



TAA TIDBITS

USACE - Transatlantic Afghanistan District

Vol. 3, March 2017

Commander's Corner



Team, February was a great month! We got a lot of items accomplished, progress was made, and we were able to show our division commander, Maj. Gen. Robert

Carlson around.

We have continued to say goodbye to some terrific people and have welcomed several new professionals to the family. We have continued to build stronger relationships with those we support. We have continued to improve our processes and procedures; and we also asked your thoughts in our Command Climate Survey.

I am pleased to report that roughly double the number of you completed the survey this year compared to the last one. I am also very happy to report that the great majority of you are generally satisfied. However, you have provided some areas for us to focus some effort. Please know we are putting some deliberate effort in addressing those areas.

Again Maj. Gen. Carlson had a great visit. It meant a lot to him to meet many of you and provide the status of important regional work as well as being able to recognize several of the team. We packed a lot in a very short visit. He was impressed with the good relationships we have with our supported command and partners. Sadly he will most likely not be able to return to theater before he changes command in July, so it was great that this visit went so well.

I joined TAD staff in reviewing the tiger team's efforts to get after the key SAV

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TAD CG discusses change throughout the division

"Change is the only thing constant in life."

That quote by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus was the theme the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Transatlantic Division's commander emphasized during his recent visit to Afghanistan. During a town hall with TAA employees on Feb. 19, Maj. Gen. Robert Carlson discussed ongoing and possible future changes at all levels within the division. The first of those changes is the standing up of a Contingency Engineer District in Iraq, Task Force Essayons. Carlson said the intent is to set up the forward headquarters with approximately 42 employees for this new organization, with its primary mission to cover down on Iraq and Syria.

"It really depends on how much work we get, it depends on how much we grow that (district)," he said. "Eventually it could grow to the size of TAA, but right now they don't have the work to support that, we're going to start small, it's going to be a scalable district and we'll plus it up as needed."

Carlson went on to say that TAA's sister district, the Transatlantic Middle East District (TAM), is having to shift its entire business model from one funded primarily through military construction to a sustainability management system model. He also said that TAM is considering moving more employees to where the work is.

"You have to have a substantial footprint forward in the same time zone working with the customer. They can't see you when things are going wrong and you're eight hours behind and you're operating on a 9 to 5 schedule. That's not going to keep the customer happy," he said.

As far as what the future holds for TAA, Carlson said that TAA is here to stay for the foreseeable future. As long as the district can maintain at least \$200 million in pre-award projects a year, TAA will maintain its current manning levels. If the pre-awards drop below that level, then downsizing the district be-



Maj. Gen. Robert Carlson, USACE Transatlantic Division, commanding general, speaks at a town hall during his command visit to TAA Feb. 19.

comes a distinct possibility. He said nothing is written in stone at this point, but that "we will make sure that we make the best and most informed decision."

At the divisional level expect to see more permanent full-time employees. Currently TAD has 24 such positions, with the rest of the staff filled by Reserve Soldiers, as well we term and temporary employees. Carlson would like to double the number of permanent employees, making it easier to attract quality people.

"They're all doing a great job, but when it comes to trying to recruit and retain high-quality people, and we tell them that all we can offer you is a temp or term job, they say thank you very much and they move on down the road," he explained.

In addition to the ongoing and future

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SUPER EARLY WATCH PARTY



John Carpenter delivers the biggest hit of the game, homemade pizza!



Despite the early kickoff, 4 a.m. local time, the ALOC conference room was decorated and a feast was laid out for those brave enough (or crazy enough) to get up early to watch Super Bowl 51 between the Atlanta Falcons and the New England Patriots.



Mimi Jones reacts to the Falcons pick six to go up 21-0.



Fans of both sides watch in amazement and disbelief as the Patriots stage the biggest comeback in Super Bowl history to win in overtime 34-28.



Someone forgot to tell Charles Meno that the Seahawks weren't playing this year.



Patriots fans Cherita Williams, Mimi Jones and Kym Robinson celebrate as Falcons fans Jim Gatling and Diane Davis are stunned when the Patriots score in overtime for the win.



Down in Kandahar Glenn Wilson shows off who he's pulling for. Glenn said he was banished because everyone else in the Southern Area Office was pulling for the Falcons.

