

Military spent \$210.2M on Guam buildup last fiscal year

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Hawaiian Rock Products employees operate steamrollers to compress a layer of asphalt on a section of Route 3A on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2020, near an area of Dededo where the military has been constructing improvements to its facilities. (Photo: Rick Cruz/PDN)

The Department of Defense last fiscal year obligated a total of \$309.3 million for projects related to the Guam military buildup and spent a total of \$210.2 million on those projects, according to a report prepared by several inspectors general for the federal government.

Most of the buildup funding last fiscal year was provided by the government of Japan, the report states, with \$208.4 million obligated for the buildup and \$100.7 million spent.

About 5,000 Marines from Okinawa and elsewhere are scheduled to relocate to a new Marine Corps base in Dededo, Camp Blaz, beginning in 2025. The relocation is expected to cost about \$8 billion, with Japan providing about \$2.8 billion.

The annual report on the Guam Realignment, due by Feb. 1 each year, is required by a provision of the 2010 defense budget.

This year's report comes on the heels of an audit released in December, which took a closer look at why some completed and ongoing military construction projects on Guam are behind schedule and over budget.

According to the audit, by the Defense Department's Office of Inspector General, the nine projects, with a total budget of \$638.87 million, were a combined 13 years and five months behind schedule and \$37.5 million over budget.

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For example, a Navy operational and maintenance hangar was completed two years and five months behind schedule because of environmental issues and changes to the hangar's floor plan and a battery storage room after the contract was awarded.

The delays and changes increased the project's cost by \$4.3 million, or a total cost of \$49.7 million, the audit states.

The main reason for project delays, the audit states, is the military's failure to adequately plan for unexploded ordnance at the project sites. That was a contributing factor to delays in six of the nine projects examined, the report states.

The next most common reason was the inability to secure skilled foreign labor under H-2B visas, the report states. Labor visa issues contributed to delays in four of the nine projects.

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