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## Colonel Thomas E. O'Donovan assumes command of the Afghanistan Engineer District

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Colonel Thomas E. O'Donovan receives the Afghanistan Engineer District Guidon from Major General Robert W. Cone, Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, Commanding General. The transfer symbolizes the official transfer of authority from one commander to another. [USACE Photo]

**Kabul, Afghanistan**—Colonel Thomas E. O'Donovan took charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District here Monday, replacing Colonel Miroslav P. Kurka.

O'Donovan, the former commander of the Portland Engineer District now leads more than 300 military and civilian volunteers assigned to the Afghanistan Engineer District to conduct construction and engineering operations throughout the Central Asian Republics. O'Donovan is the fifth commander to assume command of the Afghanistan Engineer District since it was established in March 2004.

Major General Robert W. Cone, Commanding General, Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, was the keynote speaker at the ceremony, and paid tribute to Kurka and O'Donovan during his remarks. The Change of Command is a time-honored tradition which formally symbolizes the continuity of authority as the command is passed from one individual to another. The ceremony took place at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District Headquarters in Kabul before an assembly of the District's military and civilian personnel and distinguished guests. The ceremony represents the total transfer of responsibility, authority, and accountability from Kurka to O'Donovan. Members of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Band performed at the ceremony, which was followed by a receiving line and reception immediately afterward.

The Afghanistan Engineer District is an integral part of a larger Engineer Community in the Afghan theater. It is comprised of seven Area Offices, 22 Resident Offices, and six Project Offices which are strategically located throughout Afghanistan, and also has projects planned and/or under construction outside of Afghanistan in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan. Its capabilities include project management, engineering, contracting, construction management, real estate, and safety. The District mission is to provide these services in order to facilitate the establishment of a secure and stable environment in the Central Asian Republics while promoting reconstruction and infrastructure development.



The ceremony took place on the front porch of the Qalaa House, the Afghanistan Engineer District Headquarters in Kabul. Command Sergeant Major Gary Winkleblack holds the AED Guidon in preparation for the official transfer of authority to the new Commander.  
[USACE Photo]



Colonel Thomas E. O'Donovan addresses the members of his command for the first time as Commander. [USACE Photo]

The District provides support in four major program areas: Afghan National Security Forces, which includes Afghan National Army and Police, U.S. and Coalition Force Projection, Counter Narcotics and Border Management Initiatives, and Strategic Reconstruction, which includes support to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Commander's Emergency Response Program, and the A-T Bridge program. In FY08 the Afghanistan Engineer District will award and/or build more than \$2.33 Billion in construction projects.