

SHAPING *Chièvres*

Story and Photos by
Andrew Stamer

Two hours from Paris, across the border into Belgium, a slight stir can be heard in the early morning hours and continues through the day. For now, it is the sound of bulldozers, trucks, hammers, drills and the buzz of busy workers.

This is Chièvres Air Base, and big things are happening here. A future is being forged. Barracks are being built for the first time on this 80th Area Support Group installation.

"This project is one of the most unique barracks I think you'll see in Europe, or the United States," said Army Lt. Col. G. Thatch Shepard, director, Directorate of Public Works, 80th Area Support



Air Force Master Sgt. Hyacinth Carter (right), civil engineer, 309th Airlift Squadron, discusses the new dormitories being built at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium, with Norma Renovales-Alvarez, regional program manager, BENELUX Program Office.

Group. "We have morphed the external appearance of it to accommodate the local national landscape, culture, and still maintain the force protection requirements."

These barracks, or dormitories, are also unique because of the distinct possibility that they will be the future homes for Soldiers, as well as, Airmen, Sailors and Marines. And, taking this into account, the barracks were designed to fit this broad customer range by accommodating the other services' standards and requirements into the Army's one-plus-one format.

It may have been a daunting task to make the building fit the needs of all the different services that could find themselves living at Chièvres, but payoff for everyone may be well worth it in the end.

"In the end, I think all parties were happy with the final conclusion of the design," said Shepard.

A part of this design includes equipping all the rooms with full kitchens. The plan also calls for eight rooms for noncommissioned officers, who would be assigned to monitor various sections of the new building's tenants. Rooms are also set aside for 120 troops (E-4 and below.)

Before this project came to fruition, when there were still many things being decided, Norma Renovales-Alvarez, regional program manager, BENELUX Program Office, gave partners from all the services a chance to give their input into what would fit their troop's needs.



▲ Roger Triviere (right), on-site safety coordinator for the contractor, shows Carol Steuart, construction representative, BENELUX Program Office, ditches where pipes will be laid alongside the road and sidewalk near the new barracks.

▼ These new barracks on Chièvres Air Base, Belgium will be equipped with 120 rooms to house Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines, E-4 and below, while eight rooms will be assigned to noncommissioned officers.



CORPS QUALITY

"I was in a lot of the planning and the first stages of it," said Air Force Master Sgt. Hyacinth Carter, civil engineer, 309th Airlift Squadron.

"The only dorms available around here are on SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) and we're a small unit on Chièvres ... our place of duty is here," said Carter.

The unit, made up of approximately 90 people, has the responsibility of flying the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

"We do get a lot of younger Airmen, and this is their first time away from home and their first time in an overseas environment, and I think ... when they have an environment like that, you kind of need to keep a little control of them," said Carter. "And that's where the dorm will come in."

The Air Force also has a fire department made up of 18 troops, and someone has to be on duty all of the time.

The dormitory will make it convenient for those troops, said Carter, because they would only be a few minutes away from work by living on base, versus the time it would take for them to come from a surrounding town and get through the gate during an emergency.

Some of the older barracks around SHAPE don't meet Air Force standards, so these younger troops have been forced to live in towns in the area surrounding Chièvres.

This dormitory will cater to the standards of all the services and will give troops the chance to build a sense of a community, by bringing them together to live on the base.

"Here they will get that sense (of community), and I think a lot of young Soldiers and Airmen need that," said Carter.

With the project moving along at a swift pace, it should take just over a year from the beginning of construction to its completion. The cost is more than \$13.5 million, and with this dorm it will spark the beginning of a community on post.

"This is going to be a win-win for the community of Chièvres, as well as those who are lucky enough to be placed in these quality barracks," said Shepard. "Ultimately, what's going to happen is this is going to begin the impetus for more development."

By turning Chièvres into an air base that can accompany full-time residents, it may lead to more development. While there is already a PX and commissary, the base may have to enlarge them to accommodate the influx of new residents. There



Roger Triviere (right) shows Carol Steuart the progress of work that is being done on the entry ways of the barracks in Chièvres Air Base, Belgium.

may also be a need to build a 24-hour shoppette and a community club among other things.

