Afghan Safety Professionals Apply New Knowledge Beyond Work

KABUL—Afghan safety professionals are taking what they learn with the Corps into their homes and communities. In addition to capacity building here, USACE may also be responsible for a safety renaissance.

The mission of the USACE Transatlantic Afghanistan District safety office is to provide policy, programs, technical services, oversight and outreach related to safety and occupational health matters in support of Corps of Engineers missions throughout Afghanistan. To ensure mission accomplishment, training is a major tool in the quest. Safety Manager Ed McNamara explained “We observed work practices that we found unacceptable. We made this training mandatory for all workers at Engineer Village; office workers, warehouse workers and janitorial workers. For example we had industrial safety classes for our warehouse workers and in the afternoon we had fire prevention safety for all.”

One valuable TAA employee took the training to heart. Hamid, a 36-year-old housekeeping worker who spent time as a security guard with coalition forces, observed areas at his home that needed attention.

Bagram Airfield Runway Repairs Reach Major Milestone

The runway repair project at Bagram Airfield, the most heavily used military air base in the world, reached a major milestone Aug. 10, with the paving and

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony

Today, we remember the nearly 3,000 men, women and children who lost their lives in the September 11, 2001 attacks at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and aboard United Airlines Flight 93. We invite you to leave a comment showing your patriotism and support of US Army Soldiers who protect our freedoms.

Building in Afghanistan: From Open Field to Functional Facility

KABUL—Building in Afghanistan is not like building in suburban America. It is not simply a matter of choosing counter tops and

USACE Volunteer Professionals Provide TAA Surge

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by Todd Lyman

USACE TRANSATLANTIC, AFGHANISTAN DISTRICT

KABUL—There are a few organizations with the means and resources to supply highly trained, skilled and enthusiastic personnel to a remote location on a short notice when a need is identified. Fortunately for Transatlantic Afghanistan District, USACE is an organization with a deep pool of talent from which to draw while working to deliver critical infrastructure for the Afghan people. Mark Jones, TAA Engineering and Construction Division Chief, explained the need at TAA and the solution.

“With the standup of the Transatlantic Afghanistan District, a short-term need for additional construction quality assurance personnel was identified due to the number of newly awarded projects in the Kabul area. The surge team, made of talent from construction, engineering and personnel from around the country, has responded for 90-day tasks. During this period, the additional personnel will augment the existing staff with project submittals, RMS data and completing necessary modifications required to keep pace with the dynamic environment in Afghanistan.”

Jones, with command concurrence, concurred Transatlantic District to find suitable manpower for a 90-day surge in support of the mission.

The result: Fifteen USACE personnel provided by Corps districts across the U.S. arrived at Camp Phoenix on July 21 and ready to get to work. Another 17 personnel assigned to support TAA Kabul Area Office. Col. Richard Heitkamp is the officer-in-charge for TAA. “And looking at how we reduced the district, we’ve gone from two districts to one, and we’ve reduced our manpower both on the staff and at our area and resident offices. All because we know that our mission in Afghanistan is drawing to a close. But conversely our project missions are as big as ever. We’re trying to take advantage of our last two construction seasons before we are going to withdraw from Afghanistan. And in order to help the contractors make as much progress as possible during that construction period we have to be able to rely on a timely manner to questions, submittals, and just the regular process of administering a large construction contract. So these great Americans have done to come over here and jump on board. Not necessarily anything, it is just the day-to-day requirements of administering a construction contract,” he said.

While responding to requests from contractors and working submittals are part of an ordinary day for those who’ve been with the Corps in Afghanistan over time, this activity is both routine and necessary for the suppliers.

“They get what we say is like those three times the amount of experience for time they spend here. So every day is worth three days of experience. That’s our recruiting phrase, right?” Heitkamp asked.

“One or two, more like,” corrected Bryan Dirks, a civil engineer from St. Louis District, and USACE Volkertsburg volunteer District Brad Brady. These are four of the sixteen construction surge team volunteers.

“His team’s qualifications, willingness to get to work and their contributions. “They’re very bright, very capable. They’re very driven,” he said. “With the surge team, they bring a lot of experience to the table. They’re very eager to get to work and they’re very energetic.”

Brad Brady, a project engineer here from Volkertsburg District, added, “I’d say the verge construction is something of us, I don’t want to deal with at home.”

Dirks added, “Experience is a big part of why I came. I want to do it for a while. I want to work on a construction project for a while. And there’s a lot of time left, so I put other things on hold. We may not get the chance again in our careers to come over to a war zone and build stuff for the people in that area and do good things.”

