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## *Truck stop complex nears completion, with dining, other facilities*

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TALLIL, Iraq—Tucked away in a corner of this spacious former Iraqi air base is an emerging complex that might be considered the Mother of All Truck Stops, replete with a large petroleum reserve facility, a dining facility, a fire station, and space for sleeping quarters.

Work on the \$24.1 million project began last December. Yet as Paul Christianson, project manager for the Corps' prime contractor said, "Few people on base know what we're doing out here."

Tommy Nason, construction representative with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said that "three-fourths of the project has been turned over already, ahead of schedule." Nason is with the Ad-der Area Office of the Corps' Gulf Region South district.

Located within hailing distance of Main Supply Route Tampa, the Tallil project is a key link in the supply chain that starts in Kuwait and runs the length of Iraq. Christianson said the project team completed a similar facility in northern Iraq last year with the Corps' Gulf Region North district.

Major pieces include a Convoy Support Center, capable of accommodating up to 3,600 trucks; a Tactical Petroleum Terminal, or TPT, also known as the Bag Farm, which is capable of storing up to 8.92 million gallons of fuel; a DFAC, or



A centrally located administrative area is taking shape for the convoy support center at Tallil, Iraq. (Courtesy Photo)



Construction workers sheetrock the interior of the dining facility at the convoy support center taking shape at Tallil, Iraq. (Courtesy photo)

dining facility, capable of serving 3,000 meals per cycle and about 640 meals at one time; a Centrum Area housing administrative offices; and a fire station.

Also in the mix is space for tents, to be provided and installed by other firms, to accommodate 2,100 people; showers for truck drivers; enough lights to make the Bag Farm look like it's basking in daylight at night; and a host of civil engineering works such as culverts and manholes. Most of the 2.5 square kilometer site was elevated by one meter to improve drainage.

The extensive earthworks revealed some surprises, well, not exactly surprises if one remembers the area used to be swamp. Clam shells can be found in piles of dirt all over the place.

The emerging new facility, which is expected to be open for business early next year, will be highly significant in getting "beans and bullets" and assorted other supplies for U.S. and other coalition forces in Iraq, said Christianson, who is no stranger to the Army. He enlisted at the age of 17 after attending high school in Colorado and went on to West Point. He has been in Iraq since July of 2003.

He said opening the Tallil facility—called the LSA Adder CSC & DFAC Project in contract documents—will allow a nearby facility known as Cedar II to be shut down. At Tallil, truckers hauling supplies will be able to park their vehicles in an orderly manner in a secure area, take a shower, get a meal in dining facility, and get some sleep in a tent complex.

Nason said the high standards demanded by the contractors' quality control people have made the job successful. USACE personnel have commented that the job site looks like something they'd



Construction workers build foundations for support facilities. In the background is the dining facility for the Tallil truck stop. (USACE photo by John Connor)

see in the United States, Christianson related, saying "we consider this a great compliment and are proud to deliver superior results to the client in even the most challenging environments."

The whole project is expected to be completed and turned over the U.S. government in late November, Christianson said.

While the construction went smoothly as these things go, Christianson said that "the externals have made this job hard." He cited a plane crash elsewhere in Iraq that killed 19 sub-contractor personnel, including the company's general manager, and the hijacking of two convoys. One of these incidents resulted in the loss of 11 trucks and two other vehicles.

Since it started in December, 2006, the project has had zero safety incidents and accrued 316 days and 291,716 hours of continuous incident-free performance, Christianson said.

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