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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Ground broken on long awaited commissary

Seoul — K-16 Airfield, which sits right outside of the Seoul city limit, has been in use by U.S. Forces Korea for decades but has always been without a commissary.

Soldiers have to commute to U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan for their commissary needs, but this will no longer be the situation about a year from now. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District, broke ground on a new commissary for K-16 March 22.

“Today the soldiers at K-16 spend an average of about three hours round trip to make it to Yongsan to the commissary. That’s if they wait for the bus to pick them up and bring them back here and then only what they can carry in their hands for the trip. That’s certainly not what is needed,” said Brig. Gen. Kelly Thomas, 2nd Infantry Division Assistant Division Commander for Support.

Considering the long commute and that most of the soldiers at K-16 are without their own transportation, many of them have decided to not shop at the commissary. Instead they line up at the local AAFES shoppette.

“I surveyed 30 items at the shoppette here and compared them to the commissary at Yongsan,” said Larry Lyons, Chief, K-16 Airfield Directorate of Public Works. “I was not surprised the commissary’s cost for goods was about 30 percent less than the shoppette.”

The construction of a commissary is on line with the USFK command priority number three; “Improve Quality of Life for the USFK Community.”

The K-16 community has always wanted better access to a commissary. At first, they had hoped that an older building could be renovated into a commissary. FED is giving them more than they hoped for by constructing a new facility from the ground up.

About 200 soldiers, civilians, and family members turned out for the groundbreaking ceremony for the much anticipated commissary that will help save time and money.

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“I go to a lot of groundbreakings and I have never seen so many people at one of these before,” said Col. Blair A. Schantz, Commander of FED. “That really tells me how important this project is to all of you. Thank you for being here.”

The facility, scheduled to be completed April 2012, will be about 8,100 square feet and will have all of the amenities found in any other commissary throughout Korea including cold and freeze storage, electronic checkout area, parking, sidewalks, and canopy. The Defense Commissary Agency also intends to keep it stocked with the same products that would be available at all of the other commissaries.

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PHOTOS:



Representatives from the various organizations who played a part in bringing a commissary to K-16 Airfield prepare to break ground on the new facility March 22. The groundbreaking ceremony was attended by about 200 soldiers and civilians from K-16. Col. Blair A. Schantz (fifth from the right), Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District said he had never seen so many people before at a groundbreaking in Korea.



Brig. Gen. Kelly Thomas, 2nd Infantry Division Assistant Division Commander Support speaks to about 200 soldiers and civilians from K-16 Airfield during the groundbreaking ceremony for a much anticipated commissary March 22. Thomas is very pleased that his soldiers will no longer have to spend three hours to commute to the commissary on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan.

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