"It's going to jump start some future construction efforts," said Shepard.

While the barracks are scheduled to be completed by February, it is the contractor's goal to have the project delivered in early January, said Carol Steuart, construction representative, BENELUX Program Office.

And there are a couple of reasons why the team was able to project such a positive and early

completion date.

One reason was because the Corps was allowed to take over the contract by the Belgium Ministry of Defense. This made the Corps directly responsible for the project so they were able to get the ball rolling and start construction, said Renovaes-Alvarez.

Safety is another reason.

"There haven't been any problems in terms of safety. The project is going well. It's a good success story because there haven't been any major delays," said Renovaes-Alvarez.

"Their whole attitude or concept of construction is that they are very high on their quality," said Steuart.

From her previous experience working with the contractor, Lixon, with the SHAPE elementary school addition, the data building and the switch building, Steuart has seen the pride the Belgians take with their construction.

"They're really proud people, so you get a better product when you've got proud folks," said Steuart.

The Belgians believe in teamwork.

"It's not just what I've done; the Belgians have the designer, the contractor and the government. And from these three things they all work together as a team," said Steuart.

Because any design flaws may lead to the building having big problems later on, the responsibility for the building lies on the shoulders of the designer. And the designer works closely with all parties to make sure everything is working properly. What the contractor gains is building the best product there is for his company.

And the government, in this case the Corps, always wants a quality product to pass along to its customer, said Steuart.

"When you put these three together in Belgium, it works," said Steuart. "It's been a great team. The contractor, the Corps, the district, everybody has been right there and that's what gives you a great product in the end."



Army Lt. Col. G. Thatch Shepard (top, right), director, Directorate of Public Works, 80th Area Support Group, leads a group of officers and noncommissioned officers from the Army and Air Force on a tour of the dormitories their troops will live in.

While the inside of the new barracks at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium were being completed, the outside was being completed as well. Working as a team, this contractor, with brick and mortar, was able to help deliver a product that everyone would be happy with. This new barracks is the first of its kind because it was designed to house troops from the Navy, Air Force and the Army. Its estimated cost is approximately \$13.6 million.



Renewing Life

Corps teams up with Army depot to restore the ecosystem of a stream with connections to the Rhein

Story and Photos by
Andrew Stamer

A few miles from the 284th Base Support Battalion, in Giessen, Germany, a small stream begins, which eventually runs through the main Army depot.

As the water swiftly rushes through its concrete basin on the depot, into a swirling pool, through tributary waters – it makes its way into the illustrious Rhein River.

Since this relation to the Rhein exists, there's a connection to a larger ecosystem, said Pat Cagney, biologist, U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers, Europe District.

"It was a heavily impacted stream," said Cagney of the project called *Oberlache*. "It's a re-naturalization of a small stream."

Stream re-naturalization is not new in Germany, and the roots of this project stretch back to 2001. "We received a letter from the host nation asking us to bring this oberlache stream back to its natural condition," said Thomas Cahn, chief, Environmental Management Office, 284th Base Support Battalion Directorate of Public Works.

A team was formed to re-naturalize the 350 meters of the stream that runs through the depot, to include the City of Giessen, the Corps of Engineers, IMA-Europe (Installation Management Agency-

Europe), the 104th Area Support Group, and the 284th Base Support Battalion.

"There is a regulation within the State of Hessen, that once the use of a stream changes and you no longer need it, then you have to re-naturalize it or restore it, as close as you can, back to the original condition," said Cagney.

With the backing of German officials from the City of Giessen, Europe District teamed with the Giessen DPW to start a project on this stream that would give it its vitality back.

It was something the DPW wanted to do alongside the German authorities, and asked for help from Europe District.

"We had a good working relationship with the host nation since the beginning," said Cahn.

In years past, it had been fashionable to take small streams similar to this oberlache and make them linear and line them with concrete, said Cahn.

Weirs (low dams) were also put in place in these streams, which obstructed fish movement, said Cagney.

