



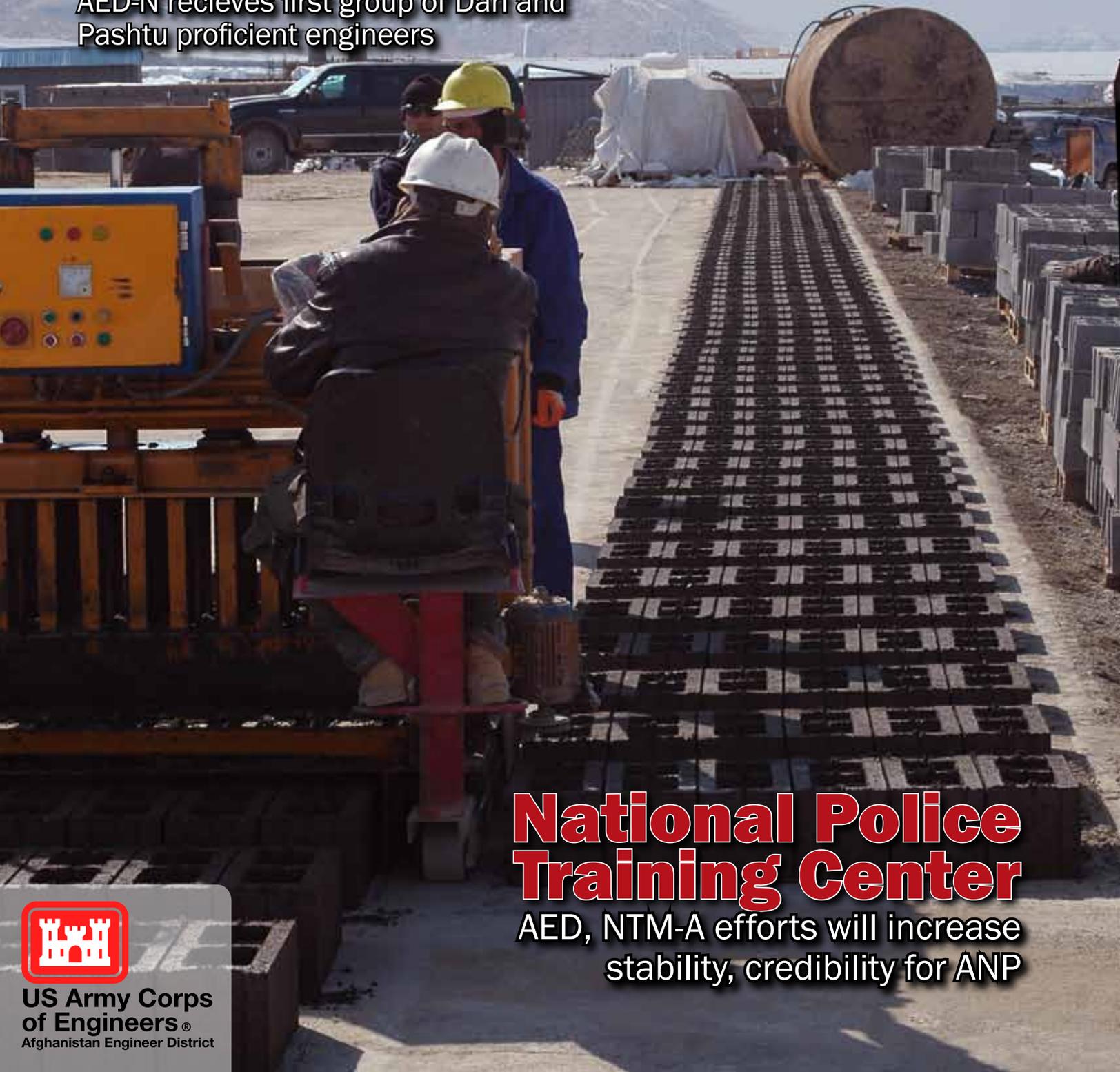
# THE **FREEDOM** **BUILDER**

June 2010

**MAGAZINE**

## **Afghan Hands**

AED-N receives first group of Dari and Pashtu proficient engineers



## **National Police Training Center**

AED, NTM-A efforts will increase stability, credibility for ANP



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Afghanistan Engineer District

**District Commander**  
Col. Michael McCormick

**AED-North District Command Sergeant Major**  
Command Sgt. Maj. Calvin T. Williams

**Chief of Public Affairs**  
David A. Salazar

**Layout & Design**  
Joseph A. Marek

**Staff Writer & Multimedia Specialist**  
Hank G. Heusinkveld

**Staff Writer**  
Paul R. Giblyn

The Freedom Builder is the field magazine of the Afghanistan Engineer District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and is an unofficial publication authorized by AR 360-1. It is produced monthly for electronic distribution by the Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District. It is produced in the Afghanistan theater of operations.

