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Wood River Corps of Engineers man is Afghanistan Bound

St. Louis, Mo. - May 14, 2009 – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Contracting Specialist Frank Johnson is en route to a six-month voluntary assignment in Afghanistan. The 43-year-old man will serve the Corps of Engineers District Headquarters contracting office in the Afghan capital of Kabul, performing contract administration duties in support of U.S. and international efforts to establish a secure and stable environment in Afghanistan.

Johnson describes himself as duffel bag baby, who grew up as an Army brat. He is also an Army veteran himself, having served nearly 15 years. When asked why he is going to Afghanistan, Johnson said, “My Dad is a retired Army noncommissioned officer. I served in the Army. I guess I just feel a deep sense of responsibility.” No stranger to overseas life – he has lived in Germany and served in Korea and Europe, this will be his first venture to Afghanistan.

Johnson came to work with the St. Louis Engineer District 10 months ago. Before that he worked in the Office of the Base Director of Contracting at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. He has also worked in private business, locating parts for aging Army equipment.

Illustrative of his world wide travels, Frank Johnson graduated from Zwiebrucken American High School in Germany while his father served there. After earning an associates degree from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, he completed his bachelors degree from Keller-Devry University in business & accounting. He just recently completed a master’s degree in Acquisition and Government Contracting with American Graduate University.

Frank resides in Wood River, Ill., with his wife, Renee, who is a nurse specializing in diabetic care. Three children round out his family: Kayla, 18 and freshman at Lewis & Clark College; son Trevor, 17 and daughter Katie, 15, both in high school. His father, Wilbur Johnson also resides in Wood River.

While work and family fill most of his time, Johnson relaxes by playing golf. “I’m not too sure about the terrain of Kabul, but conventional wisdom is that I should be able to improve my sand wedge there,” he said laughing.

Johnson will start his journey this weekend, flying first to the Corps’ Transatlantic Center in Winchester, Virginia for equipment issue and processing for his trip some nine time zones to the east. While he will miss Thanksgiving with his family this year, “I plan to be home for Christmas,” he said.

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Caption: Frank Johnson, of Wood River is seen here in front of a display in the downtown St. Louis office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that shows many places he has lived and served before

coming to work in the St. Louis Engineer District, as well as the location of his forthcoming deployment, Afghanistan. *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Alan Dooley*