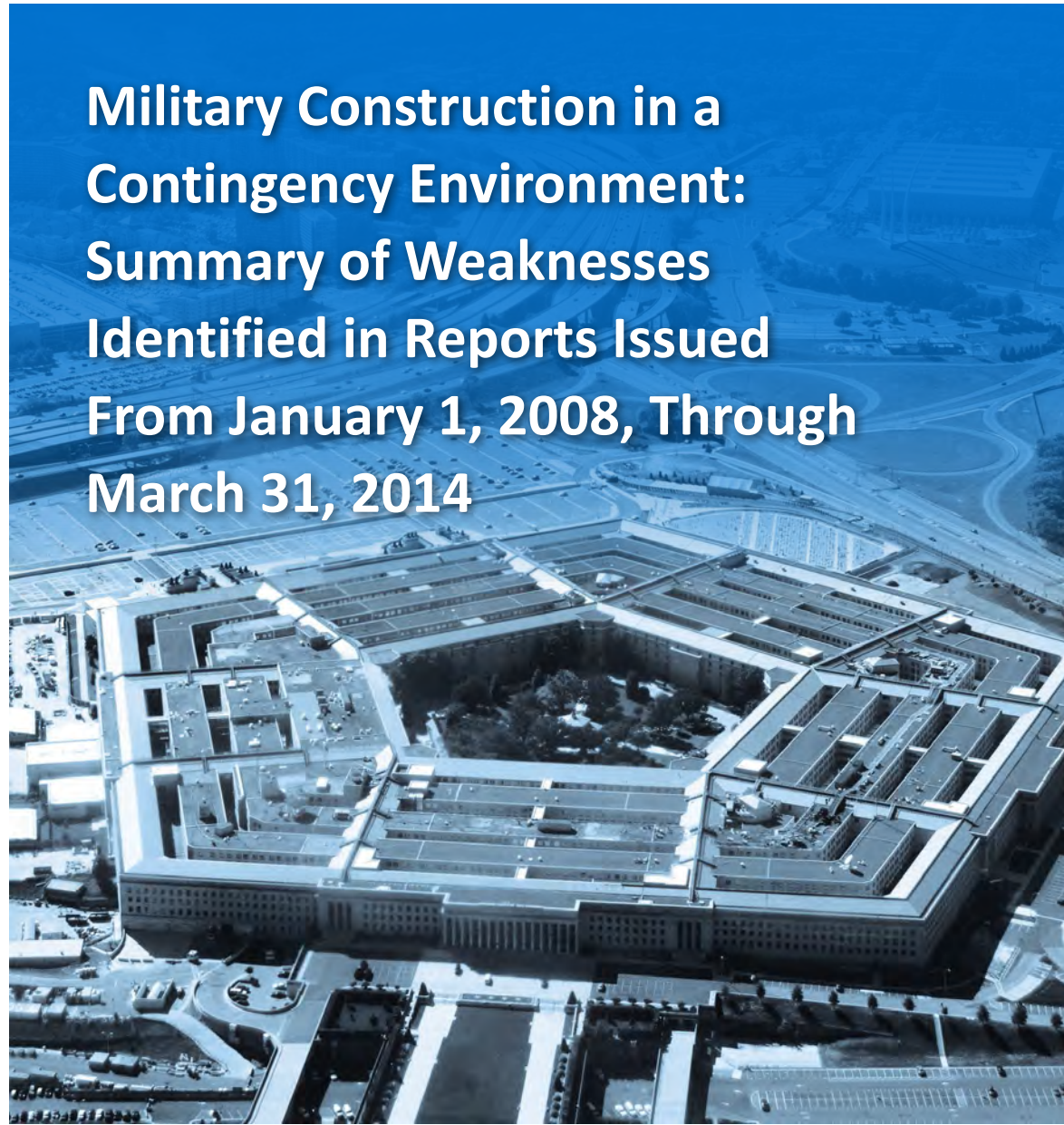




# INSPECTOR GENERAL

*U.S. Department of Defense*

JANUARY 9, 2015



## **Military Construction in a Contingency Environment: Summary of Weaknesses Identified in Reports Issued From January 1, 2008, Through March 31, 2014**

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# Results in Brief

## *Military Construction in a Contingency Environment: Summary of Weaknesses Identified in Reports Issued From January 1, 2008, Through March 31, 2014*

January 9, 2015

### What We Did

We summarized reports issued by the DoD Office of Inspector General and Air Force Audit Agency between January 1, 2008, and March 31, 2014, that contained findings on military construction projects in Afghanistan and Iraq. This summary report provides DoD decision makers and military construction managers with information on recurring weaknesses in military construction in a contingency environment.

