



Defence Construction Canada
Construction de Défense Canada

DEFENCE CONSTRUCTION CANADA

TRIBUTE

IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF CANADA'S MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN



NATIONAL DAY OF HONOUR — MAY 9, 2014



PAYING TRIBUTE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As DCC joins the Government of Canada in recognizing Canada's mission in Afghanistan, I am very proud to acknowledge the significant contributions made by DCC employees to this mission. It was both an honour and a privilege for DCC to be able to provide infrastructure and development support in Afghanistan for the Canadian Armed Forces, and to support the mission's ultimate aim to help the Afghan people.

Our employees in Kabul and Kandahar worked under incredibly challenging conditions: long hours in an active combat zone, located in a remote, harsh environment, far from family and friends, and with a construction industry unfamiliar with our normal standards.

We sought to perform our role to Canadian standards, embracing the concepts of fairness, openness, transparency and competitive process while optimizing our operations to benefit the mission. Achieving this required ingenuity and initiative from our staff in Afghanistan, ably supported by the teams that regularly deployed for technical assistance, and by DCC employees here in Canada working to support them in real-time, many time zones away.

Both in Canada and in my visit to Afghanistan, I saw first-hand your dedication to delivering the best possible solutions for our Client-Partners, every time and on time, despite the challenges. I also saw the profound respect you have for those we support, and the respect they in turn have for you, and for DCC.

To all of our staff, thank you for everything you do to support our Client-Partners. To those who participated in and supported the mission in Afghanistan, you and your families have our deepest gratitude for your service and for the personal sacrifices you made.

Jim Paul
President and CEO

INTRODUCTION

DCC is proud to recognize May 9, 2014 as a National Day of Honour commemorating Canada's mission in Afghanistan. As we honour the service and sacrifice of our Client-Partners — the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces — we are proud to support them whenever called upon, at home and abroad.

At DND's request, DCC deployed to Afghanistan to help sustain the military engineering mission. Beginning in 2003 in Kabul, DCC provided contract management support to rebuild an infrastructure shattered by decades of war. In 2006, DCC began deploying to Kandahar in roles that included program, project and contract management.

Today, we are recognizing the 63 DCC employees who deployed to Afghanistan for their outstanding service. DCC is also proud to recognize the nine managers who travelled in theatre to support and inspect operations, and all staff at Head Office, Regional Offices, Site Offices and Military Operations Support who supported our teams.

This publication draws from interviews conducted with a few of these employees, as we preserve and honour their experiences, and pay tribute to their hard work and dedication.



“I do feel I made a difference”

Keith Dyer



KEITH DYER

After four deployments to Afghanistan, including Camp Julien in Kabul and Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar, retired DCCer Keith Dyer still remembers his first impression of Kabul in 2003. “When you see a city probably the size of Toronto, and there’s no power, no running water, no sanitary lines or anything like that, (and) this is how people have to live . . .” He quickly got to work managing quality assurance and then supporting projects for the Civil-Military Cooperation team—including repairing a school that had also been a Russian dormitory. “Any building over there that was damaged was gutted . . . it was totally stripped of wiring and piping and doors and wood,” he says. The 10,000 square-foot school was refinished inside and out and outfitted with new washrooms and a sanitary supply system, allowing children, including girls, to walk from local villages to attend classes in shifts. “I do feel I made a difference,” Dyer says. “Everything I did over there I looked to with a positive attitude, and that’s why I’ve gone back as often as I have. They’re good people.”

STEVE IRWIN

After working with DCC during a 36-year military engineering career, retiring at the rank of Brigadier General, Steve Irwin knew what the company was capable of achieving when the Afghanistan mission moved from Kabul to Kandahar in 2006. “Our concept was to provide a DCC office in Kandahar that would provide the full spectrum of services in the way we would do it in Canada,” says DCC’s now-retired Vice-President, Operations, who made numerous visits to Afghanistan, first in a military role and subsequently on DCC management trips. He calls the result of DCC’s efforts in the country profound. “It’s brought DCC and DND a lot closer together. The operational folks at DND recognize the capabilities that DCC has. We’re now in their doctrine and how they would organize themselves to meet operational requirements, so it really has supported the relationship.” DCC has a responsibility to support our Client-Partners wherever they are, Irwin says, as long as the threat allows us to go. “Fortunately, we have a group of people here who are very supportive of that. The culture we have in this organization is very operationally oriented, very supportive, very collegial and collaborative.”