There is a former military member in this surge team, Mark Guerino, a St. Louis District geotechnical engineer. Guerrino spent four years in the Army in the telecommunications field. Surge team members Corps experiences range from three to seven years. Family members and state-side districts encouraged them to volunteer.

“My wife supported my deployment!” Guerino said, “I learned about the opportunity to deploy. When I told my supervisor I was interested he said, ‘Great. You should make it happen.’” But we didn’t have as many contacts. So it was tougher for me to go.”

During surge, the volunteers, some family members’ responses were mixed.

Rachel Lopez, another St. Louis engineer, relayed, “His husband also works for the Corps as an engineer. He’s the biggest cheerleader for me to do this until it came down for the time to leave, and then he was, ‘What have I done?’ Nevertheless, Lopez was very excited for her husband, who has yet to deploy with the Corps.

“One surge has now experienced what is a way of life for so many service members.”

Brad Brady, “I have four kids, they’re young. My wife was very understanding. She knows I don’t have the opportunity to come uniform. But the kids took it a little harder. My oldest actually took it hard.”

Cullen revealed what most multiple deployments have learned.

“I think it also depends on where you’re deploying to. When I talked to people who had deployed, just to get some information before I signed up, I had asked them: experience and it’s very different than what I am experiencing here at Camp Phoenix. People talked in terms of forward operating bases and as we was expecting to be in the middle of nowhere being mølested every day. I think it is awesome. We get to see the world! So exciting yet that we get to see this part of the world. And experience we’ve never really experienced the culture, but we get a little snapshot of the day-to-day life. I think it is awesome.”

Preparing friends and family members is also part of the deployment experience.

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Cullen continued, “When I was talking people that I was coming here they asked, ‘Is your family going to visit?’” I said, ‘I don’t work like that.’

Taylor clarified, “It’s not a vacation destination.” Ultimately, Heitkamp said, the construction surge team’s three months in Afghanistan is a win-win situation. More like a win-win-win situation. As opposed to some of the shortest young engineers who will graduate in a short notice as an initial commission. The volunteers will leave behind finished projects vital to Afghanistan infrastructure and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will have sixteen professionals who will have important experiences for a long career in the greater good. No doubt they will someday be the grateful veterans at home districts who can regale future members who are trying to decide whether volunteer or not about their experiences.

“TAA is able to make good use of some of the brightest young engineers and military leaders that have been trained here,” Heitkamp said. “They’ve given us a tremendous boost for KAO. “And looking at how we can make good use of their spirited work and ready camaraderie.”

“With the surge team, they bring a lot of experience to the table. They’re very eager to get to work and they’re very energetic.”

“The facility can accommodate about 30 police officers,” said Michael Winkle, the USACE project manager. It includes offices, call center, gymnasium, wall, guard towers, dining, restroom and dormitory facilities (for men and women), and parking utilities.

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Less than one year after the devastating terror attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, Congress officially recognized September 11th as Patriot Day in our Nation. While we can never forget the events of that day, we can honor the nearly 3,000 lives lost by participating in a National Day of Service and Remembrance. I encourage each of you to find a way to mark the significance of this day and, as the attached signed letter from our Army leaders reminds us, remember the more than 6,600 Service Members who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Tomorrow in Winchester, Virginia, USACE will end a chapter in our post-9/11 history when the USACE Deployment Center (UDC) officially closes its doors. Since 2005, more than 7,000 of our Soldiers and Civilians, as well as thousands from other commands, have processed through the UDC for Overseas Contingency Operations missions. The outstanding employees of Transatlantic Division and the UDC have ensured that those individuals who raised their hands and volunteered for deployment were trained, equipped and ready to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. To the many folks who have made that possible, thank you.

In the days after 9/11, retired General Colin Powell said: “You can be sure that the American spirit will prevail over this tragedy.”

We have seen that American spirit prevail in the dedication of our tireless All Volunteer Army and their families in the Civilians and Contractors who have willingly deployed in harm’s way… in our firefighters, police officers and public safety officials who risk their lives to save ours … and in every citizen of our Nation who faced the dark days and weeks after 9/11 with greater resolve to live in freedom. It is that American spirit which we remember and give thanks for today.

Essayons… Building Strong… Army Strong!