### What We Found

The DoD Office of Inspector General and Air Force Audit Agency issued 11 reports that identified weaknesses with contingency construction contracts in Afghanistan and Iraq valued at about \$738 million. The weaknesses include inadequate quality assurance and contract oversight, inadequate requirements, acceptance of substandard construction, unclear guidance, lack of coordination between commands, lack of contract files, and funding approval process. Overall, quality assurance weaknesses were cited 15 times in 7 reports and contributed to an increased risk to personnel life and safety on the facilities. The quality assurance weaknesses included insufficient contract oversight and lack of quality assurance documents and procedures. The other weaknesses contributed to additional work to bring newly constructed facilities up to standard.

The recurring weaknesses indicate that there is an opportunity to apply lessons learned from military construction projects and minimize their recurrence in future contingency environments.

### What Was Recommended

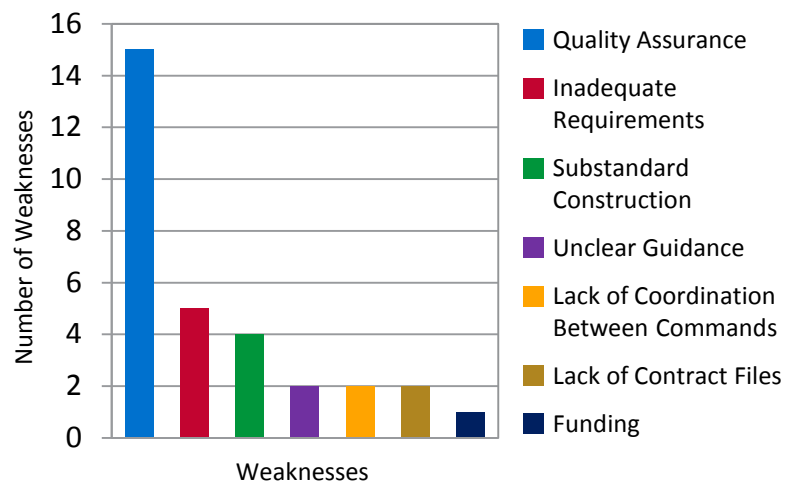
The reports had 77 recommendations, many of them to correct deficiencies and strengthen controls over future military construction within a contingency environment. Overall, the recommendations describe efforts to improve contingency construction, from developing the construction requirements to overseeing the contracts. As of November 20, 2014, DoD officials, resolved 70 of the recommendations, and 7 remained open.

Of the 77 recommendations, 42 addressed quality assurance weaknesses. Some of the recommendations made to address the quality assurance weaknesses were to:

- develop a quality assurance plan at project inception and update the plan as needed,
- provide continuous oversight and perform acceptance testing, and
- assess life and safety hazards identified at military construction projects and determine appropriate actions to correct deficiencies.

In this summary report, we identified recommendations from previous reports. Therefore, this report does not contain recommendations.

*Figure 1. Military Construction Weaknesses Reported by DoD From January 1, 2008, Through March 31, 2014*





**INSPECTOR GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500**

January 9, 2015

**MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION**

**SUBJECT: Military Construction in a Contingency Environment: Summary of Weaknesses  
Identified in Reports Issued From January 1, 2008, Through March 31, 2014  
(Report No. DODIG-2015-059)**

We are providing this report for information and use. This report relates to the overseas contingency operation, Operation Inherent Resolve, and was completed in accordance with the OIG's oversight responsibilities, as described in Section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. The report compiles quality assurance and other weaknesses identified in 11 Afghanistan and Iraq military construction reports issued by the DoD Office of Inspector General and the Air Force Audit Agency. DoD contractors, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Air Force Civil Engineering Services personnel, and military construction planners responsible for military construction in a contingency environment should read this report to be aware of challenges and opportunities for improvement.

