

Officials announce first Afghanistan surge units

Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 7, 2009 – About 16,000 Marines and soldiers have been notified they will deploy to Afghanistan as part of President Barack Obama’s new strategy.

Obama announced his decision to deploy 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan in the first half of 2010 on Dec. 1.

The troops in today’s announcement primarily will come from Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Fort Drum, N.Y.; and Camp Pendleton, Calif., Pentagon officials said today. More notifications will be made in the weeks and months ahead, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said.

These initial deployments will join the 68,000 American troops already in the country. At the end of the effort, about 100,000 U.S. troops will be deployed to Afghanistan.

About 1,500 Marines from Camp Lejeune will deploy later this month. In addition, 6,200 Marines of Regimental Combat Team 2 at Camp Lejeune were alerted for deployment early in the spring, Whitman said.

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton will deploy 800 Marines in the spring, Whitman said.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team from the Army’s 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum will deploy 3,400 Soldiers in early spring to train Afghan forces.

Additionally, 4,100 support personnel will deploy at various times through the spring, Whitman said. Military officials call these personnel “enablers” who do essential missions and bring extra value to the counterinsurgency effort. These include military police personnel, engineers, civil affairs personnel, route-clearance teams, explosive ordnance demolition personnel and experts in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.