Views and opinions expressed in The Freedom Builder are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Articles or photographic submissions are welcome and should arrive in PAO by the 15th 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 and include photo caption information.

All photographs appearing herein are by the Afghanistan Engineer District Public Affairs Office unless otherwise accredited.

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

Submissions can be e-mailed to:  
AED.PublicAffairs@usace.army.mil

Submissions can be mailed to:  
Public Affairs Office  
USACE-AED  
ATTN: Qalaa House  
APO AE 09356

COM: 540-678-2984, DSN: 312-265-2984

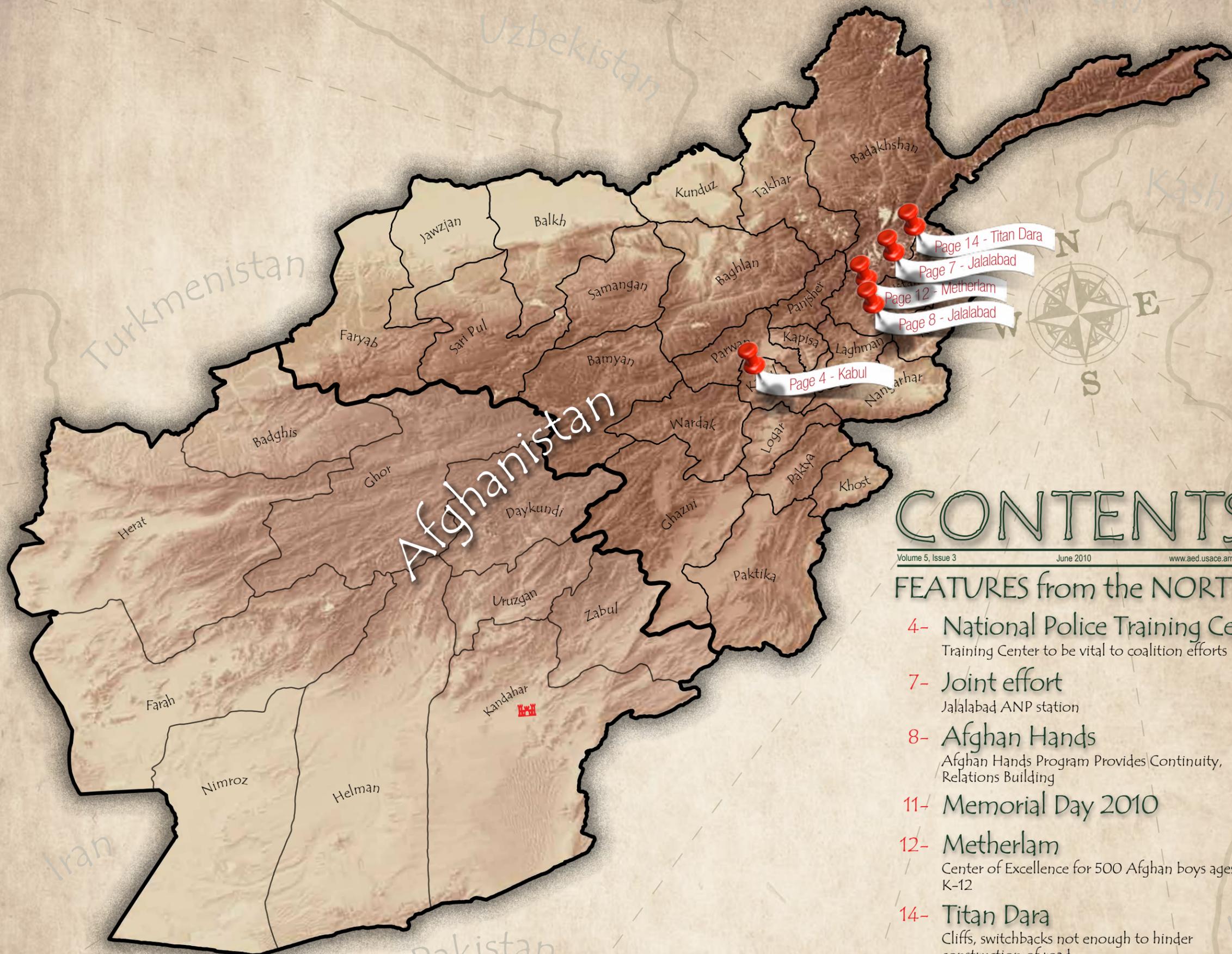
The Freedom Builder Magazine is available online at  
www.aed.usace.army.mil

