

US Army Corps
Of Engineers®
Afghanistan District

TAA TIDBITS

USACE - Transatlantic Afghanistan District

Vol. 1, December 2016

Commander's Column



Team, we have accomplished a lot during the last several months in spite of the many obstacles and challenges which we have faced.

We turned over several projects, and are set to turn over many more in the upcoming months.

We had a very successful year end. We have done a great job assisting our supported command both to understand our processes and to execute them, even if it was not necessarily our typical process or program. We have even faced criticism with professionalism and the facts.

I would like to say that it will be smooth sailing from here on out, but that has never been the case for this district (or for our predecessors). It is a good thing that it is in our DNA to solve problems, because that is something we will rely on heavily until this district rolls up our guidon.

I think we have much to be pleased with, as well as much for us to improve upon. One of the items I want to expand on is our internal communications so you will know what is going on in the district, staffs sections and divisions, as well as more personal items including hail and farewells, and special occasions and events, both here in country, and with your families back home.

This month we have said farewell to many and are set to have our Command Sergeant Major Change of Responsibility saying Godspeed-job well done to Command Sgt. Maj. John Hankins and welcoming Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Blansett. Thanks for what you do!
ESSAYONS!

Little wins big award

For the second year in a row the TAA contracting office has brought home a major award.

Contracting specialist Natanielle Little was presented with the Secretary of the Army's Excellence in Contracting Awards - Barbara C. Heald (Deployed Civilian) Award at a ceremony in Springfield, Virginia, Dec. 1.

The Barbara C. Heald (Deployed Civilian) Award recognizes a deployed Army civilian (GS 1102 series) whose actions clearly demonstrate or embody those unique, outstanding qualities possessed by Ms. Heald. This includes making extraordinary commitment and sacrifices in the service of their country; demonstrated professionalism in contracting; and dedicated to selfless public service aimed at supporting the mission of the United States Army.

Last year, the entire TAA contracting office was selected as the 2015 USACE Excellence in Contracting Awards Program - District of the Year.



DCO heads back to school



Congratulations go out to our deputy commander, Lt. Col. Jason Evers, for being selected to attend the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Submissions

TAA Tidbits is your monthly internal newsletter. It is a chance to share non-project good news (and photos) from here or back home, as well as upcoming activities at your duty station. So whether you are in Marmal, Kandahar, or somewhere in between, be sure to drop the editor a line at michael.a.glasch@usace.army.mil.

CSM's Corner



TAA Family, I'm currently transitioning with Command Sgt. Maj. Blansett and preparing to redeploy back

to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to wait for my follow-on assignment. As I sit and think about what I want to say, I pause and begin to think about the people I have come to know and love during the past year. Some have left; others have come and gone; there are those who arrived and are still here; and there are some of you who have been with me for my entire tenure.

As I attempt to write this letter, I pause and think about the laughter we shared, the meetings we sat in, the flights we shared, the food you freely shared, the loss of Family members, child births, marriages, and the many, many conversations we have shared.

Each and every one of you who spent time with me has left a positive impression in your own unique ways that I will cherish not only throughout my Army career, but for the rest

of my life.

As a command sergeant major, I'm expected to be a mentor and expert for those with whom I serve, but with you, I often felt like I was the one being mentored and guided. For that, I'm truly grateful for the warm friendship and openness that each of you shared with me. Your kindness showed me how humble leadership can be a force multiplier in building great organizations. For me, this is the biggest lesson I have learned and it is one that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

The TAA mission is one that enables the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to defend and protect the freedoms and liberties of its own people at the ford's edge of oppression. Each TAA project accomplishes increases the Afghan people's ability to do more. The net gain for us is the reduced potential for more U.S. service-members having to deploy and pay the blank check, up to an including the loss of their life, in defending our principles derived from our Creator's certain unalienable Rights.



I have witnessed the loss and stress that deployments bore upon Soldiers and Families, to include the difficulties following redeployment. Your success at TAA greatly reduces the need for more deploying troops and reduces the negative effects of deployments upon our Soldiers and families.

Your efforts truly defend freedom for all, enhance our readiness, and helps other to do more for their selves. For this, it has been my privilege and an honor to serve with each and everyone one of you as your command sergeant major. Thank you so much for what you do and the friendship you shared with me. I wish each of you success and hope that I have been a blessing to you as much as you were to me. Until we meet again.

– CSM H

J1 seeks nominations for Family Readiness Excellence Awards

Every year the Chief of Engineers recognizes exceptional individuals and teams who have advanced the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commitment to the family readiness program.

The importance of recognizing those individuals and teams who perform superior family readiness duties is critical. As an additional duty, it is very difficult to put that extra effort into performing duties in an outstanding manner,



but we have individuals who are passionate about the program, and their commitment and dedication must be appropriately recognized.

Nominations for the Family Readiness Individual Excellence Award and the Family Readiness Outstanding Team Achievement Award for Fiscal Year 2016 are due to the TAA J1 no later than Sunday, Dec. 4.

For more information call Micah Perdue at x1746, or email him at micah.g.perdue@usace.army.mil.

New Addition

Shipley welcomes granddaughter

The Shipley family welcomed in new addition, as Webster became a grandfather for the third time.

