to the AES Team containing St. Michael, Guardian Angel medallions and notes of appreciation from the 6th grade students of Our Lady of Calvary Parish in Philadelphia, Penn. The extra medallions and cards not distributed to the AES team are being provided to the U.S. Forces Chaplains on KAF to distribute to the Soldiers assigned in Kandahar.

Thank you so much for protecting our country. I am so great ful for you bravery. We appreciate you courage and selflessness. I admire your dedication and sacrifice for this country.

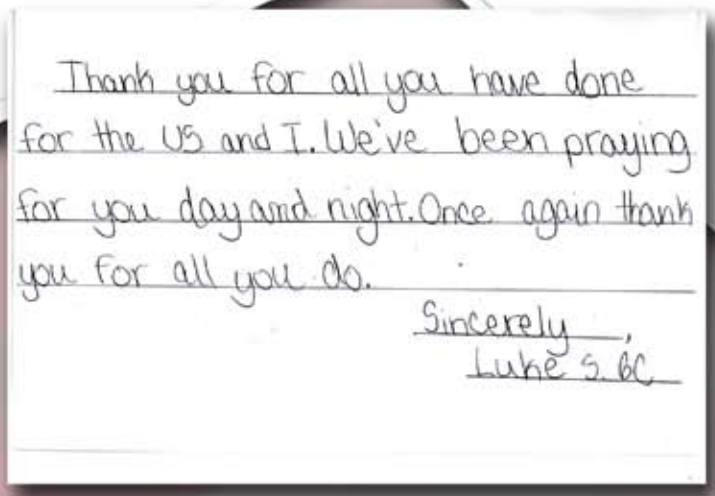
-Colleen K., Grade 6


I want to thank you for protecting and keeping me safe. Thank you for sacrificing your life and time just to keep me safe. I hope your family and you are going to be together soon and that you know that we are praying for your safety

God bless you
Kate Gantz

Thank you for all you have done and dedication to this country. You make me feel safe when I go to bed at night. You should be proud of yourself. God Bless You!

Yours friend,
Nick Nantzy


Thank you for all you have done for the US and I. We've been praying for you day and night. Once again thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,
Luke S. 6C

News briefs

Reaching 911 at KAF

By Maj. Andrew Howes

911 Service is currently activated on Kandahar Air Base. Use the following methods to reach the service:

1. Dial 911 on a local DSN phone. A local DSN phone is located in the Operations Center.

2. Cell phone direct: Dial 079-972-3490 on your Roshan cell phone. Joint Defense Operations Center (JDOC) will answer.

3. Cell phone through DSN bridge: from your cell phone dial DSN bridge number 070-113-2000, it will ring once … wait for the dial tone then dial 911. If you have not already done so, store the DSN bridge number (070-113-2000) in your phone and name the contact 911, this will save you a great deal of time trying to locate it in an emergency.

4. From a USACE phone, dial 7-318-841-2004. JDOC will answer.

Human Resource Issues

By Capt. William Figueroa

Please send all requests/issues as they arise to: DLL-CETAS-J1CivilianPersonnel@usace.army.mil.

AES Travel Issues

By Blair Nipper

Send all e-mail related to travel arrangements, Afghanistan visas, and passports to AED-S.travel@usace.army.mil.

To ensure smooth travel arrangements, please use only AES travel forms, any forms from AEN will be returned to the requester. Personnel who have access to the Kandahar server can retrieve the forms on the "S" drive at *S:\Travel Forms for users*.

Travel packets need to have all of the required signatures and be submitted to the Travel Office 45 days prior to travel. A rate quote must be submitted before any self-purchased tickets for R&R. All travelers must book their own hotel arrangements while on R&R.

Maintenance Issues

By Terry Guagliano

As our District grows, so does the demand on everyone here. If you have a maintenance problem or need to use a tool, please send me an e-mail. Do not take it upon yourself to drive nails or screws in any walls … electrical, plumbing and/or communications lines may get damaged. Contact me first. Once I receive the Facility Maintenance Request, it will be put on a priority list according to the type of maintenance problem.

