



Missile Defense Agency dedicates GMD site at Fort Greely, Alaska

By MAJ Laura Kenney

MG John W. Holly, right, Missile Defense Agency's program director for the Ground-based Midcourse Defense program, and Diane Hutchinson, special assistant to the Honorable Ted Stevens, U.S. Senator, Alaska, unveil a monument dedicating the missile field complex at Fort Greely, Alaska. The ceremony marked the end of the initial construction phase of the complex.

FORT GREELY, Alaska — A ceremony July 3 signified a milestone in the nation's emerging missile defense program.

Maj. Gen John W. Holly, program director for the Missile Defense Agency's Ground-based Midcourse Defense program, presided over a dedication ceremony that marked the end of the initial construction phase of the missile field complex here.

A monument commemorating the event and dedicating the site was unveiled by Holly and Diane Hutchinson, special assistant to Alaska's U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens. The monument is crafted of native Alaskan stone and features a bronze plaque with the words "Forging America's Shield" against the Big Dipper constellation and North Star of the State flag.

The site will operate and maintain interceptor missiles and related support facilities to provide a limited defensive capability against a limited long-range missile attack against the United States. The system will be operated by the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD), U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, in concert with sister services.

"This is a great day, an historic one in the path to defend our nation, our families and our neighbors," Holly said. "Although the missile defense system will span eight time zones, from the Yorkshire moors to the Kwajalein Atoll, the centerpiece is clearly here, at Fort Greely. Its unique position allows us to defend against enemies from

both East and West."

"The accomplishment represented here is testimony to the ingenuity and determination of a collection of Americans working together for America's defense. The combined efforts of industry and the military were vital to our success. All was done to the highest standards — which is the only standard good enough when we talk about defending our families. In the very near future, we will have that capability."

Since the June 15, 2002, ground breaking here, the government's prime contractor, Boeing, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along with subcontractors representing numerous Alaskan firms, worked in often-extreme conditions to construct the site.

Construction involved clearing more than 500 acres of land, building 11 new facilities and renovating 25 others, pouring more than 35,000 cubic yards of concrete, installing more than 3 miles of fence and more than 2.5 miles of utilidor — underground concrete utilities conduits that allow for maintenance even during extreme weather conditions.

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