His granddaughter, Iaine Alana Shipley Rodriguez, was born Nov. 23, in Coffeyville, Kansas. She weighed in at 6 lbs. and 11 ounces.

According to Webster, young Iaine already has her grandmother's "attitude."

Webster currently serves as our LNO at the Resolute Support headquarters in Kabul.



Upcoming events:

Dec. 7 *Command Sgt. Maj. Hankins' Farewell Luncheon, 11:30 am - 1:30 p.m., Dragon DFAC*

Dec. 9 *Change of Responsibility Ceremony, MWR Facility, 10 a.m. award ceremony, 10:30 a.m. CoR*

Dec. 12 *Farewell Luncheon for Sheree Brown and Kurt Reppe, Dragon DFAC on Bagram, 11:30 a.m., RSVP to Diane Davis at x6330*

Dec. 25 *Christmas (Observed Holiday- no work)*

Jan. 1 *New Year's Day (Observed Holiday- no work)*

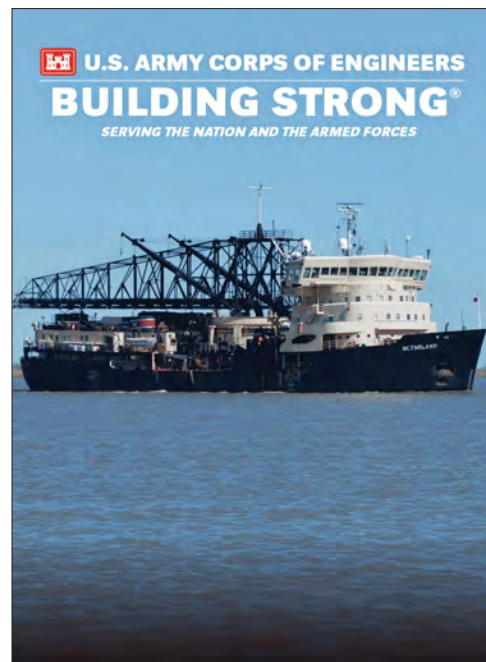
Building Strong now online

The new 2016-2017 "U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Building Strong®: Serving the Nation and the Armed Forces" digital publication is now available online.

Building Strong is a great overview of recent USACE work.

Be sure to check out the feature on TAA beginning on page 36.

You can view and download a pdf version of the publication at <http://www.nxtbook.com/faircount/ACE/ACE16/index.php#/0>.



Dec. 12 last day for Health Insurance checkup



Federal Employees Health Benefits Program

The 2016 Federal Benefits Open Season closes Dec. 12. During this Open Season, you can make changes to your Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB), Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), and Federal Employees Dental & Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) benefits.

In October, the Internal Revenue Service raised the cap on health care flexible spending accounts to \$2,600 for the 2017 benefit year.

The Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS) is increasing the maximum contribution to health care and limited expense health care flexible spending accounts for the 2017 benefit year. The new maximum contribution will increase from \$2,550 to \$2,600.

To view all the plans and make changes, visit the OPM open season website: <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/open-season>

Meet our new teammates



Name: Aaron Bradley
Home District: New Orleans
TAA position: Office Engineer
Duty location: Kandahar



Name: Daniel Carney
Home District: Vicksburg
TAA position: Contracting Officer Representative
Duty location: Kandahar



Name: Perry D'Amico
Home District: New Orleans
TAA position: Senior Construction Rep
Duty location: Qargha



Name: Patrick Duffney
Home District: Rehired Annuitant/St. Paul
TAA position: Construction Representative
Duty location: Qargha



Name: Carey Grubbs
Home District: TAD
TAA position: J2
Duty location: BAF



Name: LTC Richard Gusenhoven
Home District: New York
TAA position: Kabul OIC
Duty location: NKC



Name: Jim Henderson
Home District: Charleston
TAA position: Certified Cost Engineer
Duty location: BAF



Name: Leonce Lalonde
Home District: New Orleans
TAA position: Project Engineer
Duty location: Kandahar



PHOTO OF THE MONTH

During the November command visit to the Southern Area Office, we had the opportunity to fly over Kajaki Dam in Helmand Province. The irrigation water provided by Kajaki Dam helps support farming in Helmand Province. According to the Director of the Middle Helmand River Irrigation District, 90% of the gross domestic product of Helmand Province is agriculture, which would not be sustainable without this project.

DID YOU KNOW?

On Dec. 1, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt signed a bill authorizing the transfer of military construction to USACE.

More new teammates...



Name: Thom Lavean
Home District: Buffalo
TAA position: AIF/Garrison Program Manager
Duty location: BAF



Name: Sal Saikali
Home District: AFRI-COM/Stuttgart, Germany
TAA position: J6
Duty location: BAF



Name: Robert Williams
Home District: TAM
TAA position: Contracting Officer
Duty location: BAF



Name: Matthew Yannayon
Home District: DPW, Fort Campbell, Kentucky
TAA position: Construction Control Representative
Duty location: Kandahar



Thanksgiving Serving

We want to recognize and thank those here on BAF who took time out during their off day on Thanksgiving to serve up a Thanksgiving feast at Koele DFAC: Col. Jon Chytka, Lt. Col Dachele Banks, Lyn Gillespie, Rob Newman, Jim Gatling, Robert Stewart, Dennis Lindemeier, Leigh Ann Lucas, Andy Adams and Thom Lavean.

