

Postcards from Afghanistan



Leigh (second from left) with the Road Reconnaissance Team outside of ANA Commando base.



Leigh visiting with the kids on TV Hill.

Maj. Leigh B. Ford
Kabul Area Officer in Charge
Afghanistan Engineer District

As a civil engineer for McGuire AFB and a member of the Facility Engineer Team 22 Army Reserve unit out of Fort Dix, NJ, I volunteered for a one-year tour in Afghanistan to get experience working for the Corps and to help the people of Afghanistan. I previously did a one-year tour in Iraq on a Facility Engineer Team, but this is my first tour in Afghanistan. My husband Dave, who's a Captain in the Air Force, is on an unaccompanied tour to Korea so the timing worked for us.

My job at AED is as the Kabul Area Officer in Charge. The Kabul Area Office (KAO) maintains a fast pace due to the numerous projects, meetings, and construction schedules that must be met. Currently, we have about 65 projects worth approximately \$200 million. Most of our projects are for the Afghan National Security Forces which include the Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), and Counter Narcotics; and we also have several road projects. The Afghan National Security Forces projects provide the facilities to establish a secure and stable environment for the Afghan people, and the road projects provide safer travel routes for the population.

Since I've been in Afghanistan, I've had the chance to meet and work with so many great people, both American and Afghan. I've made friends that I'll stay in touch with for the rest of my life. I've enjoyed getting out to project sites and talking with the Afghan nationals that

work for the Corps and with the local contractors. We have many excellent local national quality assurance and security personnel who are eager to learn and help to re-construct their country. KAO has Afghan national quality assurance representatives that work for us on most of our projects. The KAO personnel assist in training these local nationals fostering relationships with the Afghans and improving their construction knowledge.

Working in Afghanistan has been an experience of a lifetime. I've really enjoyed the responsibilities and experience that comes with working in an Area Office. The efforts of the Corps in Afghanistan are helping make Afghanistan a safer place, and maybe one day we'll be able to return here as tourists in this beautiful country.



Giving directions to pilot on helicopter flight to Daykundi project site.