

Engineering IN EUROPE

Customer Care

Workshop
emphasizes
importance of
customer care


US Army Corps
of Engineers
DWIGHT McKINNEY

EB-G: Good Graf!

New initiatives help Grafenwöhr
prepare for transformation



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Europe District
Vol. 1 - Spring 2006

From the Commander



Providing the best service and analyzing feedback are keys to building future

I am passionate about delivering quality customer service. Meeting our customer's needs is so important to me that I met with my senior staff and project and program managers in April for a two-day Customer Care Workshop. Quality customer service is a key facet in our approach toward building our future, and I want to share my thoughts on this with you.

At the workshop, we gathered to discuss perceptions, communication, business cultures, processes – aspects that affect how we reach out and communicate to our customers. The synergy of our employees' talents, motivation, and dedication provided for an animated and effective workshop. This gathering was a positive step towards bringing out the best of this synergy. Now, we are making adjustments to our processes in order to provide the best service possible.

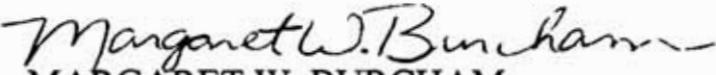
We must remember too that, from a customer's standpoint, perception can be everything. Peter Drucker, a university professor and management consultant, states an important perspective about service: "Quality in a service, or product, is not what you put into it; it is what the client or customer gets out of it." This is an important perspective because our customers define our successes; therefore, it is imperative that we continually strive to meet their needs.

Recently, our customers provided us with a wide range of comments, both positive and negative, in response to the Headquarters, USACE-sponsored customer survey. Our customers spoke candidly, and with great substance and specificity, about the quality of our service. I feel strongly that our district can make good use of this information in assessing our customer's needs. We will never sit back and say, "We're good enough." Customer feedback is of tremendous value as we assess our ability to perform our mission.

I certainly want to thank those customers and stakeholders that took their time to provide their valuable feedback. I am grateful to them for their continued commitment to us.

Self-assessment is also a key part in posturing us for success. Over the next couple of months, I will be conducting small group discussions within the Project Management Business Process to gain a sense of whether, from our customer's standpoint or from our own, changes we make will be designed to provide better product delivery to the customer.

I want to say that by taking the next right step, every time, we will continue to grow. Each and every one of you is important to the communication and positive experiences we deliver to our customers. I cannot thank you enough for your continued efforts in affecting positive change as we move ahead in service to our nation.


MARGARET W. BURCHAM
COL, EN
Commanding

Engineering in Europe

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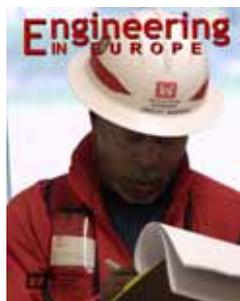
Engineering in Europe is an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. The editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. *Engineering in Europe* is a command information publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District. Circulation is 800 copies. Articles, photographs, and other contributions are welcome. The editor reserves the right to make changes to all material submitted. The submission deadline is the 1st of the month preceding quarterly publication. Send submissions to: Editor, *Engineering in Europe*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, CMR 410, Box 1, APO AE 09096. Details may be obtained from the PAO at (011) 49-611-816-2847 or DSN 336-2847. Material may be sent via e-mail to: brian.h.temple@nau02.usace.army.mil An electronic version of *Engineering in Europe* may be viewed on the Europe District Internet homepage at: www.nau.usace.army.mil

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On the Cover

Dwight McKinney, an engineering technician with the Europe District's Construction Branch, carefully completes his checklist during a routine safety inspection April 25 at a newly renovated military family housing project in the Aukamm housing area in Wiesbaden. McKinney was joined by David Stanton, the District's Safety and Health Manager, during the inspection of the facility, which was renovated by contractor KLEBL GmbH.