### Cover Image:



Afghans working at the NPTC project in Wardak, produce concrete blocks with the use of the contractor's concrete masonry block machine in February. (Full story on pg. 4)

Photo by | Dave Salazar



# CONTENTS

Volume 5, Issue 3 June 2010 www.aed.usace.army.mil

## FEATURES from the NORTH

- 4- National Police Training Center  
Training Center to be vital to coalition efforts
- 7- Joint effort  
Jalalabad ANP station
- 8- Afghan Hands  
Afghan Hands Program Provides Continuity, Relations Building
- 11- Memorial Day 2010
- 12- Metherlam  
Center of Excellence for 500 Afghan boys ages K-12
- 14- Titan Dara  
Cliffs, switchbacks not enough to hinder construction of road
- 16- Parting shot

# National Police Training Center

## Facility to be vital to coalition efforts



Story and photos by | David Salazar

Afghans working at the NPTC project in Wardak, produce concrete blocks with the use of the contractor's concrete masonry block machine in February.

**M**AYDAN SHAHR, Afghanistan It's been a long time coming, but the National Police Training Center is progressing according to plan.

Nestled in a hotspot for Taliban activity in Wardak province, the site of the future training center is teeming with activity, as Afghan workers construct concrete walls, grade adjacent land for soccer fields and shooting ranges, and weld steel support beams.

Once completed, the facility will serve as the primary training grounds for Afghanistan's police forces.

"This is one of the largest Corps projects in the country at the moment -- both in scope

and in physical size," said CPT Greg Daniel, officer-in-charge of the Afghanistan Engineer District – North's Wardak Resident Office.

Since the project began in January 2009, it has been the target of numerous rocket

and mortar attacks and until recently, was mired lack of proper tools and the inability to obtain necessary resources to sustain progress.

"The project has sustained 37-plus rocket attacks, multiple kidnappings and multiple ambushes inflicted on (our) employees," said Josh Haines, the project

manager for Technologists, Inc., the U.S.-based company contracted to complete the

**“ This is one of the largest Corps projects in the country at the moment – both in scope and in physical size. ”**

900,000 square foot complex. The number of attacks aimed at the compound has since increased.

Perhaps the most significant setback for the project's progress, at least initially, was the lack of skilled labor in Afghanistan and cultural attitudes toward accepting responsibility.

"The challenges faced in an average day are enormous," Haines said. "The first and most frustrating (challenge) is what I call the 'Afghan way.' No one wants to take responsibility. Everyone passes the buck."

Haines is the seventh Technologists, Inc. project manager put on the job since ground was broken. Many of his predecessors left due to the security threat organic to the area, while others left due to frustration with and lack of understanding of the Afghan culture. But Haines, who's been on the project since November 2009, developed a new approach to meet these unique challenges head on.

"My belief is that the way to achieve peace in Afghanistan is by teaching the Afghan people," Haines said. "The knowledge they walk away with can never be taken away. This is the approach all of us are taking and I can say the gratification I walk away with each day is enormous. Not only are they willing to learn -- they love to learn."



Brig. Gen. Anne Macdonald, center, watches TI's CMU machine at work. (photo courtesy of TI)



Afghan workers mix concrete on the project site last Winter, using hot water to prevent the mixture from freezing or setting prematurely. It's not uncommon for Afghan firms to shut down during the Winter months due to cold, snowy weather in parts of the country. Technologists, Inc., continued work on the project despite heavy snowfall.

To that end, Haines and his management team, consisting of Americans and Afghans, have implemented practices to teach their labor force better ways of doing business by introducing new hand and power tools that make their jobs easier and more efficient. Since coming on board, Haines and his crew have taught their workforce how to use skill saws, concrete saws, rebar-tying guns and paint guns, among other tools.