Meet our new teammates



Name: Ross Foster
Home District: Portland
TAA position: Chief, Quality Assurance Branch
Duty location: BAF



Name: Theodore Grimes
Home District: Baltimore
TAA position: Construction Rep
Duty location: NKC



Name: Maj. James Hayes
Home District: Reservist/
Ft. Worth, Texas
TAA position: J-9
Duty location: RS



Name: Ulrike Krueger
Home District: Albuquerque
TAA position: Project Engineer
Duty location: BAF



Name: Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Maddox
Home District: 177th Armored Brigade/Camp Shelby, Mississippi
TAA position: Resident Office NCOIC
Duty location: Marmal



Name: JaVaughn Perkins
Home District: Detroit
TAA position: Project Engineer
Duty location: Marmal



Name: Kathleen Sato
Home District: San Francisco
TAA position: Office of Counsel
Duty location: BAF



Name: Robert Schillinger
Home District: Mobile
TAA position: Project Engineer
Duty location: Kandahar

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. The deadline is the 25th of each month.



Mark your Calendar!

Starting Sunday March 12, Daylight Savings Time goes into effect for the United States as they set their clocks forward one hour. This means the East Coast of the U.S. will only be 8-1/2 hours behind Afghanistan time. So be sure to schedule your reach back meetings accordingly!

J2 Security Snippet

Team,
Please take a few minutes and look through your social media



accounts, reviewing your security measures, privacy settings, and your previous posts or tweets.

Ensure that you are not putting anything up there that may compromise our mission here, and put yourself, loved ones, friends, or colleagues in danger.

Remember, your friends and followers all have friends and followers, etc. Always sanitize all of your mail, destroying all addresses and labels, and shredding all documents containing personally identifiable information

Thanks for all you do.

- J2



Black History Month Luncheon

Jim Gatling, Chief of Construction, was the featured speaker at the district's Black History Month luncheon Feb. 28. Gatling shared how his parents drive and desire to succeed despite the odds they faced, served as an inspiration to him.

Chytka

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recommendations. Scott Cilley, chief business manager, TAD, did an excellent job leading us through how we are going to attack updating, or developing processes so that TAD districts better understand expectations and guidelines to follow. We will get the opportunity to assist in developing and reviewing processes, as well as the "USACE Overseas Contingency Operations Playbook" and construction standard efforts.

Construction standards are my greatest concern as TAA continues its mission. This endeavor requires a deliberate team effort with knowledgeable folks from the three levels of USACE. Please do your part in any of these efforts so that our successors will have better processes, lessons, and standards then we have.

Over the last couple of days, Lt. Col. Gussenhoven and I visited Hamid Karzai International Airport to walk project sites and meet with several key leaders. We did a more formal brief for Turkish Brig. Gen. Murat Selcuk, HKIA commander, and his key staff. He was very appreciative of us taking the time to visit and address his infor-

mation needs. We agreed that the Kabul office would join HKIA for their periodic project line item review.

Brig. Gen. Selcuk and his staff asked if we would consider moving an office onto HKIA. This was one of our key discussion topics, so it was great that the HKIA team bought it up. More and more CSTC-A personnel are being directed to NKC, so it is likely that we will need to move. HKIA is a great choice since it looks like a lot of our future work load will be Kabul centric. It would be a logical installation to collapse in on.

Finally, we continued with Col. Jim Landers' transition plan to theater with his first transition teleconference. I walked him through a command brief, Resolute Support overview, including key leaders, and provided him a lay down of our structure. Before he takes command, he will visit us for a Pre-Deployment Site Survey, and is looking forward to meeting many of you.

Again thank you for serving!

- COL C.

Carlson

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changes, Carlson also talked about building the bench of USACE teammates with deployment experience. He said that is great for continuity to have employees with multiple deployments, but there needs to be a health mix of seasoned veterans and new deployers in the contingency environments. He encouraged everyone to be a spokesperson for TAA when they return to their home districts.

"One of the things the chief (Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, Chief of Engineers) has emphasized is that we have to get new folks out here," Carlson said. "At some point you're going to get tired out of coming out here and then there is going to be this huge loss of institutional knowledge and knowledge transfer. So there should be a healthy mix

of new folks coming out every here as well as keeping institutional knowledge from folks who have been out here before."

Carlson also had one piece of advice for everyone regardless if they are one their first deployment or their fifth one, read the "USACE Overseas Contingency Operations Playbook."

"It's how we do business in a contingency environment," he said. "It behooves you to understand that and understand why we do some of the things that we do."

The playbook is available online at <http://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/publications/16-01.pdf>.