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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Corps of Engineers to turn over Phase II of Gamberi Garrison to Afghans

DARUNTA, Afghanistan – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is scheduled to turn over the second major phase of construction of Gamberi Garrison to the Afghanistan National Army on Sunday, Jan. 9. The garrison is massive military installation near Jalalabad in northeastern Afghanistan, close to the Pakistan border.

The Corps of Engineers began the process of transferring ownership of \$41.3 million worth of new construction to Afghan forces on Nov. 15 as individual buildings were completed and passed final inspection. The process is expected to continue through Jan. 15, said Roger Green, a resident engineer in the Jalalabad Area Office of the Corps of Engineers.

The new facilities comprise the second of four major phases for the garrison, which is designed to accommodate as many as 12,000 Afghan soldiers when complete. In addition to Phases I through IV, there are related developments.

Phase II features more than 40 buildings and support facilities. They include barracks for 1,167 soldiers and officers, administration buildings, a helipad, a fire station, a medical clinic, a training center, a warehouse, ammunition storage facilities, a detention facility, toilet and shower buildings, a sports field, roads and more.

Approximately 700 Afghan army soldiers moved into the barracks on Dec. 13 and 14. An additional 700 Afghan soldiers were expected to take up residence as well, said Green, who is overseeing the development. The soldiers brought furniture and equipment into some of the new buildings.

When complete, Gamberi Garrison will be Afghanistan's version of Fort Hood, the largest U.S. Army installation, which is located in Texas, said Col. Thomas Magness, the commander the Corps of Engineers' district in northern Afghanistan.

The garrison is a self-contained mini-city and will be used for several purposes by the Afghan army, which is in the process of taking over the lead role in the fight against insurgents. The installation will serve as a permanent base for regular and commando units, and as a training facility for new recruits. It also will have a regional army hospital.

“The fact that you’ve got ANA here currently occupying parts is the best part of the story because that means they have ownership of it already,” said Col. Mike Wehr, chief of the combined joint engineers at Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.

“Building a military from scratch takes a dedicated location like this with all the resources you bring into it,” Wehr said.

Plans are in place to provide for even more Afghan forces at the installation near the Russian-built Darunta Dam. There are provisions to increase the garrison’s power plant, well system, water storage facilities, roads and other infrastructure systems. “We built Gamberi to accommodate future expansion,” Green said.

DynCorp International Inc., which is based in Falls Church, Va., served as the prime contractor for Phase II. The firm and its subcontractors employed about 700 Afghans and 70 non-Afghans during the peak of construction. The four main phases with prime contractors, completion dates and costs:

Phase I – DynCorp, September 2009, \$51 million.

Phase II – DynCorp, January 2011, \$41.3 million.

Phase III – BYA International, scheduled to be complete in July 2011, \$27 million.

Phase IV – Asian Atlas Construction & Engineering Network, scheduled to be complete in September 2011, \$18 million.

In addition, a training range, at a cost of \$12 million, is slated to be complete in March 2011, while a \$2.3 million building that will be used as an interim headquarters for the Afghan army’s 201st Corps before being converted to other purposes, is set for completion in February 2011.

Overall, approximately 850 Afghans and 95 non-Afghans currently are employed at the various projects around the garrison. The Corps of Engineers uses seven Afghan quality assurance representatives, who are on the site daily.

The Corps of Engineers is the primary organization building army bases, police stations, roads, airstrips and other infrastructure projects in Afghanistan to increase the country’s stability and economy. The Corps of Engineers has two districts in the country – Afghanistan Engineer District-North, which is based in Kabul; and Afghanistan Engineer District-South, which is based in Kandahar.

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