

Teamwork Brings Together FORSCOM and USARC Commands

New Headquarters Increases Operational Readiness

“With so many people depending on us to have the headquarters ready, we focused on efficiency and ‘doing it right’ the first time.”

— Daniel Davis, Savannah district FORSCOM-USARC Resident Engineer.

“Completing this project on time seemed impossible at first, but the team from the Corps, the contractors, and Fort Bragg took on the challenge and won.”

— Catherine Bingham, (former) Savannah district, FORSCOM-USARC Project Manager

“If you have a great team and everyone works together toward a common goal; you then can achieve anything,”

— Diego Martinez, Savannah district Chief of Army Programs, Program Management Division.

The project’s requirements seemed enormous. It involved relocating work areas for more than 2,800 people, including two general officers; accommodating expanding and changing customer needs in the 631,000 square-foot facility; managing 50 contractors and 470 laborers; incorporating complex technology, some of which was housed in four separate buildings; while integrating communications with dozens of customers, all under an extremely tight deadline.

It was finished in 992 days (one day early).

The project is the new co-located headquarters for the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) and U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) at Fort Bragg, N.C. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission report called for the facility “to more effectively and efficiently support the Army’s forces, increase operational readiness and allow for innovation in business operations.” As part of BRAC, the two headquarters were moved from Fort McPherson, Ga., to Fort Bragg.

“All of the way from the Corps of Engineers staff to the customers at FORSCOM and USARC this was one of the best project delivery teams we have ever had with a project this size and magnitude,” said Martinez.

Getting Started

Just determining how to start the contracting was the first challenge for this large-scale project. Within 18 months, the team—including members of Fort Bragg, FORSCOM, USARC, and higher Corps entities—developed the requests for proposal requirements, resolved scope, criteria, and cost issues, evaluated proposals, and successfully awarded the \$302 million project to Hensel Phelps Construction Company.

To start, there were buildings that had to be demolished to make room for the complex, and separate entry ways had to be constructed to accommodate and distinguish two commands.

Even the outside of the facility required close coordination with the Fort Bragg cultural resources and architectural historian to ensure the structure would have a brick facade that matched the surrounding historical buildings.

The project met the strict needs of the Installation Management Command, which provided the funding and guidance from start to finish.

Meeting customer needs

The FORSCOM air distribution system was installed under raised floors to improve ventilation efficiency, reduce energy use and increase comfort by allowing occupants to control air flow. The raised floor also would allow flexibility for reconfiguring the walls.

The exterior walls were to be constructed of tilt-up, brick-faced, pre-cast concrete panels to allow rapid dry-in completion so that interior construction would begin more quickly to maintain the extremely time-compressed construction schedule. Although initially more expensive, these panels would save time and labor in construction and allow faster dry-in for interior construction.

During the project, the team managed 81 contract modifications, exceeding \$14.3 million while accruing only 2.3 percent controllable cost growth and zero time growth.

“You can’t predict everything that may develop—such as advances in new technology,” said Davis. “We had to make changes when things came up and had to handle them quickly.”

The 631,000 square-foot headquarters for the U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Army Reserve Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., is comprised of four buildings that will provide space for more than 2,800 people. *Photo by Lawrence Stevens.*



The PDT created the Information Technology (IT) Site Assessment Working Group, comprised of five IT stakeholders at the beginning of the project. They recognized that melding the IT requirements into the building construction was critical to the project's overall success and customer satisfaction. This model has subsequently been used for other three and four star headquarters projects.

The team devised and implemented methods to improve the construction and occupancy schedule from 48 to 36 months. Techniques included the phased turnover of IT buildings, joint occupancy of the headquarters facility with the IT engineers, and procuring and installing the furniture as part of the design-build contract.

Communications

The consolidation of the largest major command in the Army and its sub-command represent the new force structure and modernization of the Army, which propelled the construction project in the spotlight, Martinez said.

The project manager prepared regular information papers for the project, which were distributed to 52 stakeholders. This information was used by the stakeholders to prompt decisions from their leadership, which ensured timely execution for the project. The format was sent by Assistant Chief of Staff of Information Management to other districts as an example of what they would like to see on other three-star and four-star headquarters projects.

"The extremely high level of open, honest communication and cooperation by all parties at all levels, consistently working only toward solutions was the driving force in the success of the project," said Davis.

Finishing Strong

With all of the work and challenges that surfaced along the way, the Savannah district's dedication did not go unnoticed. They received all fives (a perfect score) on customer satisfaction surveys from both FORSCOM and USARC.

"The team surpassed all expectations set forth by executing the project one day ahead of schedule, and saved more than \$10 million from the original authorization," Martinez said. "We finished \$16 million below the budget, and met the BRAC deadline."

"We knew we had a deadline to meet so we had no time for mistakes," said Davis. "The workers logged more than 1.3 million craft hours without a 'lost time' injury since the project's groundbreaking in December 2008...we finished on time and under budget with absolutely no compromises in quality or safety."

Joseph Tyler, (former) USACE Director of Military Programs, sent an e-mail to the district commander and the rest of the team, at the conclusion of the project. It said, "folks, my hearty congrats for a job very well done. This took a tremendous amount of hard work and patience while you endured many frustrating moments. Your patience and fortitude has paid off." 

By Kristin Mack, Corporate Communications Office