The construction firm also took measures to prevent slowdown of progress by purchasing a concrete masonry unit machine. With the machine, TI is able to produce concrete blocks on the project site, eliminating excess costs and potential delays due to production and delivery issues. Haines estimates Afghan workers will produce around 300,000 blocks using the machine.

Though the challenges have been plentiful but surmountable for TI and Haines, the project is scheduled to meet its completion milestones. Adherence to the agreed-upon deadlines is critical as NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan officials plan to start training police officers in the facility as soon as this Fall.

"This facility will provide critical training

capacity for 1,000 Afghanistan National Police students and 250 trainers in September 2010, and another 1,000 students and 250 trainers in June 2011,” said Brig. Gen. Anne Macdonald, NTM-A’s assistant commanding general for police development.

The completion of the facility and the formal training environment it will provide, will also bring renewed credibility to the nation’s law enforcement capability by allowing coalition forces to concentrate more on selecting the most qualified applicants to join the police force’s ranks.

“As we grow the Afghanistan National Police to 134,000 by October 2011, the NPTC’s additional capacity ensures that we implement the Recruit-Train-Assign model,” Macdonald said. “This model ensures every new policeman is trained before being sent to the field -- absolutely critical to ensuring the ANP are a credible, respected organization.”

Once completed, the facility will feature



**An Afghan worker uses a rebar-tying gun -- one of the many tools TI has taught its workforce how to use.**

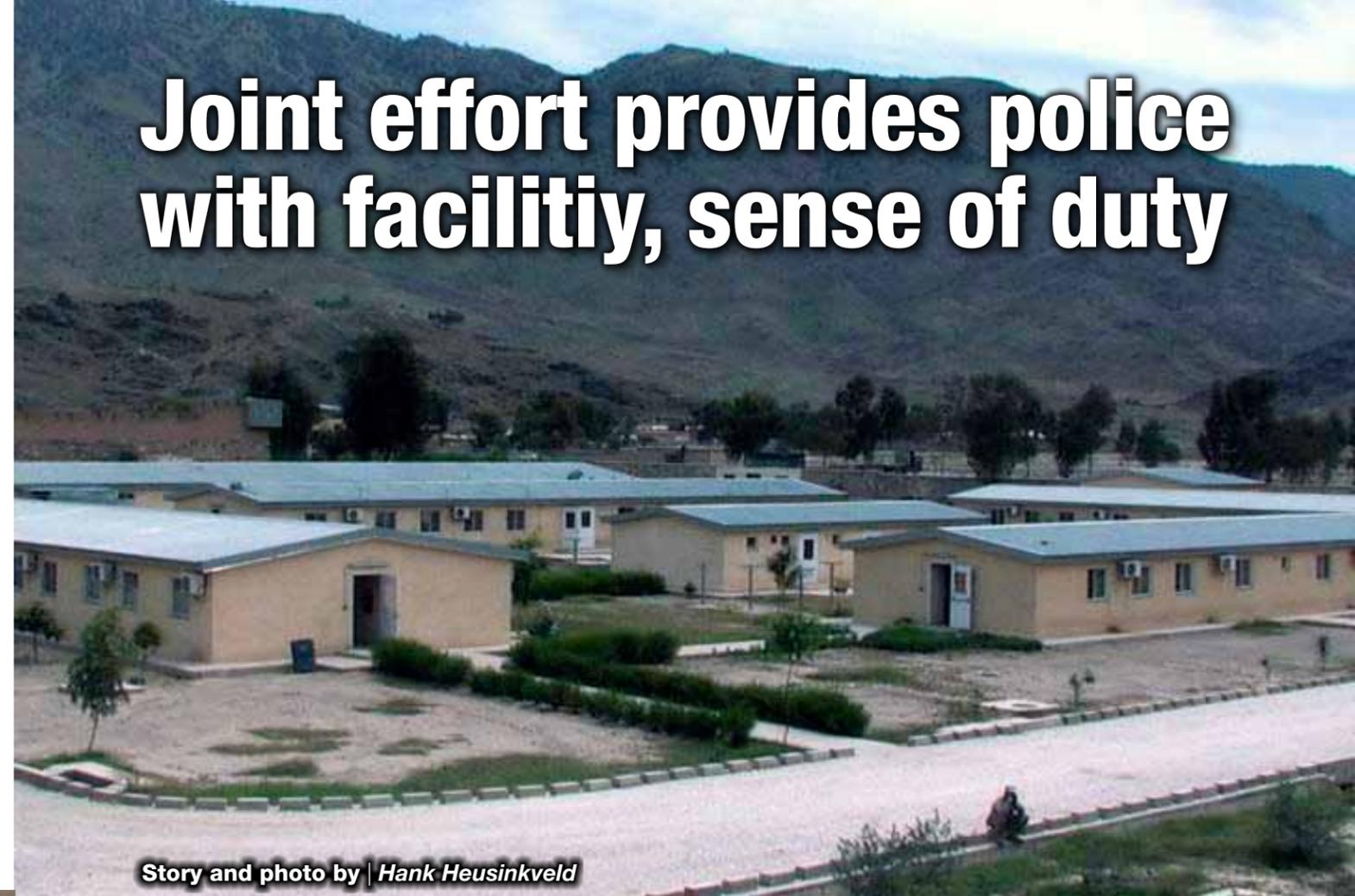
eight classrooms built to accommodate 3,000 students, living quarters for students and support staff of 500, a helicopter pad, multiple ranges for pistol, rifle, RPG and live-fire driving training, a parade field, and an 11,000 square foot gym.