This report contains no recommendations for action; however, it identifies previously issued audit reports that contain open recommendations. We did not issue a draft report, and no written response is required.

We appreciate the courtesies extended to the staff. Please direct questions to me at (703) 699-7331 (DSN 499-7331).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carol N. Gorman", is positioned above the typed name.

Carol N. Gorman  
Assistant Inspector General  
Readiness and Cyber Operations

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# Introduction

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## Objective

The overall objective was to summarize systemic problems specific to military construction (MILCON) in Afghanistan and Iraq identified in audit reports issued by the DoD Office of Inspector General (DoD OIG), Army Audit Agency,<sup>1</sup> and Air Force Audit Agency (AFAA). See Appendix A for a discussion of the scope and methodology, and Appendix B for a list of the 11 reports summarized.

## Background

In overseas contingency operations, MILCON is a key component in support of the warfighter and mission operations. Contingency MILCON includes any construction, development, conversion, or extension carried out to meet a temporary military installation requirement when troops are outside of the United States. Construction projects are usually justified and funded through the multi-year budget process. However, contingency operations create the need to accelerate the MILCON process, and projects can begin as early as 7 days after Congress is notified of the proposed project. The contingency construction authority is a funding option for construction projects in contingency environments. Public Law 108-136, “The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004,” Section 2808, “Temporary, Limited, Authority to Use Operation and Maintenance Funds for Construction Projects Outside the United States,” November 24, 2003, initially established the contingency construction authority and provided authorization to use operation and maintenance funds for construction projects outside of the United States. Since FY 2004, Section 2808 has been extended and modified each year to include the FY 2014 National Defense Authorizations Act.

Contingency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq required MILCON projects such as taxiways, air passenger terminals, offices, barracks, dining facilities, and recreation facilities. Figure 2 displays the construction of a concrete apron and taxiway at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

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<sup>1</sup> Army Audit Agency did not issue any reports that met the scope of this project.



Figure 2. Construction of a Taxiway at Kandahar Airfield.

### ***Army and Air Force Contingency Construction Support***

DoD Directive 4270.5, "Military Construction," February 12, 2005, establishes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as the design and construction agent for the Army and Air Force and as the construction agent for military facilities in Afghanistan and Iraq. As the construction agent, USACE provides design, construction execution, and related engineering services to U.S. Central Command and other activities within the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Although not designated in DoD Directive 4270.5, the Air Force Civil Engineering Center, Strategic Design and Construction Division, also provides design, execution, and management for new vertical construction for Air Force requirements in contingency settings.



## Results

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### DoD Reports Consistently Identified Quality Assurance Weaknesses

The DoD OIG and AFAA issued 11 reports that identified weaknesses with contingency construction contracts in Afghanistan and Iraq valued at about \$738 million. The most prevalent weaknesses related to quality assurance (QA) and contract oversight and were cited 15 times in 7 reports. Causes for the QA weaknesses included reliance on contractors' technical expertise to manage MILCON projects, lack of QA documentation, inadequate Government resources, and not holding contractors accountable for unsatisfactory performance. The absence of adequate QA and oversight contributed to an increased risk to personnel life and safety from inoperable fire suppression systems and electrical problems.

The other weaknesses included inadequate requirements, acceptance of substandard construction, unclear guidance, lack of coordination between commands, lack of contract documentation, and funding approval process. Generally, the other weaknesses resulted in additional work performed to bring newly constructed facilities up to standards. The recurring weaknesses indicate that there is an opportunity to apply lessons learned from MILCON projects and minimize their reoccurrence in future contingency environments. See Table 1 for the matrix of MILCON weaknesses identified in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The reports contained 77 recommendations, many of them addressing the need to develop or update QA plans, provide continuous oversight, perform acceptance testing, and assess life and safety hazards. Overall, the recommendations describe efforts to improve contingency construction, from developing the construction requirements to overseeing the contracts. As of November 20, 2014, DoD has taken corrective action in response to 70 of the 77 recommendations.

