

Viewpoint

From Where I Sit

The Inspiration Behind a Modern Fort Bragg

It might be easy to draw the wrong conclusion about Fort Bragg, N.C. as you browse through the pages within this publication. You will see new, better, and modern construction of barracks, company operations facilities, dining facilities, chapels, support facilities and headquarters. You will see before and after images that demonstrate the contrast of what was then, and what is now and you will read about an installation that has transformed into a contemporary city at extraordinary speed. Since 1994, the U.S. Army Corps Engineers, Savannah District has completed 209 projects at Fort Bragg, totaling 5.2 billion. Thanks to the efforts of the Savannah district, Fort Bragg is now one of the most modern military installations and home to 10 percent of the Army. The massive transformation will give you pause. But if this issue does nothing more than impress you with the volume of recent construction accomplished at Fort Bragg, we have communicated the right idea but the wrong conclusion. The construction at Fort Bragg is not an end in itself.

Transforming Fort Bragg and its facilities changes the lives of soldiers and their families. Given the time constraints, Savannah district faced a herculean task. The team succeeded at this effort because we care deeply for American soldiers. In the years following 9/11 we sent those soldiers to fight a war in bitter places to secure and defend our freedom. Conscious of their sacrifices, the Savannah district aimed to make a positive and meaningful impact at Fort Bragg. After reflecting on what we have accomplished there, I think those patriots helped us in more ways than securing our freedom through their sacrifices in combat.

The vision to provide better quality of life for soldiers existed before 9/11, but the attacks served as a catalyst to accelerate the process. When soldiers deployed to the Middle East in response to the attacks on the nation, many of their aging barracks stood empty. This eased the burden to find temporary housing while new ones were built. Most importantly, when our soldiers deployed to fight in miserable conditions for long periods, many of us wanted to contribute to the effort in a meaningful way. We didn't want them to return from the hardship of war to conventional rolling-pin barracks and other aging facilities. Cramped and outdated buildings were not the ideal places for a professional soldier to recuperate. So in order to provide a better quality of life for the returning warriors we were tasked to re-build Fort Bragg – and to build fast.



In order to meet the strict time demands, we knew we had to reduce construction time significantly. This forced us to change the way we operate. The Savannah district teams involved in Fort Bragg's transformation found innovative ways to work together. We cut construction time by half for barracks and company operations facilities. We met the time demands on every project. We worked closer as a

team because we shared a common drive; the will to serve soldiers in a time of war. It was this common goal that led the Engineering, Construction and Project Management teams to collaborate in new ways, to willingly go the extra mile, to step outside of comfort zones and to take chances on new operating ideas. The end result produced some of the finest facilities ever built.

And this is what I meant when I wrote that American soldiers helped us in more ways than ensuring freedom. By their sacrifices, soldiers inspired us to be better at what we do. The Fort Bragg transformation is a tangible result of that inspiration. As you browse the pages of this issue and see the progress made at Fort Bragg, I'm confident you'll be impressed by the absolute transformation in such a small amount of time. The point of it all is not that we built it – but rather, who we built it for. Let us marvel not at the product, but who inspired it. The service of our soldiers made it all possible – in more ways than one. 

By Ken Gray, Chief of Construction

Military Transformation In a Nutshell

Global events, such as the aftermath of 9/11 changed the nation's security needs. As a result, the Army underwent a massive reorganization focused on modular units, such as brigade combat teams, to fight different kinds of battles in new conditions and environments. Today, the Army Campaign Plan calls for a "balanced Army for the 21st century that is a versatile mix of tailorable and networked organizations... to provide a sustained flow of trained and ready forces for full-spectrum operations and to hedge against unexpected contingencies..." The transformation has brought military units together to live and train in real-world scenarios and created an urgent need for new or improved infrastructure.