

# Specialized facilities provide blood in support of Soldiers and families worldwide

The military has always prided itself in taking care of its own, and when it comes to providing a vital resource such as blood, it's no different.

State-of-the-art blood donor centers, such as the one the Savannah district has underway at Fort Benning, Ga., focus on the collection, processing, testing, storing, and shipping of blood specifically for the military community.

"Armed Services Blood Program blood centers are unique in that we collect blood from the military community to supply to military service members, their families, and other DOD beneficiaries," said Capt. Maschelle Hoover, interim director, Fort Benning Blood Donor Clinic. "These facilities help to keep costs down, because without them, blood would have to be purchased from an outside source. It also allows the military to take care of its own."



At 20,000 square-feet, the new Blood Donor Center currently underway at Fort Benning, Ga., will be nearly double the size of the one at Fort Bragg, N.C., and is expected to accommodate the increase of soldiers and families arriving at Fort Benning due to Base Realignment and Closure initiatives.

## District Helps Establish New Primary Care Clinic

In another effort to support soldiers' families, the Savannah district's Real Estate division has negotiated long-term leases needed to establish the Army's newest Community-based Primary Care Clinics. The clinics will provide primary care quicker and more conveniently to families of active duty soldiers.

The district will arrange leases for six of the Army's planned 17 community primary care clinics near Forts Jackson, Benning, Stewart, and Hunter Army Airfield.

The district worked closely with the Army's Medical Command to locate suitable facilities that could be remodeled to meet Army needs.

The district will break ground on the \$7.8 million facility at Fort Benning in spring 2011 and completed a similar facility at Fort Bragg, N.C., in August 2010. Both facilities operate as a part of the ASBP, a network of more than 20 blood donor centers worldwide.

"We correspond regularly with Army, Navy, and Air Force blood donor centers and military treatment centers to determine need," said Hoover. "We all work together to get blood where it needs to go."

Blood products collected at the centers are sent overseas to help save the lives of injured or ill service members stationed in Overseas Contingency Operations. It is also supplied to military treatment facilities locally and worldwide.

At 20,000 square-feet, the new facility at Fort Benning will be nearly double the size of the one at Fort Bragg, and is expected to accommodate the increase of soldiers and families arriving at Fort Benning due to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiatives.

"The Fort Benning population is expected to increase by upwards of 28,000 as a result of BRAC," said Hoover. "The relocation is anticipated to result in an over 30 percent increase in blood donations as well as the addition of plasma collections."



A soldier donates blood at the new Blood Donor Center at Fort Bragg, N.C., completed by the Savannah district in August 2010.  
*Photo by Joe Harlan*

The building of the new facility is a “much anticipated” and “eagerly awaited” event for Hoover and her staff, who have been operating out of a temporary 5,700 square-foot donor center for the past two years.

“We have to pack up and transport our equipment to the various companies daily for each blood drive, because there is barely enough room in the temporary facility for staff and for production and manufacturing activities,” said Hoover. “It is a huge logistical undertaking.”

The design of the new facility will enable Hoover and her staff to collect, separate, process, and store blood and blood components on site.

“It will be a one-stop shop,” said Hoover. “We will also have an apheresis donation area, which will allow us to draw, manufacture and distribute a much larger percentage of the rare blood types needed for fresh frozen plasma, further lowering our dependence on outside providers.”

Other features will include storage for organizational vehicles for blood drives, staging and waiting areas, and blood draw stations.

“I’m excited to see this project get off the ground,” said Demetrius Huddleston, Corps project manager. “The blood donation mission of the U.S. Army is an important facet of keeping our active duty military, as well as their families, safe.”

The new Blood Donor Center at Fort Benning is slated for completion in May 2012 and will seek Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification. A program of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the LEED rating system is a point-based rating tool that uses objective, measurable criteria to promote and recognize achievement in the design, construction and operation of environmentally sustainable buildings (see pages 6-7). 

*By Rashida Banks, Corporate Communications Office*