Table 1. Matrix of MILCON Weaknesses in Iraq and Afghanistan

Weaknesses Identified		DoD OIG Reports									AFAA Reports	
		D-2008-119	D-2010-083	DODIG-2012-057	DODIG-2012-089	DODIG-2013-024	DODIG-2013-052	DODIG-2013-099	DODIG-2013-137	DODIG-2014-010	F2009-0007-FD1000	F2011-0014-FD1000
Quality Assurance	Lack of Accountability for Contractors								X			
	Lack of/Unapproved QASP, QA Plans, or COR Letters*	X				X	X			X		
	No requirement to Submit QA Plans	X										
	Lack of Qualified Oversight Personnel	X				X		X				
	Lack of Adequate Oversight				X	X	X	X	X	X		
Inadequate Requirements		X	X	X				X			X	
Acceptance of Substandard Construction		X			X		X		X			
Unclear Guidance				X							X	
Lack of Coordination Between Commands			X						X			
Lack of Contract Files		X		X								
Funding											X	

\* QASP (Quality Assurance Surveillance Plans), COR (Contracting Officer's Representative)

Note: F2011-0014-FD1000 was a good news report and did not identify weaknesses.

## QA in a Contingency Environment

QA is important in a contingency environment because operational and functional demands are greater and more complex than those in a peacetime environment. Ensuring the successful execution of a QA program is essential for contingency MILCON. Personnel assigned to perform QA need to effectively manage and document their execution of QA to ensure the Federal Government receives the best value for the warfighter. A comprehensive and consistent QA program is vital to:

- ensuring contractors are providing timely, high-quality services and supplies;
- mitigating contractor performance problems; and
- providing rotational QA personnel with the information necessary to properly administer and monitor projects.

Adequate QA in construction projects can also help to decrease safety and security risks to DoD personnel. In addition, relying on the technical expertise of contractors without a process to monitor, assess, and document the quality of their work is not an effective way to ensure work is performed in accordance with applicable contract requirements. Proper execution of contracting officers' responsibilities, such as verifying and inspecting contractor performance, is essential to validate contractors' compliance with requirements and ensures DoD receives the intended benefit.

### ***Quality Assurance Requirements***

Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 46, "Quality Assurance," contains policies and procedures to ensure services acquired under government contract conform to the contract's quality and quantity requirements. QA includes the various functions performed by the Government to determine whether a contractor has fulfilled the contract obligations related to quality and quantity. Agencies are required to ensure contracts include inspection and other quality requirements when appropriate to protect the Government's interests. In addition, surveillance plans should be prepared in conjunction with the statement of work. The plan should state all work required and the method of surveillance.

### **Systemic QA Weaknesses in Contingency MILCON**

The DoD OIG and AFAA issued 11 reports that identified weaknesses with contingency construction contracts in Afghanistan and Iraq valued at about \$738 million. The most prevalent weaknesses related to QA and contract oversight and were cited 15 times in 7 reports. Causes for the QA weaknesses included reliance on contractors' technical expertise to manage MILCON projects, lack of QA documentation, inadequate Government resources, and not holding contractors accountable for unsatisfactory performance. The absence of adequate QA and oversight contributed to an increased risk to personnel life and safety from inoperable fire suppression systems and electrical problems.

### ***Insufficient Contract Oversight***

Report No. DODIG-2013-052 concluded that Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment (AFCEE) officials did not develop a formal process to monitor, assess, and document the quality of the contractors' work on four MILCON projects valued at \$36.9 million. Specifically, AFCEE officials relied on contractor technical expertise to collect data on construction requirements, develop the statement of requirements, implement the QA plan, and manage the MILCON projects. In addition, AFCEE officials stated that a QA surveillance plan was not required for the type of service.

As a result, AFCEE's process for developing and reviewing contract requirements design was not sufficient to prevent conflicting electrical standards in the MILCON statements of work and requirements used during construction. In addition, contractor personnel did not identify significant deficiencies that led to increased hazards to the life and safety of coalition forces who occupied the facilities. Furthermore, the deficiencies contributed to a 6-month delay in Government acceptance of one facility.