Cover photo by Justin Ward

Military transformation advances U.S. basing footprint eastward

The U.S. military footprint in Europe has significantly changed from just a decade ago. Gone are dozens of American enclaves — some self-contained communities complete with schools, shopping centers and housing complexes — located throughout Western Europe, but primarily in Germany.

In their place soon will be small regional training centers in Romania and Bulgaria, through which U.S. combat brigades will rotate on training and regional-security-cooperation missions.

“We have the capability in that region to do some things with the existing infrastructure from the former Soviet days, capitalizing on some of their training grounds,” said Army Gen. William E. “Kip” Ward, U.S.

European Command’s deputy commander.

“We capitalize on what is there, because we go into existing locations and facilities,” Ward said in a recent interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service. “And I think we reap the benefit of that at a much-reduced cost . . .”

Also, through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, U.S. Army Europe is in the process of planning, designing and ultimately constructing additional military facilities in the region to complement the existing infrastructure.

“The District has issued a pre-solicitation notice to contractors in order to alert them of the planned work,” said Kris Hurst, chief of international

engineering for the District.

The notice is for the design and construction of a forward operating base and forward operating facilities in Romania, said Hurst. The work includes the design and construction of basic facilities to support rotational training units, including expeditionary-type billets, operation/administration, and maintenance facilities.

The creation of these forward operating sites, whether using existing infrastructure or building anew, is part of EUCOM’s and USAREUR’s transformation strategy, said Hurst.

In total, it’s part of a larger initiative: the principle of collective security.

In an October 2005 interview, Marine Gen. James Jones, who is

Bulgaria



- **Joined NATO in 2004.**
- **Scheduled to obtain EU membership on Jan. 1, 2007.**
- **Signed an agreement with Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice in April 2006 to allow several already-established Bulgarian military facilities to be shared by U.S. and Bulgarian troops for training.**



- **Capital: Sofia**
- **Government: Parliamentary democracy**
- **Area: 110,910 square km., slightly larger than Tennessee**
- **Population: 7,385,367**
- **Population growth rate: -0.86%**

Source: CIA World Fact Book

both the supreme allied commander for NATO military operations and the commander of EUCOM, spoke about the changes in EUCOM. He said EUCOM and NATO have moved away from the reactive defensive missions that characterized the organization in the 20th century and moved toward building capabilities that can take on asymmetric threats.

The end result is a lighter footprint in Europe, Jones said.

Forward basing U.S. forces in Eastern Europe also creates the opportunity to help shape regional militaries so they can better interact with allies during combined operations, Ward said.

EUCOM and NATO are working to reinforce such concepts as an expeditionary force structure and a professional noncommissioned officer corps, he added.

“Transformation is not just about things. Transformation is about the intellectual aspects of thinking about the way you do business, as well,” he said. “And, quite frankly, before the physical part of transformation occurs, that intellectual shift has to occur.”

Such efforts benefit the United States as well, he said, because they make other countries better partners in the “Long War.”

The Eastern European initiative, called the Eastern European Command Post or the Eastern

European Task Force, will consist of a small permanent staff of U.S. servicemembers facilitating the rotation of U.S. brigades through Romanian and Bulgarian bases. These rotational brigades will conduct training with Eastern European militaries and be available to react to any potential developing crises in the region.

“The Eastern European Task Force is clearly an integral leg of a transformed U.S. European Command,” Ward said.

Ward described this arrangement with the host countries as a win-win situation. The host countries get training from U.S. forces, and the United States is allowed to base expeditionary forces in a key geographic region.

The notion of expeditionary forces being employed throughout U.S. Central Command in the war on terrorism is not new, Ward added, and is a part of Army transformation.