Thomas P. Bostick
Lieutenant General, US Army
Commanding

HQ USACE Message from Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick


HQ USACE photo by Alicia Embrey

Department of Defense photo by Master Sgt. Jennifer Lindsey

http://www.tad.usace.army.mil/
Afghan Safety Professionals Apply New Knowledge Beyond Work

BY TODD LYMAN
TRANSATLANTIC AFGHANISTAN DISTRICT

KABUL—Afghan safety professionals are taking what they learn with the Corps into their homes and communities. In addition to capacity building here, USACE may also be responsible for a safety renaissance.

The mission of the USACE Transatlantic Afghanistan District is to provide for its workforce, contractors, and partners a safe and healthy work environment. The district safety office is to provide safety for all. We observed work practices that we found unacceptable. We made this training mandatory for all workers at Engineer Village, office workers, warehouse workers and partners. For example we had industrial safety classes for our warehouse workers and in the afternoon we had fire prevention safety for all.

One valuable TAA employee took the training to heart. Hamid, a 36-year-old housekeeping worker who spent time as a security guard with coalition forces, observed the dangers of putting so many items on one cord and he understood. I did not only tell my family, but my relatives, too. I explained to my relatives, sisters and told them what could happen.

Hamid explains to Omid what he found when he inspected his home fire extinguisher following the training:

"We observed work practices that we found unacceptable. We made this training mandatory for all workers at Engineer Village, office workers, warehouse workers and partners. For example we had industrial safety classes for our warehouse workers and in the afternoon we had fire prevention safety for all.

One valuable TAA employee took the training to heart. Hamid, a 36-year-old housekeeping worker who spent time as a security guard with coalition forces, observed the dangers of putting so many items on one cord and he understood. I did not only tell my family, but my relatives, too. I explained to my relatives, sisters and told them what could happen."

"also checked to see if they were overload- ed or if I had any dirty chains. When I saw pictures in training of what happened when flames occur and saw what we had at home, I removed the television, refrigerator and other things from the same cord."

Hamid continued to explain to Omid the dangers of putting too many things on one cord and understanding. I did not only tell my family, but my relatives, too. I explained to my family, sisters and told them what could happen.

Omid, 24 years old from Kabul, learned English through classes he took on his own and assists with administration and interpreta- tion here. He recalls the safety training: "As we met with workers and explained the dangers of putting too many items on one cord and he understood. He tells me, "I observed work practices that we found unacceptable. We made this training mandatory for all workers at Engineer Village, office workers, warehouse workers and partners. For example we had industrial safety classes for our warehouse workers and in the afternoon we had fire prevention safety for all."

"The electrical safety and fire extinguisher use and maintenance training was very helpful and I was able to apply it in my home. I got home after the training and checked to see if our extinguisher was ac- cessible and in working condition. I saw immediately that our extinguisher needed service and got it fixed.

"I also looked at the extension cords in our house to see if they had the UL or CE labels."

"For more than a century Underwriters Laboratories has tested and certified products for safety. The European Commission (CE) certifies that products have met EU health, safety and environmental require- ments that ensure consumer and worker- place safety.

Contracts come from across the globe to accept work in Afghanistan and some find the environment more challenging than they imagined and some leave before com- pletion of the work they were contracted to perform. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does everything within its authority to build contractors accountable for the qual- ity and completion of work for which they were contracted. The bottom line is that constructing in Afghanistan is not like con- structing anywhere in the USA and the abil- ity to hold contractors fully accountable is an important feature of the system."

Building in Afghanistan:
From Open Field to Functional Facility

BY TODD LYMAN
TRANSATLANTIC AFGHANISTAN DISTRICT

KABUL—Building in Afghanistan is not like building in suburban America. It is not sim- ple a matter of choosing counter tops and a new wall color. Afghanistan is a world away from the typical construction environment that many of us imagined and some leave before completion. Transatlantic Afghanistan District is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers primary agent for Donors at ‘MyPay’

In Afghanistan USACE designs and con- structs projects for the National army and national police. ANSF projects...

The system has been in active development for two years, he said. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service led the effort, with support from the Office of Management and Budget, which has a similar system in its ex- ecutive agencies.

In its first year, the service is open to employ- ees in all of the 160 local CFC areas. Officials said more areas may be added in the future, and ask donors to use paper pledge forms in areas where the MyPay option is not available this year.

DeCrosta said use of the system, like part- icipation in CFC, is strictly voluntary. Many employees have asked if and would likely pre- fer electronic options, he said, although em- ployees who want to make a cash gift to use a paper CFC pledge form instead can do so.