Though these cosmetic features may have seemed like good ideas at the time, it has turned out they weren't so good for these streams – causing them

to flow too fast and overflow very easily, said Cahn.

The stream had been impacted from many different face-lifts that it had received. The latest was when it was being used to feed a steam plant, said Cagney.

It may have been a good way to feed the steam plant, but the 350 meters that are being re-naturalized were the worst part.

"The water itself is in very good condition," said Konstantin Gross, environmental engineer, Environmental Management Office, 284th Base Support Battalion Directorate of Public Works, because no waste water is running into the stream.

The water's condition is a major factor and contributor in re-naturalizing the stream. Without the clean water, the task would be much more difficult, said Gross.

What makes this area of the stream so bad is that this is the narrow, straight, concrete portion where the water flows very fast.

This has made it difficult for many species that would occur naturally in a stream of this type to inhabit this ecosystem, said Gross.

"Only a very small population of special kinds of fish can live in here, under this condition," said Gross.

Streams that have been lined with concrete and have had blockages put in become "sterile areas," said Cagney. And that is one reason why the concrete is being replaced with local rocks and stones.

The process of getting back to a functional condition does take effort. Curves will be put back into the stream and it will be widened. Removal of the concrete will also help the water's ability to seep into the banks and ground and rocks will give a place for fish to hide, said Gross.

All of these factors will also help contribute to a much needed element for life – oxygen. The increased surface area allows the water to become more oxygenated, said Gross. The increase surface area also increases the humidity in the air with evaporation, which, in turn, will increase the plant population and increase the quality of the air as well.

"Our first thing is to get fish and the second thing is to let



To re-naturalize the oberlache, a backhoe is used to remove dirt from its banks to widen it and put it back into its original condition.

local flora and fauna re-establish," said Cahn.

While only a select few species of fish are able to live in this habitat now, after re-naturalization, it should be habitable for 10 to 12 different kinds, said Gross. More insect species will also be able to inhabit the area.

"You build up a place where different species can live. Some may come from upstream and some may come from downstream," said Gross.

After construction is completed, which is expected sometime in January, it may take a few years for all these plants and animals to repopulate this portion of the stream, said Gross.

Projects, such as this one, are something the Corps of Engineers does as part of being good stewards to the environment, said Cagney.

While the Corps may have the environmental specialists and expertise, it took many to get this project underway.

"It really was a homegrown effort from the City of Giessen and ... the BSB. Without their help, we couldn't have done it," said Cagney. "I think it is a project that people enjoy working on."



Thomas Cahn (left) and Konstantin Gross (center) of the Directorate of Public Works at the 284th Base Support Battalion in Giessen, Germany, discuss the process of stream re-naturalization with the contractor.

TEAMWORK



Photo by Brian H. Temple

Story by
Brian H. Temple

Nestled in the heart of the Bavarian Alps in the shadow of the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain, the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort officially opened during a ribbon cutting ceremony October 30.

The 330-room lodge, Garmisch-Partenkirchen's latest addition featuring alpine design, is the pride of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District.

The \$77-million hotel, housing three restaurants, two bars, an indoor pool and hot tub, a gift shop, wellness center, and fitness center, was opened after two and a half years of construction.

The lodge can be used by all service members, Department of Defense civilians, retirees and family members.

Although the ceremony celebrated service members and other guests being the beneficiaries of the facility, the event indirectly honored a high point in successful project delivery teamwork. The Corps' Europe District

worked with CFSC staff to oversee construction, and the team delivered the hotel under budget and ahead of schedule, in what one could consider record timing.

Collocation of both Corps and CFSC engineering staff, versus having separate offices for each agency, helped the team succeed said Frank Kislán, project manager, Community and Family Support Center.

During construction of the Hale Koa Hotel in Hawaii, another CFSC hotel, Kislán said separate offices did not permit for the continuous exchange of information daily, which slowed the process.

However, the Edelweiss approach was different. Here, Kislán sat facing Gregory Vaughn, Europe District project engineer. And, Heidi Meissner, Europe District project manager, was only feet away in an adjacent office. Because of the pace of this project, (a hotel of this magnitude would normally take three to four years to build) both Corps employees were relocated to meet the immediate needs of the customer.



