

Photo by First Lieutenant Kenya Virginia Saenz



# International Engineers Work Together in Afghanistan

By First Lieutenant Kenya Virginia Saenz

**A**fgans and multinational forces are working hand-in-hand on a variety of expansion construction projects for Forward Operating Base Sharana in Afghanistan. Soldiers from Task Force Pacemaker, Headquarters Support Company, are not only engaged in supporting the 864th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy) but also manage the missions of the multinational forces. Soldiers from the

864th; the 1st Construction Company, Korean Engineering Group; and the Polish 1st Engineer Brigade are teaming to construct metal building systems (K-Span buildings), roads, ditches, culverts, and sewage lagoons.

The Polish engineers provide additional leadership and manpower to multiple horizontal construction projects and are improving the roads by ensuring that proper drainage and

sewage structures are constructed before the rainy season begins. Although they didn't know what to expect or what missions they would perform, their leaders stated that working with multinational forces has been a great experience. According to their commander, he learned different training techniques from the American Soldiers, compared them to their own techniques, then used the technique that worked best to accomplish the mission. The Polish army has been deployed in places such as Lebanon, Syria, and Africa to support many humanitarian missions since the War on Terror began in 2001.

The Korean engineers focus on K-Span construction. They are especially meticulous

**A Polish engineer completes the final touches on a culvert as a scoop loader hauls away the rest of the dirt.**

Photo by First Lieutenant Kenya Virginia Saenz



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**A Korean engineer welds a K-Span building that will support the expansion of the forward operating base.**

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**Polish soldiers work on a culvert that will prevent flooding during the next rainy season.**

and brought a vertical construction capability that the task force does not have. Once completed, the K-Span buildings will enhance maintenance operations and provide more space for supply support activity. Even though K-Span buildings are not common in Korea, the soldiers had been trained by civil engineers in their country. Their main goal was to bring proper engineering assets for future coalition forces. Even with the challenges of the language gap and different working systems, the construction progress and the relationship with multinational forces is going well.

The addition of Polish and Korean engineers, along with Afghan contractors, gave the task force a tremendous capability that it normally would not have—engineers of four nationalities working together toward a common goal. In addition, common understanding and respect for safe operations kept them accident-free despite the communication difficulties.



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