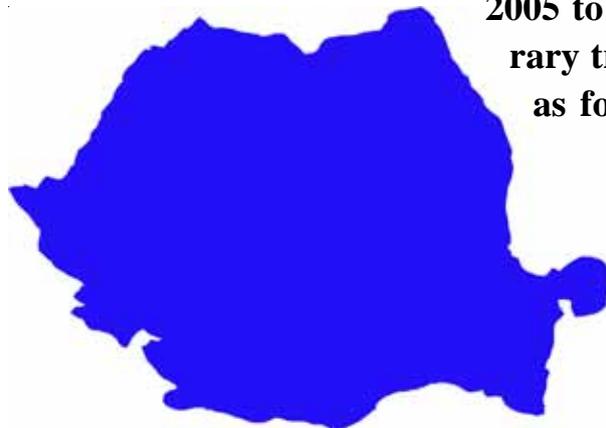
Once the Army transformation process is further along in Europe, a Stryker brigade combat team of the 2nd Cavalry, scheduled to move to Germany from Fort Lewis, Wash., this summer, and the 173rd Brigade Combat Team, based in Vicenza, Italy, will be available to rotate through the Eastern European Task Force as well, Ward said.

Information and quotes for this story were compiled from various DoD sources.

Romania



- **Joined NATO in 2004.**
- **Scheduled to obtain EU membership on Jan. 1, 2007.**
- **Signed an agreement with Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice in December 2005 to allow the U.S. military to establish temporary training bases in the country and use them as forward operating sites.**



- **Capital: Bucharest**
- **Government: Republic**
- **Area: 237,000 square km., slightly smaller than Oregon**
- **Population: 22,303,552**
- **Population growth rate: -0.12%**

Source: CIA World Fact Book

CUSTOMER SUPPORT



Catering to customer care

To emphasize the importance of customer relationship management, the Corps of Engineers Europe District held its first Customer Care Workshop April 4-5. The resulting initiative was simple: Find out what the customers want, and give it to them.

*Story by Justin Ward
Photos by Brian H. Temple*

Historically, the Corps has been inwardly focused, concentrating on processes, efficiencies, and conducting best business practices.

However, Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Carl Strock has recently and repeatedly indicated a strategic direction that focuses more on relationships. That is, striving to achieve customer satisfaction.

In Strock's strategic vision, headlined by the Corps' relatively new slogan – "One Team: Relevant, Ready, Responsive and Reliable" – he mentions how he'd like to see the Corps think more about "delighting the customer."

Mark Roncoli, deputy district engineer for the District, repeated this message during the two-day workshop in early April and illustrated his position by pointing

to the district's three-letter initialism, EUD. Although this has stood for both EUropean Division and EUrope District, it has also come to represent "Efficiency in service, Understanding customers, and Dedicated workforce."

Roncoli, in an effort to maintain emphasis on performance, added the following bullet to the initialism: "Project delivery performance."

"The reason we are doing this," said Col. Margaret Burcham, District commander, "is because, to me, customer service and customer care are extremely important to what we do. We are in the service industry, and the success and effectiveness of our customer care is going to make all the difference in how successful we are."

The workshop was held in response to feedback collected from a recent customer survey about the District's performance. "We did get a lot of feedback; and it was pretty useful feedback," Burcham said. "And as I read those comments, I thought, 'this is too valuable not to do something with.'"

The discussion helped participants dissect the meaning of customer relationships and allowed for an open forum on customer expectations and customer satisfaction.

It was explained in the workshop that communication is essential to effective relationship management, not only because customer expectations may shift, but also because the project delivery team's understanding of

the customer's expectations may shift.

Because of this, project managers should be responsible for establishing and maintaining continuous interfacing between the participants, it was explained.

Burcham reiterated this point at the June 20 town hall meeting held in Wiesbaden, Germany.

"Communication is key to solving almost any problem," she stressed, adding that regional program managers must strive to facilitate active dialog with the customer.

"They help facilitate liaison between the District and the customers we're supporting. And it's really important that they keep up the communication."

Also stressed at the meeting was the importance of continuity of program managers and other members of the project delivery team. "We can't always keep the same team every time," she allowed. People get promoted or shift jobs, she said, but continuity is so important to maintaining relationships that "we've got to keep that [shifting] to a real minimum."