The training center is scheduled to be completed in June 2011. 📷



The sprawling facility is constructed primarily of concrete blocks and pre-engineered building materials. Over the course of the project, TI has employed as many as 1,600 Afghan workers. The number fluctuates depending on the work required and security conditions. (Photo by Dani Bolte)

# Joint effort provides police with facility, sense of duty



**Story and photo by | Hank Heusinkveld**

**Afghanistan National Border Police facilities like this help keep a watchful eye on insurgents who use mountainous areas as refuge.**

**JALALABAD, Afghanistan,** -- the Afghanistan National Police are relied upon as a strong force for fighting insurgents. The NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan provides the police with modern facilities to do their job better, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the agency that builds them.

To ensure that the ANP is getting a quality facility, NTM - A and USACE officials teamed up for site inspections of various facilities. COL John Ferrari, the Deputy Commanding General for Programs at NTM - A, said the push is on to establish and build more ANP facilities. The site inspection gave NTM - A officials a chance to assess how the police force is doing in the Regional Command – East area of operations. The police are the top priority for the NTM - A, and officials visited facilities for all of the major police which include the uniformed police, the civil order police and the border police.

“The police are the top force for fighting counter insurgency on the battlefield because

they’re the security force that’s closest to the people,” Ferrari said. “The Afghan Army is responsible for clearing an area, but if you want to hold and build in an area you need the police. They’re the government agency that the people in a city, town or village are going to look to figure out if the government can provide security for it or not.”

During a site inspection to an ANP compound in Jalalabad’s city center, Ferrari noted that the new facility brings a sense of pride to ANP officials. He said that the facility is more than just a building to the local population.

“It’s also an important symbol to the Afghan people, the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of the interior in that it represents an enduring relationship. There are a lot of people who think that the U.S. is only here for a short time, and it’s only going to build a security force for a short period of time,” Ferrari said.

**Continued on Page 15**



# Afghan Hands

Program provides continuity, relations building

Story and photos by | *Hank Heusinkveld*

Capt. Mike Holbrook, right, practices speaking Pashtu with members of the Afghanistan National Army's 2nd Brigade in Jalalabad.

**J**ALALABAD, Afghanistan -- Capt. Mike Holbrook is like a celebrity when he walks through a village that's located between Forward Operating Bases Hughtie and Findley.

A group of teenage boys walks up to him with high fives, and speaks to him in broken English. He responds with his limited vocabulary of Pashtu, the boys' native language. They find it fascinating, and welcome him into their village as a respected and honored guest.

The casual conversations Holbrook has with Afghans are part of a much larger picture. He beneficiary to Afghan Hands,

a grass-roots program initiated by U.S. Forces Afghanistan commander, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, that's designed to build long-lasting relationships with Afghanistan National Security Forces.

During a month-long immersion with the Afghanistan National Army's 2nd Brigade, Holbrook polished his language skills and sent a message to the Afghans that by speaking their language and learning more about their culture, genuine interest in building long term relationships. Holbrook volunteered for Afghan Hands because

**“We all believe very strongly in the effectiveness of this program and how it's going to help the Afghan people.”**

he saw inconsistencies with regular troop rotations during a previous deployment to Afghanistan.