In another example, Report No. DODIG-2013-099 discussed compliance with the National Electrical Code, Unified Facilities Criteria, and National Fire Protection Association standards at Kandahar and Bagram Airfields. The report noted 1,089 findings that affected the life, health, and safety of personnel. Of these 1,089 findings, 71 were critical findings that represented an immediate danger to personnel and required immediate corrective action. Specifically, unprotected wires were used throughout living quarters, and live power cables were placed directly on a rooftop. These deficiencies occurred because Kandahar and Bagram Airfields did not have adequate Government resources to conduct oversight or inspections of facilities to ensure requirements were met.

Additionally, Report No. DODIG-2013-137 identified two facilities that were not fully used due to construction deficiencies, and that DoD officials were constructing facilities that the Regional Support Group at Kandahar Airfield was not able to effectively sustain. This report further identified that in the event of a fire, the suppression systems in 21 facilities could not adequately subdue the fire, putting the life and safety of the occupants in jeopardy. These conditions occurred because the USACE, Transatlantic Division, did not hold the construction contractors accountable for unsatisfactory performance.

### ***Lack of Quality Assurance Plans and Other QA Documents***

DoD OIG Report No. D-2008-119 discussed Regional Contracting Command (RCC) Bagram's lack of compliance with QA requirements and emphasized the need of doing so. RCC Bagram contracting officials accepted construction projects at Bagram Air Field that required extensive rework by the contractor to be useable by U.S. troops. This occurred because RCC Bagram did not adhere to the Federal Acquisition Regulation guidance on contract documentation and quality oversight requirements. Specifically, of the 42 construction contract actions selected for review, 40 contract files did not contain quality assurance surveillance plans, contractor quality control plans, or contracting officer's representative designation letters; and the other two contract files could not be located by RCC Bagram.

As a result, the U.S. Government incurred costs of least \$3.4 million to perform additional work on newly constructed, refurbished, and remodeled buildings in Afghanistan. Furthermore, U.S. military units and organizations experienced delays in receiving fully usable facilities throughout Afghanistan.

## ***QA Procedures Not Fully Implemented***

Report No. DODIG-2014-010 discussed USACE execution of QA responsibilities for two Special Operations Forces MILCON projects at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, and highlighted the importance of a fully implemented QA process. Area engineers did not ensure QA procedures were fully implemented, and resident engineers did not fully execute QA responsibilities. Specifically, when the projects were initiated, project engineers approved incomplete quality control plans and did not prepare QA plans, and subsequently did not maintain QA documentation.

This occurred because QA officials did not always have critical QA documents available before their arrival. Furthermore, although QA officials could not explain why QA requirements were not fully executed from the projects' start, the area engineer stated that documenting the QA process was secondary and that completing the Special Operations Forces MILCON projects was the top priority. This resulted in an increased risk that the projects would not meet contract requirements.

## **Other Weaknesses in Contingency MILCON**

DoD MILCON reports also discussed weaknesses such as inadequate requirements, acceptance of substandard construction, unclear guidance, lack of coordination between commands, lack of contract files, and funding approval process. Although each of these weaknesses was identified in five reports or less, the weaknesses are important to note for minimal recurrence in future contingency environments. These weaknesses resulted in additional work performed to bring newly constructed facilities up to standards.

### ***Inadequate Requirements***

DoD OIG Report No. D-2008-119 addressed inadequate MILCON requirements. Specifically, the report states that RCC Bagram awarded construction contracts with poorly written statements of work. The statements of work often lacked specific requirements and did not clearly define the acceptable standards for construction projects. Joint Contracting Command-Iraq/Afghanistan personnel noted that this occurred because of a lack of subject matter experts to consult with during the procurement phase. This weakness contributed to poor building quality on projects accepted by the U.S. Government.

### ***Substandard Construction***

Report No. DODIG-2012-089 discussed substandard construction in Afghanistan. USACE Afghanistan Engineer District-North officials accepted the detention facility in Parwan, Afghanistan, from the contractor with major deficiencies. The contractor used materials in the major infrastructure systems that did not conform to the contract specifications. This occurred because USACE officials did not adequately oversee the construction of the detention facility and did not comply

with their internal policies on oversight of the contractors' warranty. This resulted in poor cell door construction, an inoperable sewage system, electrical systems built to British standards, and a weak fire-suppression system. The deficiencies increased safety and security risks to DoD personnel and detainees.

