

Seoul — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District broke ground on seven new battle positions for Rodriguez Live Fire Complex at Yongpyong Feb. 11.

The U.S. Army's Second Infantry Division is acquiring a new fleet of Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles this year. To showcase these new vehicles and train crews to their full potential Maj. Gen. Michael Tucker, 2ID Commanding General, envisioned a new world-class range.

"It is only fitting that these vehicles, who are the premier of their class, be allowed to qualify those crews on the most modern mechanized and tank range in the world. This is what we will have here in Korea," said Tucker.

Col. Blair A. Schantz, Commander of the Far East District, said that the project is a reminder of why we are here in Korea.

"We're here to support the war fighter and maintain the posture, the peace we have right now and the armistice we're in," said Schantz. "To have a project that reminds us about that is good."

Situated in a level valley surrounded by steep mountains, Rodriguez Live Fire Complex is the best place in Korea to accommodate live-fire exercises for Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. In its current configuration, the range is laid out for test firing and evaluation of weapons systems. Offensive training takes place in simulators.

"The existing battle positions are defensive battle positions and there's nothing wrong with them when considered from that perspective," said Jerry Williams from Thomas J. Davis/Jung II Architecture and Engineering, FED's contractor. "The proposed battle positions are offensive battle positions."

Williams has worked on many upgrade projects at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex through the years and already having a concept in mind allowed FED to get this project underway quickly. It was just last month that Brig. Gen. Charles L. Taylor, 2nd Infantry Division, Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver, asked FED to help transform the range into a world-class live fire complex with "shoot and move" capabilities.

"The soldiers need to be trained in both defensive and offensive scenarios. Defensive battle positions are prepared in advance. Offensive battle positions in a real battlefield are opportunities presented either by terrain or by man-made features that the TC's (track commander) have to recognize when they see them and then take advantage of them," said Williams.

The features that will be added to allow this battlefield flexibility are maneuver lanes. The lanes will allow vehicles to move laterally between the primary existing firing lanes and the seven proposed offensive battle positions, allowing the weapons systems to fire and advance (attack).

In keeping with 2ID tradition of training where we will fight, Rodriguez Live Fire Complex is also in close proximity to North Korea.

"We are going to build probably the premier range in the world and we'll be building it within a stone's throw of the DMZ. Who would have thought?" said Schantz.

Once completed, the upgraded Rodriguez Live Fire Complex will be a symbol of the U.S. commitment to the Republic of Korea-US Alliance by providing a world-class training facility to both U.S. and Korean troops.

"It will absolutely enhance the readiness of the total alliance and we look forward to offering this

Far East District breaks ground on "premier range"

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range to share with our Korean partners as we continue to strengthen the alliance," said Tucker.

Tucker acknowledged the hard work from many organizations that it took in order to make his vision for the range a reality.

"People are going to come from all over the world to see this range, the way that tower is set up, the way this range is laid out, and how we operate it. People are going to come to see what right looks like and it's because of all you great people," said Tucker.