

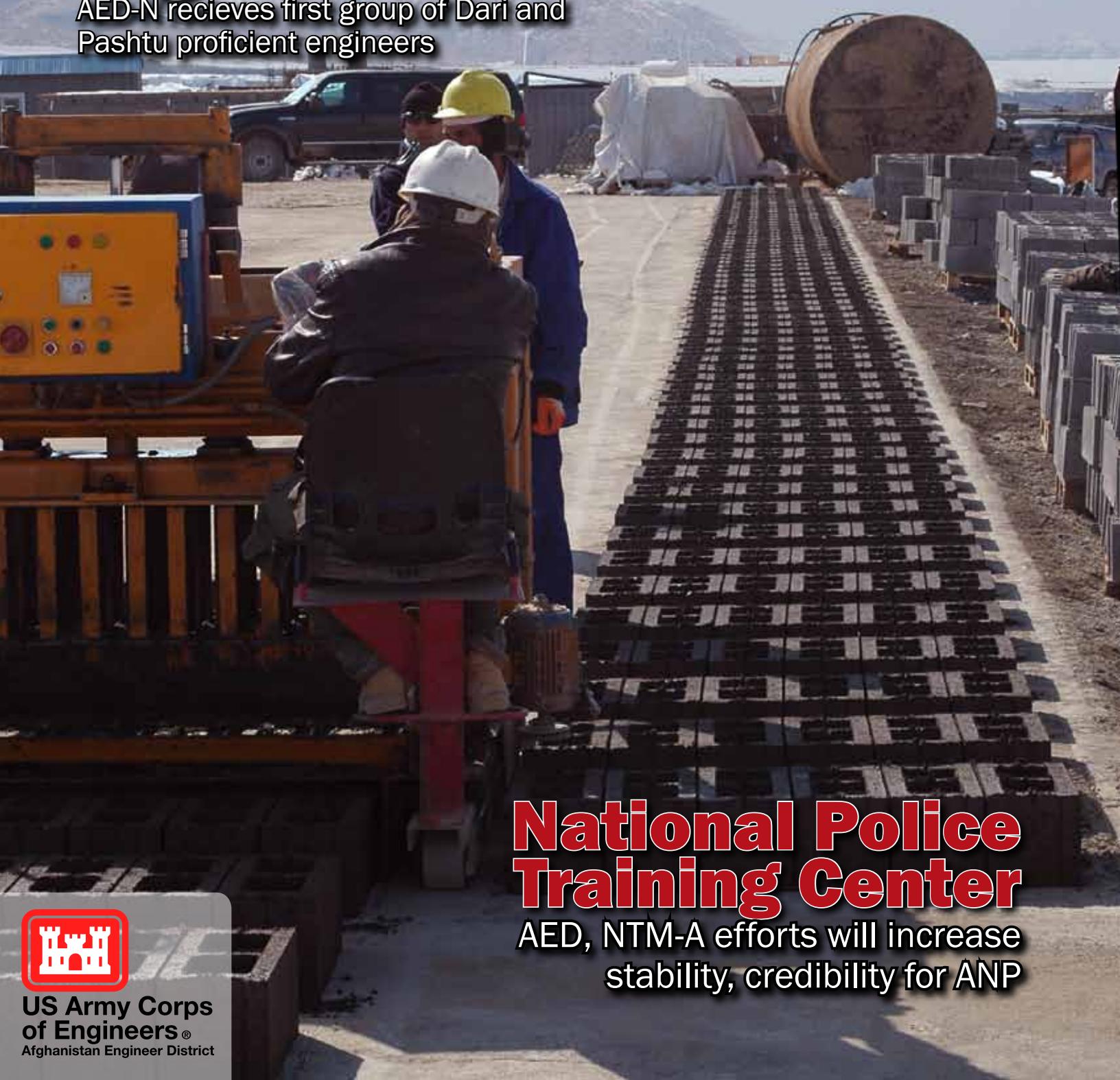


# THE **FREEDOM** **BUILDER** MAGAZINE

June 2010

## 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

# 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

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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."



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



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

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. ■



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Reprint from *The Freedom Builder Magazine* June 2010  
Publication of US Army Corps of Engineers Afghan Engineer District  
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