On the other side of the coin are the customers. One of the biggest customers the District works with is the German Ministry of Construction, liaised by Herr Peter Fröhlich, a senior leader in the German Ministry of Construction. In response to a recent meeting with the District, Fröhlich indicated his desire for more unfettered communication, recommending the creation of an "unbureaucratic information platform"

"We are in the service industry, and the success and effectiveness of our customer care is going to make all the difference in how successful we are."

-Col. Margaret Burcham



The program and project managers at Europe District discuss with leadership the importance of practicing consistent customer relationship management throughout the organization during the Customer Care Workshop April 4-5 in the District's eighth floor conference room.

under the aegis of OFD (Oberfinanzdirektion) Koblenz.

Fröhlich implied that this team could manage in a more streamlined fashion the construction measures required by the District and be able to do so more efficiently and economically.

The shared desires of Fröhlich and the District were made public at the town hall meeting. "We're at the stage now where we've got to develop some specific customer action plans ... tailored to each customer about how we're going to specifically address that particular customer's concerns and achieve better success," Burcham said. "And then, once we got a plan, we gotta implement it. And we've got to get back to the customer to see how we're doing."

Burcham also brought up the conclusions of the workshop. Of prominent importance was proactive involvement with the customer, Burcham said. She explained this as, "going out and seeing what their needs are, what their concerns are. Don't wait until

they come to you."

Other conclusions included maintaining consistent messages and priorities and ensuring a quick flow of communication. "Whenever there's a change, tell them about it right away," she said. "If you know they need something and you're not going to be able to meet it, let 'em know as soon as possible. That gives them a chance to react."

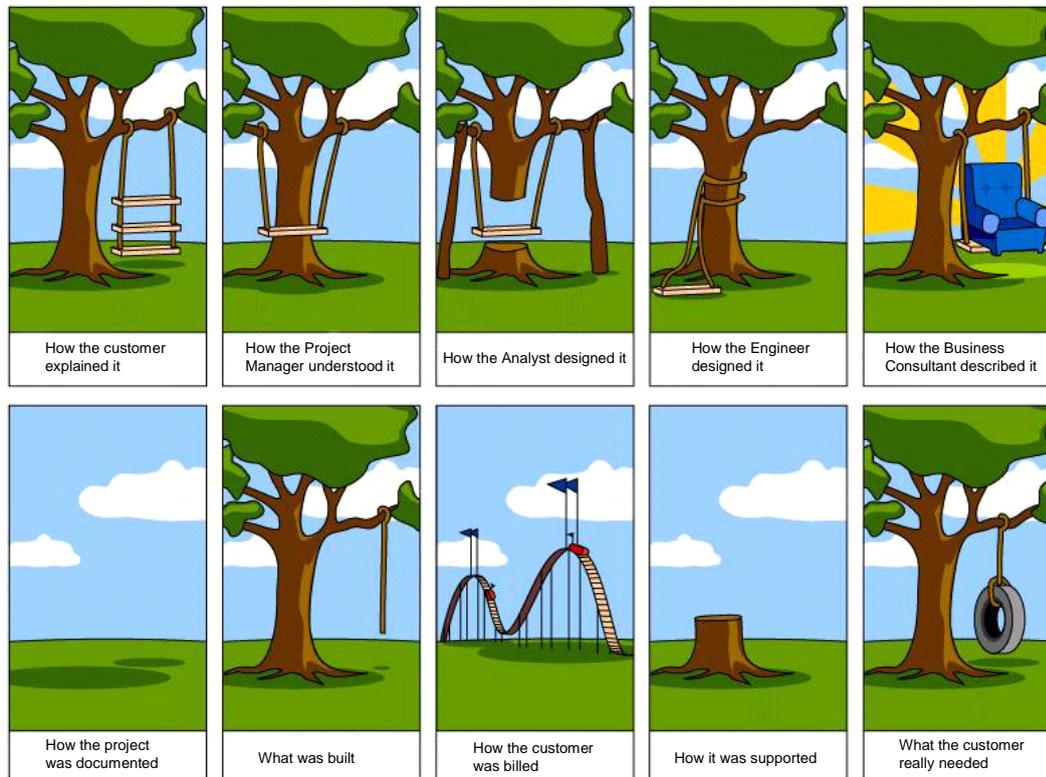
"If you know they need something and you're not going to be able to meet it, let 'em know as soon as possible. That gives them a chance to react."