Bavaria Crest

"In this project, all good, bad and ugly information was freely shared by all team members as we focused together on the construction at hand," Kislán said. "The team effort didn't detract from the separate chains of command and reporting requirements that normally exist. Simply put, there was unity of effort by all members of the team, despite different organization affiliations."

Due to an aggressive construction schedule, coupled with the size and complexity of the project, it was essential to have all parties actively engaged, and accessible, he added.

But, collocation alone provides no guarantee to success. You also have to pick the right people, Kislán said. "If you build the team with seasoned professionals who are willing to focus together, the project can be a success. As true professionals, they will willingly work together and solve the problems."

Europe District's selection of a project manager for this job was the correct choice,

▲ Edelweiss Lodge and Resort officially opened its doors to all service members, Department of Defense civilians, retirees and family members, Oct. 30.

► During the Grand Opening Celebration, guests were greeted by traditional Alpenhorns.



Photo by Brian H. Temple

TEAMWORK



Photo by Brian H. Temple

A lofted area for guests to gaze out of grand windows overlooking the Bavarian Alps, sits above the resorts lobby. The lobby's chandeliers (not pictured) were delivered a few weeks prior to the Grand Opening.

Kislan said, and Meissner facilitated construction above and beyond the resources Kislan had on hand. "It would have been extremely difficult to execute such a large construction contract without extensive language skills and personal connections to the German Government's *Bauamt*."

Whether it was language skills, previously established relationships, or the individual talents of those on the project delivery team, synergy made the project a success. The Bauamt, Armed Forces Recreation Center-Europe, and various contractors, were also members of the team.

The Corps of Engineers was noted as being an essential part of the Army's construction mission by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations and Environment, Geoffrey Prosch. Prosch said that the Corps involvement on projects yields an improvement in the quality of life for service members.

"The Corps of Engineers is an absolute vital, attached to the hip, partner to the installation environment. I rely heavily on the Corps to help me with all my military construction," he said.

"This is a world class facility. ... I come here today and everything is one-stop-shopping, modern, new, and consolidated in a beautiful location. ... I think there are tremendous opportunities for this to be the R&R (rest and recuperation) center for our troops in Europe," he said.

Gen. B.B. Bell, U.S. Army, Europe, commanding general, lent his support to the ceremony as well. Bell introduced two Soldiers who were visiting the new lodge and resort while

on rest and recuperation leave from Operation Iraqi Freedom. "It is an honor to honor you," Bell said, "by providing a decent place to stay."

One of the R & R Soldiers recognized by Bell during the ceremony, Spc. Robert Carter said, "Mere words don't do this place justice. I'll recommend it to every returning Soldier as soon as I can."

Kislan, a former Corps employee himself, just may have joined his teammates in exhaling a collective sigh of relief knowing that guests are now enjoying the efforts of their hard work. Perhaps it is time for some R&R themselves.

For more information, visit: www.EdelweissLodgeandResort.com or call 440-2575/civ.08821-9440.

(Editor's Note: Melanie Casey, assistant editor of The Citizen for the 6th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office, contributed to this article.)

For casual dining, this family has chosen Zuggy's. Just one of the many options available to guests of the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort.

Photo by Brad Hays, Edelweiss Lodge and Resort



Project Delivery Team

CFSC – Arthur Thompson, Frank Kislan, John Ontko, Susan Unruh, and Maureen Worden.

AFRC – Steve Petrowski, Mark Hendryx, Ed Fagan, Bruno Cestari, and Jack Smithback.

Architect and engineering firm of IBB – Frau Suppmayer, Herr Schropp, and Herr Abells.

Bauamt Regensburg – Herr Fiegel and Herr Bräu.

OFD Nuremburg – Herr Felschner.

OBB – Herr Roll and Herr Hoffmann.

Architect Firm Hesse.

Herr Rudolf of Firm Magendorf.

Electrical Engineering Firm IGT.

Mechanical Engineering Firm Bergbauer.