MARCY BURTON

When Marcy Burton began six months as Site Manager at Kandahar’s Camp Nathan Smith in November 2007, she was already interested in international development. What she found was a relevance beyond expectations. “There, every single thing you do has an impact on someone out in the middle of Afghanistan,” says the RSL, Construction Services. Working with the Provincial Reconstruction Team meant supporting projects such as accommodation, office and supply facilities in camp, and community centres, gathering places and wells in Afghan communities. “You didn’t stop work at 5 p.m. If something needed to be done, you were there all night, it didn’t matter,” she recalls. “Everyone there was working as part of a team. It was overwhelming to me and amazing because it was just such an integrated approach to service delivery . . . it didn’t matter that we were there in civilian clothes, we were just part of the team. It’s an incredible compliment that the Canadian Armed Forces wants us there to assist them. To be able to actually be in theatre with them, I think makes our relationship that much stronger.”



LARRY CLINTON

Between soup-like mud in winter and heat too strong for daylight concrete pours in summer, weather proved one of Larry Clinton's biggest challenges in Afghanistan. The Coordinator, Professional Services Contracts deployed to Kandahar Airport for six months in November 2008 as a construction contract coordinator, managing the process to build a helicopter ramp for the Griffon and Chinook helicopters. The \$6-million project began as 53,000-m² of 30-cm deep concrete (the area was later expanded by a third), and the timeline was high pressure. "They ended up with a mini air wing," Clinton says, with operating areas for aircraft, maintenance staff and everything required to keep the aircraft in the air. Major technical issues included the need for a subgrade structure that could carry the concrete's weight even in the rainy winter, and a raw material supply via transport trucks vulnerable to attack enroute through the Khyber Pass. Contractors taking products out to the forward operating bases were also vulnerable to IEDs. "We take that back with us," he says, remembering the local and international contractors who were killed or injured on the mission. "Those things do dance across your mind eventually."



JANETTE BRODEUR

For Janette Brodeur, Site Manager, it's the Afghan workers who stand out as special memories from the six months she spent managing projects at Camp Nathan Smith in 2008–09. Local contractors worked on projects such as upgrading observation towers, building an ablutions facility and assembling ISO (prefabricated) complexes that included a church, post office and accommodations — but they often weren't used to standard Canadian practices such as safety measures. "You had to ensure there was safety on the site, but you had to use your common sense as well," she recalls. "There was a lot of showing and mentoring, but the thing that made the whole trip (was the owner of the contracting company) who sent me an e-mail thanking me for my small part in trying to help his country. That for me was very emotional. Even now I sometimes think about the contractors and wonder where they're at and what their lives are like. It certainly made it really clear how fortunate I am to have been born and raised in North America. I'm so grateful for what I have and the people in my life."



KEVIN NELSON

Civil engineer Kevin Nelson was interested in a challenge when he joined DCC, and working overseas was something he'd always wanted to do. "I just wanted to do my two cents to help Canada's efforts in Afghanistan, to feel I could contribute a little bit," says the Technical Specialist, Real Property Management. His six months in 2009 as a Contract Coordinator at Kandahar Airfield included managing a project to build a new Weapons Clearance Base – a U-shaped sandbag structure, four metres square and three metres high, where soldiers returning from missions would clear (unload and test fire) their weapons to ensure they couldn't accidentally be fired on the base. "Even though I worked with the military here, it's very different to work on an active base in a war zone. Everyone is carrying a weapon, there are missions in and out of the base every day, so these structures were used daily," Nelson says. "And they're important, because in the old ones you could see impacts from bullets."



SHAWN HELMERSON

As the Site Manager at Kandahar Airfield between June and December 2009, Shawn Helmersen—now Technical Specialist, Program Management—oversaw projects ranging from airfield construction for helicopters to building accommodation, office and warehouse space. Heat and sand were daily challenges, as were lengthy delays for local workers and supplies to get onto the base. "There would be trucks lined up for hours to get through the screening just to bring in a load of gravel," he recalls. The operational imperative to move quickly and find solutions that worked on site, however, made it all worthwhile. "Everything that we did there had an impact, and hopefully a very positive impact, on the lives of the Afghan population," he says. "Even though I was managing a group of people who were building concrete pads and accommodations for soldiers, because we were doing that, the Canadian Forces soldiers were able to go out and do what they could do for the population, so we were a part of that."