### ***Unclear Guidance and Lack of Contract Documentation***

Report No. DODIG-2012-057 stated that USACE and AFCEE did not construct facilities in accordance with congressional request for authorization forms because the scope of work variations permissible by section 2853, title 10, United States Code<sup>2</sup> (10 U.S.C. § 2853 [2010]) are unclear and inconsistently applied. In addition, the report noted that AFCEE officials did not maintain a complete and accurate copy of the contract, as required by the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation, subpart 204.8, "Contract Files."<sup>3</sup>

## **DoD's Progress In Implementing Recommendations**

DoD OIG and AFAA reports contained 77 recommendations; DoD successfully addressed 70 of these recommendations. However, 7 recommendations remain unresolved as of November 20, 2014, and 5 are over 2 years old. Given the nature of a contingency environment, it is important to take corrective action as quickly as possible. Table 2 shows the status of the 77 recommendations by report.

*Table 2. Status of MILCON-Related Recommendations*

Report Number	Report Date	Status of Recommendations		
		Open	Closed	Total
D-2008-119	9/29/2008	-	7	7
F2009-0007-FD1000	8/3/2009	-	8	8
D-2010-083	9/30/2010	-	6	6
F2011-0014-FD1000*	4/12/2011	-	-	-
DODIG-2012-057	2/27/2012	5	5	10
DODIG-2012-089	5/17/2012	-	7	7
DODIG-2013-024	11/26/2012	-	6	6
DODIG-2013-052	3/8/2013	-	3	3
DODIG-2013-099	7/18/2013	2	9	11
DODIG-2013-137	9/30/2013	-	12	12
DODIG-2014-010	11/22/2013	-	7	7
<b>Totals</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>77</b>

\*F2011-00014-FD1000 did not contain any recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> Section 2853, title 10, United States Code states that MILCON projects' scope may not be reduced or increased by more than 25 percent from the justification data provided to Congress.

<sup>3</sup> Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation, subpart 204.8 states that official contract files consists of original, authenticated, or conformed copies of contractual instruments.

Of the 77 recommendations, 42 were QA-related and all were closed. These recommendations addressed the need to develop QA plans at project inception, update the QA plans to improve the quality of construction, provide continuous oversight, perform acceptance testing, and assess life and safety hazards. Table 3 shows the reports that had QA-related recommendations and how many were made in each report.

The five open recommendations in Report No. DODIG-2012-057 addressed requirement problems through revising DD Form 1391<sup>4</sup> and performing scope verifications to ensure compliance with 10 U.S.C. § 2853 [2010] and maintaining adequate contract files. The remaining open recommendations in Report No. DODIG-2013-099 discussed the review of contracts to determine if contractual remedies were satisfied.

*Table 3. Status of QA-Related Recommendations by Report*

Report Number	Total QA-Related Recommendations
D-2008-119	6
DODIG-2012-089	7
DODIG-2013-024	6
DODIG-2013-052	3
DODIG-2013-099	4
DODIG-2013-137	9
DODIG-2014-010	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>

Note: Reports F2009-0007-FD1000, F2011-0014-FD1000, D-2010-083, and DODIG-2012-057 included MILCON-related weaknesses but did not have QA-related recommendations.

## DoD Needs to Improve MILCON Projects in Future Contingencies

Over a 6-year period, DoD OIG and AFAA issued 11 reports that addressed MILCON in Afghanistan or Iraq valued at about \$738 million and consistently identified QA weaknesses. The reports also identified weaknesses with inadequate requirements, acceptance of substandard construction, unclear guidance, coordination between commands, lack of contract files, and the funding approval process. The weaknesses indicate that there is an opportunity to apply lessons learned to future contingency MILCON. Those lessons learned would serve as a reference for personnel overseeing and conducting MILCON projects.

<sup>4</sup> The DD Form 1391 is the principal project justification document to express the user's facility needs to request authorization and funds from Congress through the chain of command.