Kitchen Design Firm HPM.

Civil Works Firm Wittmann.

Landscaping Firm Bücheler.

Europe District – Heidi Meissner and Gregory Vaughn.



Photo by Brian H. Temple



Photo by Susanne Bledsoe, Baltimore District



Photo by Brian H. Temple

By using prefabricated elements such as concrete steps and these fully contained restrooms (above), Edelweiss was delivered on schedule and on budget. Alpine-style chandeliers (top, left) are used to accent the alpine theme of the lodge in the open lobby. The lobby is a place where guests can sit in rocking chairs in front of an open fire and relax. Many classic murals (bottom, left) inspired by the Bavarian way of life, adorn the walls of the lodge and resort.

building spang

Story by
Andrew Stamer

In the Eifel region of Germany, sits Spangdahlem Air Force Base, and it is growing. In a landmark case, land has been added on both sides of the base in order to substitute all of the capability of Rhein-Main Air Force Base to both Ramstein and Spangdahlem Air Force Bases.

Europe District's construction includes a new fire station and troop processing center on the runway's south side, and many other projects on the northwestern part of the base.

The Northwest Expansion, as it is called, is one part of this new addition to the base. This expansion comes from approximately 125 acres that was acquired through the German Government, said Udo Stürmer, engineering flight commander, 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron at Spangdahlem. Another 125 acres were also added to the southern portion of the base.

To obtain this land, the base had to explain and justify a need for more land to the German Government, said Stürmer, who is a local national employee who has been at Spangdahlem for approximately 10 years.

And now that the land has been turned over to the Air Force by the German Government it is something that Spangdahlem can use and build on, said Stürmer.

"In the future, we are trying to become even bigger," he said.

Spangdahlem was also able to acquire the land because of the relationship with the

surrounding communities.

"We have a great relationship with the surrounding communities," said Stürmer. "You hear the complaints, but it is just the minority, the majority loves the military presence here. Not only because they leave their money here, there's also a lot of friendship to that."

Approximately €160,000 is being spent every day, he said. All of this is to allow for big planes, such as C-17s and C-5s, to gas and go.

While the Corps is actively involved in building on both sides of the base, most of its work is being performed in the Northwest Expansion.

What's planned for this area is a new hospital, dormitories, transit quarters, fitness center, chapel and a gas station, said John Thoele, construction and quality assurance representative, Europe District.

"It's logical that what you do first is your infrastructure," said Thoele, which includes the sewer and storm lines, high pressure lines for fire



Photo by Andrew Stamer

John Thoele, construction and quality assurance representative, shows off some of the new kitchen hardware in Spangdahlem's Club Eifel.

hydrants and electrical substations.

Trees have even been planted along the newly paved roads.

"We are trying to do something to give it a nice view and to make it a nice environment here, for our military population," said Stürmer.

And since the infrastructure has been laid, the Corps has been able to work on their newest projects on the new land, which include new roads, a guard house and visitor center, both of which will be at the new main entrance to the base.

As the contractors worked to put on the final coats of paint, light fixtures, and flooring, the Air Force soon had the first Corps project on the Northwest Expansion delivered to them, just in time for the holidays.

Working with the civil engineers from Spangdahlem, Europe District was able to help get Club Eifel, which is a new collocated club for officers and enlisted personnel, finished in late October.

"Nobody believed that the club was going to be done by the end of October, including myself," said Stürmer. "But, I think that was the good thing that everybody questioned ... I think if we had not asked the question at each and every meeting with all of our partners, that it would not have happened."

The new club is part Officers' Club and part Enlisted Club, but is more than just a



Photo by Andrew Stamer

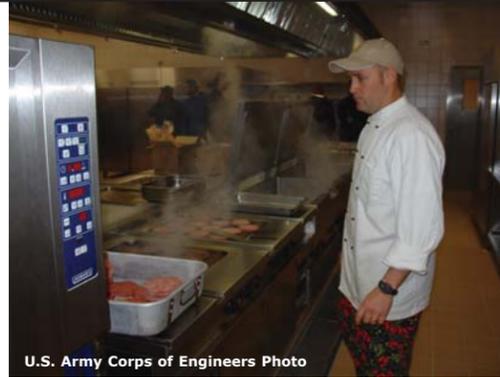
A contractor lays tile in the foyer of Club Eifel. Final touches are also being done throughout much of the club which houses casual dining, an Officer's Club, an Enlisted Club, a slot machine room, a banquet hall and a sports bar.