The new option is an example of a collabora- tive effort that was designed to: increase our effi- cacy; the added DFAS built computer pro- grammers and worked with payroll offices to build and test the system, he said.

DeCrosta added that donors outside the Department of Defense, who can’t use the online pledge option, can still give online, as the online pledge option offers several advantages over paper pledge forms.

CFC Adds Online Option for Donors on ‘MyPay’

BY KAREN HARBIN
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6 - The annual Combined Federal Campaign added a new feature for donors: an online pledge option available through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service’s MyPay website, which most service members and civilians receive to see their leave and earnings statements.

Anthony DeCrosta is assistant director of the DFAS Voluntary Campaign Management Office, which is within the Washington Headquar- ters. "The new option is in anyone’s favor that wants to give, and DFAS has worked hard to make us as easy as possible to use."

DeCrosta added that donations outside the federal government can still make a difference.

The new option will be available to eligible donors outside of the Defense Department, he noted, as the departments of Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs and Energy, along with the Environmental Protection Agency, are also DFAS clients.

"It’s easy to, eliminate papers, and inside the government, it’s really going to save time," he said.

The newly announced online pledge option allows donors to make a gift to a charity of their choice online, using official government-issued computers.

The option is part of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service’s MyPay service, which has been available since August, he said.

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Army MATOC - First awards under $7 billion renewable energy contract

These contracts will place the Army one step closer to meeting the Congressionally mandated energy goal of 25 percent production and consumption of energy from renewable sources by 2025 and improving installation energy security and sustainability while remaining cost conscious.

“In our current fiscal environment, attracting third-party money to build renewable energy production facilities that will allow military installations to purchase energy at a pre-determined rate without building, owning and maintaining the facility is the right thing to do,” said Col. Robert Ruch, Huntsville Center commander. “Increasing energy security is a top priority for DoD and Army leadership, and this effort will lead to enhanced energy security and sustainability for our installations.”

In April 2012, the White House announced the Defense Department was making one of the largest commitments to clean energy in history, by setting a goal to deploy 3 gigawatts of renewable energy – including solar, wind, biomass or geothermal – on Army, Navy and Air Force installations by 2025. That is enough energy to power 750,000 homes.

The Army’s goal is 1 gigawatt of that total. These goals support the broader DoD goal to enhance installation energy security and reduce installation energy costs.

By awarding these contracts, the Army will increase its agility by streamlining acquisition processes to develop large-scale renewable energy projects that use private sector financing. This approach will help speed overall project development timelines to ensure the best value to the Army and private sector.

Mr. John Lushetsky, the EITF’s executive director, spoke about the role of the EITF in helping the Army meet its renewable energy goals.

“To reach the Army’s goal of deploying 1 gigawatt of renewable energy by 2025 will require a different way of doing business with the private sector. The issuance of the MATOC is a clear milestone for us, and the significant interest we’ve seen from industry indicates that we are on the right path.

The EITF has worked closely with the Huntsville Center to make the MATOC a streamlined and agile tool for the government to procure power from large scale renewable energy projects.”

BY DEBRA VALINE
USACE ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT CENTER

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (May 3, 2013) -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, working with the Army Energy Initiatives Task Force (EITF), today awarded the first of its kind Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Multiple Award Task Order Contracts (MATOC) for the first technology under this contract to support renewable energy on Defense Department installations.

Individual MATOC awards are being staggered by technology starting with today’s announcement for geothermal. Announcement of awards for the remaining technologies, solar, wind and biomass, are anticipated for staggered release through the end of calendar year 2013.

The total amount for all awards under the Renewable and Alternative Energy Power Production for DoD Installations MATOC will not exceed $7 billion. The MATOC will be used to procure reliable, locally generated, renewable and alternative energy through power purchase agreements (PPA).

The $7 billion capacity would be expended for PPAs to procure energy over a period of 30 years or less from renewable energy plants that are designed, financed, constructed, operated and maintained by contractors using private sector financing. This approach will help speed overall project development timelines to ensure the best value to the Army and private sector.


The contracts provide a three-year base with seven one-year options, for a total ordering period of 10 years. Having these contracts in place will expedite the acquisition process for future projects.

Huntsville Center, working on behalf of USACE with the Army’s EITF, issued the Request for Proposal for the $7 billion Renewable and Alternative Energy Power Production for DoD Installations MATOC on Aug. 7, 2012.

http://www.tad.usace.army.mil/