Program and contracting personnel must ensure QA occurs and QA personnel are adequately trained. They must also ensure a well-documented QA surveillance approach is in place. QA surveillance plans and surveillance logs should be measurable and documented to show the quality and quantity of actual surveillance performed. Furthermore, contracting officials should maintain complete and accurate copies of contract files to provide a complete background for decision making and actions taken. Statements of work must include specific requirements and clearly define acceptable standards for MILCON projects.



## Appendix A

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### Scope and Methodology

We conducted this summary work from April 2014 through December 2014. We followed generally accepted government auditing standards, except for the standards of planning and evidence because this report summarizes previously released reports. We believe the information obtained provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on the project objectives.

This report summarizes recurring problems specific to contingency MILCON identified in 11 reports issued from January 1, 2008, through March 31, 2014. To prepare this summary, we reviewed the DoD OIG and Army Audit Agency websites to obtain publicly available reports (AFAA's reports are not available online) and also requested reports discussing MILCON in Afghanistan and Iraq from the Army Audit Agency and AFAA. Our search and requests resulted in nine DoD OIG reports, two AFAA reports, and no reports from the Army Audit Agency.<sup>5</sup> We reviewed the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from these reports. We did not review the supporting documentation for the reports. This summary report does not make recommendations because recommendations were contained in the reports summarized.

To provide context on the recommendations from the summarized reports, we coordinated with DoD OIG and AFAA officials to obtain the status of the recommendations made in each report reviewed. If we were not able to obtain the status, we reviewed the management comments to the recommendations and assessed whether the command took action and whether the auditors agreed with the actions taken.

### Use of Computer-Processed Data

We did not use computer-processed data to compile information for this report.

### Prior Coverage

During the last 5 years, Government Accountability Office, DoD OIG, Army Audit Agency, or AFAA did not issue reports summarizing systemic problems specific to MILCON in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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<sup>5</sup> DoD OIG and AFAA each issued one classified report.

## Appendix B

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### DoD OIG and AFAA Reports On Afghanistan and Iraq MILCON

Unrestricted DoD OIG reports can be accessed at <http://www.dodig.mil/pubs/index.cfm?office=Audit>. AFAA reports are unavailable on the Internet.

#### ***DoD OIG***

Report No. DODIG-2014-010, "U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic District-North Needs to Improve Oversight of Construction Contractors in Afghanistan," November 22, 2013

Report No. DODIG-2013-137, "DoD Is Not Properly Monitoring the Initiation of Maintenance for Facilities at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan," September 30, 2013 (FOUO)

Report No. DODIG-2013-099, "Compliance with Electrical and Fire Protection Standards of U.S. Controlled and Occupied Facilities in Afghanistan," July 18, 2013

Report No. DODIG-2013-052, "Inadequate Contract Oversight of Military Construction Projects in Afghanistan Resulted in Increased Hazards to Life and Safety of Coalition Forces," March 8, 2013

Report No. DODIG-2013-024, "U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Needs to Improve Contract Oversight of Military Construction Projects at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan," November 26, 2012

Report No. DODIG-2012-089, "Better Contract Oversight Could Have Prevented Deficiencies in the Detention Facility in Parwan, Afghanistan," May 17, 2012

Report No. DODIG-2012-057, "Guidance Needed to Prevent Military Construction Projects From Exceeding the Approved Scope of Work," February 27, 2012

Report No. D-2010-083, "Construction of the New Kabul Compound Lacked Planning and Coordination," September 30, 2010 (Classified)

Report No. D-2008-119, "Construction Contracting Procedures Implemented by the Joint Contracting Command-Iraq/Afghanistan," September 29, 2008

**AFAA**

Report No. F2011-0014-FD1000, "United States Air Forces Central Area of Responsibility Construction Planning," April 12, 2011

Report No. F2009-0007-FD1000, "Air Forces Central Area of Responsibility Construction," August 3, 2009 (Classified)

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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- AFAA** Air Force Audit Agency
- AFCEE** Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment
- MILCON** Military Construction
  - QA** Quality Assurance
  - RCC** Regional Contracting Command
- USACE** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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