

Firm chosen to design Museum of U.S. Army

By Jim Tice
jtice@militarytimes.com

The Army Corps of Engineers has identified a New York architecture and engineering firm — Skidmore, Owings and Merrill — to design the \$300 million National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Va.

The Army will negotiate with SOM before awarding the design contract.

SOM has an international reputation for large projects. The firm designed the Sears Tower and John Hancock Center in Chicago, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C., and the Infinity Tower in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

Construction is set to begin in 2010 on the first phase of the

joint public and private partnership project between the Army and the Army Historical Foundation, for the 156,000-square-foot museum complex.

The museum is scheduled to open in 2013.

In a related action, the Corps of Engineers has awarded a \$24.4 million contract to Manhattan Construction of Muskogee, Okla., to design and build a 124,000-square-foot museum support center on Belvoir's South Post.

The support center will provide laboratories and work and storage areas to Army curators, historians and outside researchers.

Construction of the support center is expected to be completed by July 2010, about the same time construction on the museum complex begins.

The support center will be on the corner of Thoete Road and Racy Loop, and will have more than 20 permanent staff from throughout the Army museum system to support curators and historians.

A decision on the exact location of the museum at Belvoir is expected later this year. □