



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:
July 28, 2011

Contact:
Joan Kibler, (540) 667-5705
joan.f.kibler@usace.army.mil

Partial completion of apron provides additional capability for U.S. Air Force at Shindand

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The partial completion of a strategic airlift apron at Shindand Airbase gives the U.S. Air Force added capability as it supports Afghan Air Force and coalition efforts in western Afghanistan’s Herat province.

Shindand Airbase provides air mobility support for coalition operations, with C-17 aircraft regularly landing on a single runway, and it serves as a training ground for the Afghan Air Force.

“We will start training Afghan pilots here in September,” said Air Force Col. John Hokaj, commander of the U.S. Air Force’s 838th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group based at Shindand.

“As cargo arrives, we don’t want to interrupt training by having to close down the runway,” Hokaj said. “We asked the Corps of Engineers, A7 AFCENT (Installations, U.S. Air Forces Central) and the 838th AEAG to develop a plan for completion of a portion of the strategic airlift apron. This taxiway helps us manage all our missions at Shindand without impacting operations.”

On July 27, representatives of the 838th AEAG and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South ceremoniously opened the first 400 feet of the airlift apron. Hokaj and Air Force Col. Benjamin Wham II, AED-South commander, cut the ribbon to mark the occasion.

Shortly thereafter, a C-17 aircraft parked on the



This C-17 aircraft is the first to use the partially completed strategic airlift apron at Shindand Airbase. (Photo by Joan Kibler)



Members of the 183rd Maintenance Company board the C-17 to redeploy. (Photo By Joan Kibler)

-more-

taxiway to load some 200 members of the 183rd Maintenance Company, who are redeploying. “These personnel are our first outbound passengers to use this new apron,” Hokaj said.

Aircraft Commander Air Force Capt. Caleb Rasmussen, Air Mobility Command, was enthusiastic about the new parking space. “This area allows us to move off the runway while loading and unloading passengers or cargo,” he said. “If we have maintenance problems, the crews can work on the aircraft where it’s parked. All this keeps the runway open.”

The strategic airlift apron has connecting taxiways and shoulders to accommodate the airlift aircraft, pavement markings, utilities and site improvements. The \$18.2 million contract also includes a passenger and cargo terminal. The contract is scheduled to be complete by November.

The strategic airlift apron is one of several U.S. military construction projects aimed at expanding and improving Shindand Airbase, according to Air Force Capt. Gregory J. Ward, officer in charge, AED-South Shindand Resident Office. “This base is on its way to becoming the premier training base for the Afghan Air Force and Afghan Army.”

Shindand Airbase recently expanded to three times its original size, making it the second largest airfield in Afghanistan.

AED-South provides design and construction services throughout southern Afghanistan to support the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. The work is carried out in Regional Commands South, Southwest and West with the goal of achieving counterinsurgency effects and bolstering the Afghan Government’s services to its people.

Please visit <http://www.aed.usace.army.mil/AES/news.asp> for more news and stories from the Afghanistan Engineer District-South.



183rd Maintenance Company Wing members are ready to depart Shindand Airfield. (Photo by Joan Kibler)



From left, Air Force officers Col. Benjamin Wham, Col. John Hokaj and Capt. Gregory Ward. (Photo by Joan Kibler)