“As a Provincial Reconstruction Team (operations officer) I saw a lot of teams come and go and there wasn't a lot of continuity. (I thought) we were starting all over again with the Afghans every time,” he said. “So with this program I will be in Afghanistan for a year, make some relationships, develop a team, and then the next time I come back it will be with the same organization speaking their language.”

When Holbrook leaves Afghanistan for a new duty station, he'll continue working Afghan issues and provide reachback to the Afghan Hands member who'll have taken his place. Then it's back to Afghanistan to provide that continuity.

Another engineer officer, Capt. Jim Mooney, is anxious to get started in the program. He's optimistic that with his newly acquired skills in speaking Pashtu, he'll be able to gain better insight into what the

Afghans themselves need for the rebuilding of their country.

“When you break that barrier and you can speak to them on their own terms your credibility goes up tenfold,” Mooney said. “And they are incredibly receptive. The Afghan people are incredibly friendly, people-centric people who want to have Americans here. It has been an amazing experience for us.”

During the language immersion portion of their training, the Afghan Hands members relied on interpreters to help them along. But once they head to their new duty stations they'll continue learning to speak the language, but without the aid of an interpreter.

“Even when you speak through an interpreter, you're still not making that connection, and with the Afghan Hands (program), we are right on the ground making that connection and it's paying big dividends already,” Mooney said. “Even in the 30 day-immersion that we just completed



In a small village nestled between two Forward Operating Bases, Holbrook converses in Pashtu with a villager.



Holbrook discusses engineering issues in Pashtu with an ANA 2nd Brigade engineer with minimal aid from an interpreter. Pashtu is the main language spoken in and around the Jalalabad area.

it's going to pay bigger dividends down the road when we go to our final destination and we actually really start getting our feet on the ground and making those long lasting connections."

Capt. Kimberly Taifitic is a Pashtu-speaking engineer who'll add a new dimension to a Provincial Reconstruction Team. When she heard about the program, she wanted to be a part of it because of its tangible, effective results.

"The program really sounded like a new approach to Afghanistan and helping its people," Taifitic said. "They trust what we're doing for them. They absolutely love that we can speak their language, and they approach us because of that. They welcome you as a family member."

Like others in the program, Taifitic is betting that Afghan Hands will only strengthen Afghan and U.S. relations. She said that a three-year tour in the program is just about the right amount of time a volunteer needs to make the program work.

"It's a great idea for continuity, so one

year is just not long enough. And that's what Gen. McChrystal wants; building relationships over time," Taifitic said. "This country doesn't need any more insurgent activity. If the Afghan people support us more than the Taliban through trust, then that's where we'll make our mark. It's going to better for everyone."

So far, the program is off to a good start. Air Force MSgt. Irene Mason feels she will be able to explain construction methods much more clearly when she arrives at her new assignment. Nothing will get lost in translation, and she'll be a trusted and respected American doing her part to help rebuild Afghanistan.

"We all believe very strongly in the effectiveness of this program and how it's going to help the Afghan people," Mason said. "By being more approachable because I can speak and understand their language I expect that the Afghans will be more open to us to tell us how we can help them help themselves like additional training for construction or things similar." 



# Memorial Day 2010



# Boys school to offer safe, traditional learning environment



Story and photos by | **Hank Heusinkveld**

The Center of Excellence will house up to 500 boys from Kindergarten thru 12th grade and is scheduled to open in a few months.

**METHERLAM, Afghanistan** – Last year, Afghanistan government and religious officials approached Coalition Forces to discuss the possibility of building an Islamic school on the outskirts of the town of Metherlam.

The request was an attempt to provide an alternative to sending boys to Pakistan to attend school and risk having them educated by Islamic radicals.

The request was given a green light, and one year later, a Provincial Reconstruction Team and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are just months away from completion of the Metherlam Center of Excellence.

The compound itself resembles a small campus. The school will accommodate roughly 500 boys, who will attend school from kindergarten through 12th grade, and

will be able to live within its walls.

Officials from the PRT and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers checked for quality assurance to ensure that the compound is being built to standard.

**“Many families want their children to have a proper Islamic education.”**

To provide a bit of economic stability in the immediate area, the school is being built by locally hired workers who are putting the finishing touches on the interiors of the buildings. Once the compound is completed, it's expected to

ease the fears and concerns of parents and government officials who won't have to send their sons to Pakistan anymore.

