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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers celebrates completion of Air Force intelligence facility

By Lacey Justinger, Honolulu District Public Affairs

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 26-09) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Agency, the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and Watts Constructors Inc., celebrated the completion of a new ISR Operations facility on Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, with a maile lei untying ceremony Oct. 21.

The ISR structure houses the Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS) operation center and the Global Hawk ground mission unit, and was designed to facilitate partnerships between the United States and allies for worldwide missions.

“For five years we worked from a vision and a focus that’s coming to fruition and reality today,” said Air Force Gen. Gary North, PACAF commander. Highlighting the flexibility of the construction team, North commented that during construction, “We could go to the Corps of Engineers and Watts and say; let’s tweak this and finalize this to make it better and work for a long time. This is a state-of-the-art facility.”

The design-build project was a five-year partnership, from concept to occupancy, between the Corps of Engineers, PACAF, Air Force ISR Agency, the Air Force Center for Engineering and Environment, and Watts Constructors Inc.; to build the more than 25,000-square-foot, \$15,500,000 facility.

“The facility is a better fit for the mission while we also stewarded our citizen’s hard earned dollars and our history,” said Lt. Col. Jon J. Chytka, commander and district engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District. “This project had challenges but we accomplished all of our goals with a great sense of teamwork.”

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Rev. William Kaina from the Kawaiaha'o Church in Honolulu dedicated and enlisted the help of Gen. North; Brig. Gen. Thomas Harwood, reserve assistant to the commander of 13th Air Force, PACAF; Air Force Col. Mark Westergren, director of ISR for PACAF; Air Force Col. Daniel Johnson, commander of the 480th ISR Wing; and Lt. Col. Chytka; for the blessing and maile lei untying.

“It’s a great honor to represent the US Army Corps of Engineers today and share this historic moment with the world’s premiere air power, our United States Air Forces,” said Chytka. “As a Soldier and an engineer, I’m very impressed with the Global Hawk system and I’m sure my future units will benefit from its high resolution imagery.”

Watts Constructors and the Corps of Engineers maintained a strict safety regiment that resulted in more than 54,000 man-hours without a lost-time accident, in spite of restricted spaces with some areas constructed with only five feet between structures.

“This is remarkable and highlights all of our commitment to building safely,” said Chytka. “This is even more impressive considering the confined spaces of literally constructing a building, within a building, next to another building, inside a building. Watts almost needed to recruit spelunking craftsmen to be a part of their DCGS team.”

“DCGS is a force multiplier, enhancer and enabler for pervasive and persistent surveillance in our AOR,” said North. “I couldn’t be prouder of COE and Watts, as I watched this vision come to fruition.”

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Cutlines:

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Lt. Col. Jon J. Chytka, commander and district engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, addresses a group of Airmen, contractors and Corps of Engineers employees during the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Operations facility maile lei untying ceremony on Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

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Col. Daniel Johnson, commander of the 480th Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing; Lt. Col. Jon J. Chytka, commander and district engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District; Air Force Gen. Gary North, commander of the Pacific Air Forces; and Brig. Gen. Thomas Harwood, mobilization assistant to the commander of 13th Air Force, PACAF; assist Reverend William Kaina from the Kawaiaha'o Church in Honolulu, in blessing the new Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Operations facility on Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, during a maile lei untying ceremony Oct. 21.