BRIGITTE TRAU

Administrative Assistant Brigitte Trau approached supporting the DCC office at Kandahar Airfield as an opportunity to work side-by-side with DND, to serve her country, and to help the women of Afghanistan. Her deployment, between May and November 2009, proved to be all three. As the Administrative Support Officer, she handled both an administration and a contracting support role; but as a volunteer, she helped support a sewing project for Afghan widows who sold garments to provide for their families. “To be a part of that as well, to support the women, was very important to me,” she says. When it came to working seven days a week, Trau says it helped to have a routine. “The most special part of that was working as a team. Every Sunday we’d go out and call it a family dinner — we’d go to one of the messes as a group. We’d often go for lunch together, too . . . that really helped build the team and helped us support each other when that was needed.”



SHAWN BINDON

In addition to serving in Afghanistan, Manager of Major Programs Shawn Bindon regularly travelled to Afghanistan for two to three weeks at a time for DCC, to support employees on the ground and to better understand and help resolve issues. “Our mandate under the *Defence Production Act* is to deliver defence projects and there’s no geographic limitation on that,” says Bindon, who is a Colonel in the Reserve Force. “The biggest learning for us was how you deliver on this mandate in a high-paced environment like Afghanistan where the impact of failing to deliver in a very timely manner, or to use the right people, can have significant operational impacts on the Canadian troops and civilians that are working over there.” With DCC involved in the awarding of hundreds of contracts — from supplying electrical components to managing helicopter ramp construction — Bindon says he was consistently impressed with the ability of DCC employees to deliver projects under trying conditions, thinking on their feet, while still employing Canadian best practices and principles. “This is the ultimate delivery of defence projects . . . (you) truly see the impact of your ability to deliver.”



“This is the ultimate delivery of defence projects”

Shawn Bindon



Top: Keith Dyer in front of a new observation post being constructed by a local Afghan firm.

Left: Derek Fraser receives his General Service Medal from CAF personnel.

Centre: Janette Brodeur shares a playful moment with the daughter of an Afghan National Army member.

Right: Steve Irwin and Jim Paul with the contractor (centre) at the Kandahar Airfield runway project.



Top: Retired DCC President Ross Nicholls and Keith Dyer on a staircase up the side of a mountain in Kabul.

Left: President James Paul (centre) with staff outside of their DCC site office in Kandahar. Jim presented employees with red shirts in support of the men and women who serve our country.

Right: Gregory Sheppard with a group of local Afghan workers.

2003–2011

In recognition of outstanding service in support of the Canadian Forces mission:

AFGHANISTAN

The DCC employees who served in Afghanistan:

Allie, Richard	Elliott, Judith	Kaus, Ben	Seiler, Kristoffer
Bachelder, Ron	Ernst, Frederick	Leavitt, Paul	Sheppard, Gregory
Bourgault, Christian	Fraser, Derek	Leslie, Vanessa	Sirois, André
Brodeur, Janette	Gardner, Tania	MacArthur, Daniel	Summers, Tim
Brulé, Mario	Garieri, Peter	McAuley, Michelle	Tanguay, Stéphanie
Burke, James	Gesner, Gary	McDermott, Valerie	Thibault, Kimberly
Burton, Marcy	Guelpa, Susan	Miller, Elia	Tourville, Ray
Clinton, Larry	Gultekin, Ruth	Munroe, Dan	Trau, Brigitte
Cook, Bruce	Hall, Scott	Nauss, Todd	Turner, Douglas
Dafoe, Stewart	Hand, James George	Nelson, Kevin	Vaillancourt, Réjean
Denault, Steven	Harvey, David	Nolet, Richard	Wallace, Perry
Deong, Wanda	Helmerson, Shawn	O'Donnell, Patricia	Wharrie, David
Drake, Michael	Heslinga, Dan	Palmer, Michael	Wilson, Kiel
Dyer, Keith	Hofman, Michael	Philipsen, Hans-Georg	Winsor, Marian
Dzepak, Christopher	Jarman, Mark	Rohde, Harry	Yeung, Tommy
Eid, Amanda	Jones, Chuck	Schneider, Alain	

The DCC managers who went to theatre to support and inspect the deployed personnel:

Bindon, Shawn	Irwin, Steven	Mould, Kerry
Blasko, John	McCuaig, David	Nicholls, Ross
de Vries, Ronald	McGee, Randy	Paul, James

The DCC staffers in Head Office, the Regional Offices, the Site Offices and Military Operations Support, who played an essential role in supporting our team in theatre.



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