AIR SUPPORT



Before opening Club Eifel at Spangdahlem Air Force Base, Germany, the Corps tested the kitchen hardware (top, right). John Thoele (bottom, right) shows the new club's accents such as the woodwork on the walls and the floor tiling.

Photo by Andrew Stamer



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Photo



Photo by Andrew Stamer

John Moreno (top, left), project engineer, Europe District, watches as contractors put a sports-themed restaurant together. John Thoele (bottom, left) looks at the restaurant as the finishing touches are being completed.



Photo by Andrew Stamer

watering hole for the ranks.

This is a grand club, which will be used for grand occasions, such as balls, with a capacity to hold more than 400 people in the ballroom alone. There is also a slot machine room, casual dining area, hair salon, and themed sports bar.

Until about a year and a half ago, the base had separate clubs for officers and enlisted personnel. These were consolidated in anticipation of the move to the collocated club, said Fred McKenney, services business operations flight chief, 52nd Services Squadron.

Initially consolidating the two clubs into one

before the move into the collocated club worked because it made it easier to make the move into the new building, said McKenney.

In comparison between the old clubs, McKenney said it is like night and day.

"We went through a typical 20- to 30-year-old facility to a state-of-the-art facility, which incorporated a lot of computerized lighting and a built in music system," McKenney said. There are also multiple television sets in the bars.

The construction of the club is also going to improve the quality of life for Airmen.

McKenney had taken many of Spangdahlem's new Airmen to the club before it was finished, and all of them were impressed.

"Every one of them joined the club," said McKenney. "You saw their eyes light up when they saw where they were going to be able to go."

For McKenney, who has 30 years of experience in this type of work, he believes this is "one of the finest facilities in the Air Force."

With any project, to go from a hole in the ground to one of the finest in the Air Force, takes a lot of cooperation from the key players. All of whom had to partner up as a team and overcome challenges.

The Corps of Engineers, the German Government, U.S. Air Force Europe, and the base civil engineers still meet on a monthly basis to make sure that any problems they may face are ironed out early. This is to ensure there is no delay in a project's completion. It also makes everyone

involved aware if a problem is expected, so it's not a surprise, said Stürmer.

These meetings are useful for the continuous planning and work being done now and in the base's future. They have also proved useful, because it was these scheduled meeting with all the team members that led directly to the timely delivery of the collocated club.

"One of the finest facilities in the Air Force."

"We didn't all agree all of the time, and we didn't always like what we heard," said McKenney

about the club. "But at the end of the day we made it through to see the completion of this fantastic facility."

From the civil engineers side of the house, the feeling about the club remains consistent. "Look at the club. It speaks for itself," Stürmer said.



Photo by Andrew Stamer

John Thoele points out the new visitor center (left, top) and the troop processing center (right). The new main gate, with the latest in force protection requirements, is also currently under construction.



Photo by Andrew Stamer



Photo by Andrew Stamer

Answering the Call

On **Sept. 11, 2001**, time seemed to stop. While others were raising questions, there was no question for one Soldier on what he had to do:

Volunteer

Story by Andrew Stamer

Selfless service may have earned Capt. Craig “Kush” Kushniruk the Bronze Star Medal while he was deployed to Afghanistan, but it was his volunteerism that landed him in Europe District. Like so many people, Kushniruk watched in horror as Sept. 11, 2001 unfolded unlike any day. Feelings of frustration welled up inside of him,

but instead of feeling paralyzed by the sight, he did what he knew he had to do. It’s not just because he’s a native New Yorker from Buffalo that made him act. He knew he couldn’t sit back when the threat of freedom was something to fight for. So, at age 40 and eligible for retirement, Kushniruk volunteered. He was assigned to Europe District in March of 2003 and sent to Afghanistan.

