

# Ribbon cut for stealth bomber hangar

\$32.8M project could lead to additional jobs

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A hangar that can house two B-2 stealth bombers at the same time was unveiled yesterday at Andersen Air Force Base on Guam, a \$32.8 million project that some in the local community view as another sign the military is building up on Guam.

The hangar, made of concrete and steel, is designed to withstand typhoons of 170-mph strength and major earthquakes. It also keeps aircraft safely sealed from volcanic ash. The hangar is cooled by an 800-ton air-conditioning unit, and its systems can be controlled from a laptop computer.

It's the single largest project for local contractor Black Construction, said Leonard K. Kaae, senior vice president and general manager for the company.

The company believes the Pentagon will have reason to consider Andersen's further potential for military buildup, Kaae said.

"We hope this is the beginning of larger projects," Kaae said of military contracting on Guam.

The project involved about 140 workers at its peak, or close to one-fourth of Black Construction's total work force of 600 during the project's busiest construction period.

## High-tech project

Col. Michael Boera, the new commander of the 36th Air Expeditionary Wing, which calls Andersen home, said it's "cool" to have the hangar during his leadership.

"This is a thing of beauty," he said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony, with the hangar's towering, electronic-controlled doors as the backdrop.



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**Andersen Air Force Base:** Sgt. Justin Aguilar, center, stands guard in front of a B-2 bomber as Tech Sgt. Keith Coyle, left, and Master Sgt. Warren Rosenbrough, right, open the doors to the new Air Expeditionary Force Forward Operation Location hangar. The doors were opened during the ribbon-cutting ceremony yesterday at Andersen Air Force Base.

## TO THE POINT

▲ Andersen Air Force Base yesterday unveiled a \$32 million hangar capable housing two, billion-dollar stealth bomber aircraft at the same time.

"Being a fighter pilot guy, seeing this kind of project blows my mind away," he said.

The hangar project includes 13,000 cubic yards of concrete, 1.6 million pounds of steel and a state-of-the-art, push-button firefighting system that can cover an aircraft with fire retardant foam within 4 minutes.

Besides being able to house two B-2 "stealth" bomber aircraft, the hangar also can accommodate the nose of a C-5 galaxy aircraft for

## ON THE NET

▲ U.S. Air Force: [www.af.mil](http://www.af.mil)

docking.

The hangar is along the airfield's flight line, allowing aircraft that need to be in the hangar for repair, storage or maintenance to drive through.

The project started in February last year and was completed on time and within budget, officials said yesterday at the ribbon-cutting.

Alfred A. Yee of Honolulu and Singapore designed the hangar, and he's designed military hangars on Guam dating back a quarter of a century.

This latest hangar leaves Yee with a special feeling, in part because of the project's complexity, size and its ability to house billion-dollar B-2s.

Each B-2 is worth \$1.15 billion at 1998 dollars, according to the Air Force Web site, [www.af.mil](http://www.af.mil).

But most importantly, Yee said, it's nice to know that the hangar has been mentioned as having played a role in the U.S. military's bombing operations in the war on terror.

Gerry Perez, with the Guam Chamber of Commerce Armed Forces Committee and chairman of the Guam Visitors Bureau, said the hangar is a signal of the U.S. military's commitment to Guam.

"In an extremely tight budget situation in the Air Force, any decision to spend money like that has long-term implications," Perez said.

Implication that signals military commitment for buildup?

"Absolutely," Perez said.

"I think we can look toward more activities," he said.