Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum, Army Corps of Engineers officials break ground on new UAS facility

Fort Drum, NY - Fort Drum and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials conducted a ground-breaking ceremony for the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade’s new unmanned aircraft system May 12 at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield.

Col. Jeffery Lucas, Fort Drum garrison commander, said the event marked not just the beginning of a new construction project but the end of a long, collaborative process.

“A major construction project like this only happens after years of strategic planning, environmental studies, funding requests and justifications, structural planning, contract writing, bidding and rewarding,” he said. “It’s a long road to get here, and I’m incredibly proud of the many on the staff in the garrison whose ongoing work empowers readiness here every day in countless ways.”

The 26,000-square-foot facility will be home to a portion of 10th CAB’s Shadow Platoons, and it is designed to enhance the unit’s ability to perform maintenance on its tactical reconnaissance systems. The project also includes an extension to the existing runway.

“Today we mark the beginning of the end of this project, but we celebrate the ongoing effort to sustain this post as one of the most viable training sites in our Army and the very best home of America’s light infantry, the mighty 10th Mountain Division,” Lucas said.

Reinhard Koenig, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regional business director for North Atlantic Division, said that the focus of this project moving forward is to deliver a quality facility on time, within budget and in a safe manner.

“Ultimately, what this is all about is providing a capability to the Soldiers and to the nation, and it is certainly a thrill to be a part of that process,” he said.

During his remarks, Col. Travis McIntosh, 10th CAB commander, said that the new hangar meets all of the criteria of the Army chief of staff’s top three priorities of people, modernization and readiness.

“On behalf of the 3,000 members of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade who call Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield home, and the 11,000 family members of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, we appreciate all of the world-class facilities that we have here to support our mission,” he said. ‘And our mission is to fight and win our nation’s wars, and provide aviation operational support to our ground forces in the United States Army.”

McIntosh said that the new hangar will ensure that UAS operators and maintainers have what they need to maintain mission readiness.

“We require facilities like this to continue year-round capabilities that we can launch, as a power projection platform, for the benefit of the U.S. Army,” he said. “We do that here at Fort Drum because of the facilities you are able to provide.”

The project was announced last September with funding totaling roughly $21.7 million through the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. The contract was awarded to Structural Associates Inc. of East Syracuse, and construction is scheduled to be completed in October 2022.

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Media with inquiries regarding this press release should contact Fort Drum Public Affairs, Katherine Wright, [katherine.e.wright12.civ@mail.mil](mailto:katherine.e.wright12.civ@mail.mil), 315-772-9043.