“My big reason for coming on active-duty was because I was in the infantry and an engineer officer. I thought I could do some good,” said Kushniruk who enlisted in the Marine Corps when he was 17 years old.

Watching the events of 9/11 unfold is something few can explain – eyes fill with tears quicker than words flow from a mouth. Kushniruk could do no better but express his frustration at what had happened and what he should do. His wife, Kristine Kushniruk, even knew he couldn’t sit this one out, and encouraged her husband to fight the good fight. It was his children who drove him to his decision to volunteer.

“My oldest child is 17, so

they’re right at that age,” said Kushniruk who speaks selflessly of the sacrifices he made to save younger people from having to go to war.

And Kushniruk sacrificed approximately 20 months from his family – a year of it spent in Afghanistan.

His time in Afghanistan was spent wearing many hats. He was the resident engineer at the Bagram Joint Operations Center, a liaison between the CJ-7 and the Corps of Engineers, project engineer and construction representative, as well as pulling security for the civilians and contractors.

“I was basically the person on point, so if something were to happen, I’d have to react to it,” said Kushniruk.

Working the 12- to 14- hour days were both challenging and rewarding, said Kushniruk.

“It was nice because the busier you kept the faster the time went,” he said. And there were always projects to be done.

After 30 years of war, Afghanistan was littered with landmines.

“No matter where you’d excavate you’d always end up coming up with UXO (unexploded ordinances), landmines and other stuff,” said Kushniruk.

This hit home quickly when he would see children and adults who were missing arms and legs from landmines.

When they’d excavate and find ordinances, the engineers would call in the EOD (explosive ordinance disposal) or the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), who would clear it. The NGO would also help by training the Afghan people on how to identify what was dangerous and how to remove and dispose of it properly, said Kushniruk.

The Corps of Engineers were helping in a different way – by building a working infrastructure, and being witness to the good being done.

On a detail to take a U.S. dignitary back to the Kabul International Airport, Kushniruk said he

The Combined Joint Task Force-180, took over responsibility for all Afghan operations at the beginning of June 2002.

Photo illustration by Andrew Stamer

remembers seeing the street lights come on for the first time.

“It was just neat as things started working again and being able to witness it,” said Kushniruk.

During his year in Afghanistan, Kushniruk witnessed many good changes.

There is a generation of Afghans who are relatively uneducated, with no, or minimal, trade skills. Kushniruk said because of this, he was trying to get more local national employees hired to do the construction because it would help teach them trades and help them learn.

“The more we do the more it’s going to help,” said Kushniruk.

And now the Corps has more of an opportunity to teach workers because more reconstruction projects are being done such as wells, dams, power, schools, and hospitals.

“I think the more we get out and do the small projects with the PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams), it is going to show we’re there to help, not that we’re occupying the country,” said Kushniruk.

While building bases for the Afghan National Army are helpful in providing security and stability, Kushniruk’s ambition was doing more civil projects for the people. When the Corps begins construction on a military base, if they would help the people who live in the surrounding villages with projects like wells, it would serve to help everyone.

“If they see that we’re helping, then they’re going to watch the base and make sure things stay safe. They look out for you,” said Kushniruk.

He has high hopes for Afghanistan.

“I think we’re doing a lot of good. I’ve seen the good that we’ve done in Afghanistan and how appreciative the people are,” he said.



Capt. Craig Kushniruk stands at attention before he is decorated with the Meritorious Service Medal and the Global War On Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. Kushniruk also previously received the Bronze Star Medal for his work in Afghanistan.

Photo by Andrew Stamer

A look inside ...



Roger Triviere, on-site safety coordinator for Lixon, shows Carol Steuart, construction representative, BENELUX Program Office around the inside of the first barracks to be built on Chièvres Air Base, Belgium. These are one-of-a-kind barracks for numerous reasons; the most important is that they were built to meet the standards across the military. To read more about how Europe District is working with customers to accommodate their needs, see “Shaping Chièvres” on page 4 and “Building Spang” on page 14.