KAF Vehicle Fleet Tips

By Staff Sgt. Kwasi Gyamfi

-DO NOT smoke in the vehicles. It's against the government vehicle policy.

-Keep the inside of the vehicles clean every day.

-Check the vehicles daily for fluids, oil and gas. It is the operator's responsibility to ensure sure that the vehicle's fluids are maintained at the proper levels.

-Fill out the 2404 form in the Vehicle Log Book whenever a fault is found or detected on the vehicle, and turn it in to the Transportation Motor Pool (TMP) section for immediate attention.

-Individuals visiting from FOBs can also sign for the floating vehicles to facilitate movement around KAF.

-Dispatch Logs are placed in each vehicle and government vehicle utilization policy requires that individuals sign the dispatch log book to include time, date and purpose of trip.

-Fill out the Motor Vehicle Accident Report Form (SF 91) in the log book whenever an accident happens. DO NOT drive the vehicles around without the log books in them.

-DO NOT get caught by the MPs for driving a government vehicle without a valid OF 346. A valid government license is required to operate a motor vehicle on KAF.

-Parking is becoming a very important issue at KAF. Please AVOID parking in the MRAP/Tactical spots

-Watch the speed limit. The MPs use radars on KAF. Notify the TMP office immediately if you get a ticket for speeding.

Photo by Capt. William Figueroa

Corps employee places first in talent contest

Several Afghanistan Engineer District - South (AES) employees attended the KAF (Kandahar Airfield) New Year's Eve party Dec. 31, 2009, at the MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) tent. In the first annual KAF talent contest, AES's Sharon Mers entered and captured first place with her singing talent. "When I heard the prize was one hundred dollars, I thought 'hey, I can do this,'" Mers said.

RM team finishes first in Monsoon 5k Road Race

From the flatlands of Albuquerque to the St. Louis Arch onward to Raven country to the Sunshine State, the RM team made their way on a brisk Sunday morning (Dec. 27, 2009) to finish their first Monsoon 5K Road Race in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Left to right: Vivian Wippler, Koufra Girven, Rob Derrane, Joe-L Yancey and Pat Shaw.

December 2009 Townhall, dinner

Moving in

Daisy Duboise

Patricia Ryan

Timothy Gordon

Lewis Epps

George Flickner

Gregory Stigall

Joe-L Yancey

Christine Hess

Rebecca Miner

Cecil Brock

SGT Ryan Crouch, Army

Cedric Pelt

Mark Foster

Joanie Jackson

Jeffrey Brewer

Sharon Mers

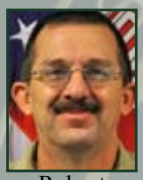
Brenda Beasley

Shawn Boone

William Caswell

Alan Eastridge

Derland Ellison


Robert Flood

Rodger Johns

James Killion

Pete Perez

D'Lorah Small

Jim Wolfe

Linda Wolfe

MSG Stephen Allwes, USMC

William Lee

Luis Esqueda

Diedrie Hurd

Victor Ross

Alan Berry

Clark Wyatt

Thomas Blankenhorn

Jennifer Zimmerman

Kathleen Cavanaugh

Jacob Davis

Joseph Wade

Beverly Deese

Mark Fascher

LTC Tim Karstrom, Army

Lawrence Piazza

Richard Powers

MSG Stephen Gray, Army

Moving out

Norman Boeman
Joe Ariaz
Ronald Gatlin
Christopher Clinton
Dianne Pacheco
Raul Villar
James Buckalew
Damian Salazar
Charles Wilburn
Andy Adams
Jonathan Jellema
Gail Thearle
1st Sgt. Tim Forte, USMC

Louis Brachett
Michael Alley
Timothy Runquist
Roy Devine
Jim Collier
Judith Britton-Curry
Evan Carter
Timothy Bishop
MSG Rocky McKenzie, Army
Norman Guenther
Aaron Bradley
Michael Pearson
Nancy Wallace

Hamilton Batista
Kurt Reppe
Edward Starnes
Philip Kadala
Jeffrey Simpson