“That's their fear. Many families want their children to have a proper Islamic education and in western terms this is (kindergarten through 12th grade),” said Maj. Clint Hanna, of the Fourth Infantry Division Civil Military Operations unit based at Jalalabad

Air Field. “They have no say, no control over what's in Pakistan. Here, they know their government will regulate the curriculum and monitor their boys while they're gone.”

A school like this one in Metherlam is just one of dozens of projects the Provincial Reconstruction Teams work on to help stabilize the Afghan government. The PRTs mentor the government through provincial councils and district development, and help teach Afghans how to properly prioritize budgets to learn how to efficiently and effectively rebuild their country. Afghanistan Engineer District-North construction representative, Brock Hansen, is assigned to the 4th ID's Task Force Mountain Warrior and helps coordinate the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' mission of building the school.

“Schools are a huge piece of what the PRTs do,” Hansen explained. “The PRTs are out there making sure that children who used to go to school under a tree have a building where they can go and learn.”

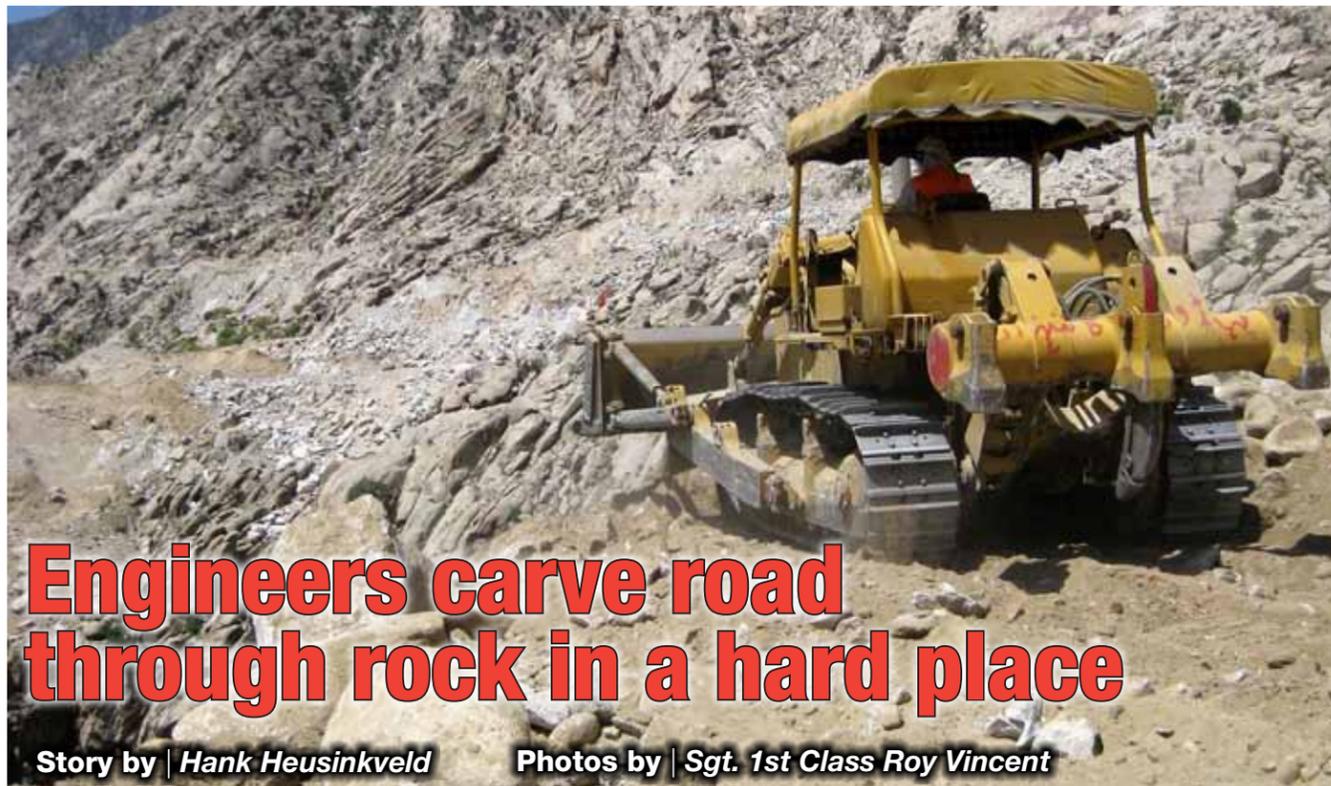


Former AED-N Chief of Engineering & Construction Rex Goodnight, foreground, greets boys from a local village after a site inspection at the Center of Excellence.

