



DCMA SUSTAINS LARGEST FORWARD OPERATING BASE IN SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN

By Cassandra Locke, DCMA Public Affairs

As an indispensable acquisition partner, Defense Contract Management Agency employees have turned Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, into one of the most critical forward operating bases supporting overseas contingency operations. Camp Leatherneck is a logistics hub supporting the southern and western expansion into Afghanistan.

Since late January, DCMA has directed and coordinated Logistics Civil Augmentation Program services for 22,000 Marines with an exceptional level of service. Less than a year ago, the agency supported 4,000 Marines and civilians. Now there are more than 12,000 Marines and civilians operating out of the camp. By June 2010, it is projected that number will grow to 20,000. The camp is now the largest FOB in southern Afghanistan, and DCMA's expertise has been invaluable in its global engagement efforts supporting *Operation Enduring Freedom*.

There are currently six DCMA employees at the camp — four civilians, one LOGCAP lieutenant colonel and one Air Force technical sergeant. Through the LOGCAP contract, employees provide maintenance on tents, fuel all of the generators and perform any maintenance on the environmental



The Defense Contract Management Agency has helped Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, evolve into a premiere forward operating base. Shown here is the entrance to the camp.

control units. DCMA ensures those operating on the camp have the proper security badges and unload and distribute all cargo.

In support of a rapidly growing population and anticipated surge, two dining facilities were recently constructed on the camp. These two facilities increased the camp's feeding capacity by more than 135 percent. Another major milestone was establishing a dining facility

on the camp Flight line directly supporting the increased air combat operations and improving the Marine Air Group's efficiency by reducing downtime during meal periods. Overall, LOGCAP constructed and now operates and serves approximately 40,000 meals per day in six dining facilities.

According to Loren Duwel, DCMA administrative contracting officer operating out of Camp

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Leatherneck, more than one-third of the Marines dispatched to Afghanistan under President Barack Obama's recently ordered surge will live at or process through the camp. "Without the support of LOGCAP and DCMA, it would be very difficult to house, feed and sustain any additional troops," Duwel remarked.

In addition to dining facility oversight, DCMA oversaw the construction of the first U.S.

aircraft maintenance facility on the Camp Leatherneck Flight line, finishing 15 days ahead of schedule. Duwel and his team facilitated the restructuring of the camp shuttle bus service and increased the number of stops, while relieving overtasked troop labor. The team also relieved the logistical burden and reduced safety hazards by constructing all required roads and crossings. Duwel said his team was responsible for building

the first maintenance tent for the V-22 *Osprey* rotor-wing aircraft so Marines can maintain the craft indoors.

Currently, Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson commands the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade at the FOB, but in March there will be a change of command and a two-star general from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force will assume command. "The FOB is growing and will continue



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to grow as the base continues to take on new tenants, roles and functions, even as it is still under construction,” commented Duwel.

According to Duwel, in January 2009, a site survey team of Marines claimed the open desert location adjacent to an existing United Kingdom base, Camp Bastion, and an Afghan army base, Camp Shorabak. Within days of the site survey, members of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion-5 transformed the open desert into a modern and functional base capable of sustaining the combat operations of the entire task force.

Camp Leatherneck was officially dedicated May 29, 2009, as the MEB-Afghanistan conducted transition of authority with Special Purpose Marine Air/Ground Task Force-Afghanistan at the sprawling Marine base in Helmand Province.

While nobody knows how long the Marines will remain in Afghanistan, as long as DCMA supports the FOB and Marines who are there working to support the nation, Camp Leatherneck will play a prominent role. According to Duwel, expansion plans for this base exist today, and building has already started. He said it is projected that

the once modest base will triple in size over the next 12 months. “The commensurate expansion of Afghan security forces, the facilities at Camp Shorabak and sustained high-tempo operations by Camp Bastion mean that the great Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak complex will continue to provide a critical and meaningful role in support of our collective forces for the foreseeable future,” remarked Duwel.

Duwel added that the Afghan Security Forces will eventually seek to take possession of the camps as part of their defense infrastructure. 



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