When the school is completed within the next few months, it will signal a new beginning for the slow process of rebuilding Afghanistan.



An interpreter explains construction progress of the Center of Excellence from a contractor to Metherlam PRT members and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials.



# Engineers carve road through rock in a hard place

Story by | **Hank Heusinkveld**      Photos by | **Sgt. 1st Class Roy Vincent**

**An Afghan heavy equipment operator moves boulders off the road during construction.**

**KABUL, Afghanistan** – Titan Dara is a challenging mountain road in Nuristan Province in eastern Afghanistan that’s laden with two-ton boulders, sheer cliffs and difficulty in getting equipment to the job sites. It’s challenging work, but construction crews are making headway.

“The biggest challenge is all of the switchbacks,” said Sgt. 1st Class Roy Vincent, combat engineer who is assigned to the Metherlam Field Office. “There are established footprints, but sometimes we have to make new footprints. It’s like taking a whole mountaintop and defacing it. I’ve helped build roads in the Army before, but nothing like this – nothing of this magnitude.”

Contracting representative Dave Kaplan echoed Vincent’s description.

“If I were to single out a portion of that project that has been the most difficult to construct, where valued engineering has been most applied, I would say it would be the first 3 1/2 kilometers, due to the steep grade and the narrow path descending and transcending in and out of the valley,” Kaplan said.

Project manager Loan Harris said the project will have a significant impact in the area because it will connect at least seven villages. She, too,

believes this is a difficult road project, but that it is possible to build a road in such an inhospitable area.

“When we first generated a map with all of the switchbacks, we said to ourselves, ‘How are we ever going to accomplish this?’ But the contractors are doing a very good job,” Harris said.

The contractor has an adequate number of locally-hired security personnel to provide security for the project, Harris said. 🇺🇸



**Huge boulders and steep inclines are typical for this mountain road and make getting equipment here difficult.**

**Continued from Page 7**

“Through the construction program that’s being run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, we’re building enduring infrastructure that the Afghan security forces, the Army and the police, and the people of Afghanistan will have for many decades. We use those construction projects as a symbol of our enduring commitment to them to ensure the people we will be with them as long as we need to get through this COIN fight.”

According to Ferrari, there are about 200,000 security forces in the field. In the next 18 months there will be 50 percent more.

“This means they all need a place to live or work, and beyond that there’s potential for even further growth.”

The structures are having a positive effect on recruiting. In September 2009, only 800 Afghans were recruited to join the ANA, Ferrari said. By April of this year, more than 8,000 people have signed up.

“One of the things that we try to do is once we recruit them, much like the United States Army, you don’t want to lose them through attrition. One of the things we know that keeps soldiers is permanent buildings,” Ferrari said. “So the quicker we can get the permanent buildings in the better it is for the morale of the unit and the less attrition we have. Soldiers in tents walk away, especially if they have to spend more than



**Retention of Afghanistan National Security Forces starts with well-built, and well-maintained permanent buildings.**

one winter in a tent. It’s absolutely critical that the buildings are available and on time when the units are fielding.”

The push is on to expand the Afghanistan National Police forces. LTC Matt Cadicamo, the officer-in-charge of the Corps’ Jalalabad Field Office, said that once buildings are completed, there’s an even bigger push to get the forces trained and ready.

“If we can build a facility so that the Afghanistan National Police can get established and start training their people so that they can use it for providing security and regional and local stability, that’s part of winning the War on Terror,” Cadicamo said. “That’s a critical part of counterinsurgency operations.” 🇺🇸



**COL John Ferrari, Deputy CG for NTM-A programs, center, listens to concerns of an Afghanistan National Police official, right, through an interpreter.**

A photograph of a man in the foreground, wearing glasses and a dark t-shirt, holding a lit candle in a white dish. He is looking down at the candle. In the background, a woman is also holding a lit candle. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the candles, creating a somber and reflective atmosphere.

# Parting Shot

J.W. Purcell shares a moment of silence during a candlelight vigil at Qalaa House for Memorial Day on May 30.

Photo by | *Hank Heusinkveld*