-Col. Margaret Burcham, speaking about customer notification.

The Customer Care Workshop was the first step in forward momentum for the District. The topics discussed at the workshop could be expected to reappear at the monthly staff meetings and town hall meetings.

A topic to be discussed at the next workshop was strategic and tactical approaches to customer care

recovery. "We really have to think our way through this," she said, "especially if [there are] customers who are totally dissatisfied with the Corps. ... Those are the ones we want to zero-in on right away because I believe we can normally always recover from that."



This tire swing cartoon, shown during the Customer Care Workshop April 4-5, comically illustrates the outcome of multi-filtered communication. It demonstrates not only departmental barriers but also the challenges of active listening and of interpreting customers' needs.

Illustrator unknown

CONTRACTING SUPPORT

In the spotlight



The spotlight shines bright on center stage. Actors, singers, dancers, orators - all get applause for delighting an audience. But, what about the lighting directors, the set designers, the orchestra, the writers, and the countless others who are just as worthy of the spotlight's warmth? **Story by Brian H. Temple**

Sometimes the best these contributors see is a handshake from an appreciative cast member. But they know a show will not go on without their teamwork.

Without public accolades, they return because they enjoy what they do. They are part of a team, and they know the applause heard from beyond the curtain is for them as well.

In the process of construction management, there are players in the wings who do not get that center stage bow: the Project Delivery Team. People may applaud the addition of an important quality of life improvement in their community, but those on the PDT usually do not get the kudos.

Don't tell that to William "Bill" DeLozier, a Regional Program Manager from Europe District who led the PDT that recently completed the Dr. Benincaso Mother and Infant Pavilion at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy.

DeLozier, who held the position of the Contracting Officer Representative, was recently awarded the U.S. Army Contracting Command Europe's 2005 Award for Contracting Excellence for Outstanding Contracting Support.

He led an unconventional team of 15 agencies and contractors to award a \$3.2 million contract in 38 days with a performance period of 150 days to design and construct the facility.

"Mr. DeLozier kept the Project Delivery Team on track and focused on the task," said George "Leo" Hargreaves, of the Regional Contracting Office. "He provided timely design review and acceptance with no delays to the contractor's

construction schedule."

But, in construction, there isn't such a thing as a one-man show.

DeLozier said it all came together because each member had the passion to make it work. "Keys to this success were teamwork; communication and more communication; openness; the willingness to take risks, set schedules and deadlines and keep them; and looking forward for solutions and alternatives immediately."

Indeed, with so many players coordinating with each other, the process is easily left open to pitfalls. But the unconventional roles that many assumed meshed together to form a strong team and deliver an unparalleled facility.

"This was not your typical Corps PDT. This team consisted of members who are normally competitors for projects," DeLozier said of the RCO and the Navy construction office in Vicenza, who compete for business.

And, this was not the only unconventional approach.

The team took shape when European Regional Medical Center, the primary customer, chose the garrison's Department of Public Works and the RCO, instead of the Corps, as the primary lead agency. The twist was that ERMIC agreed to

the DPW's request to farm out the project management and to provide design review and quality assurance support.

Also unconventional was the RCO's appointment of a Corps employee as their COR for this project - a first in Vicenza.

To make it even more unique, the project also had multiple directors.

Commanders from U.S. Army Europe, ERMIC, the Southern European Task Force, and the Area Support Group provided continued direction, which ensured the project's timely completion.

"All approvals and funding were provided in a quick manner to keep this project on track and on time. They were involved in weekly updates and decisions," DeLozier said.

Also key was the active involvement and coordination of the prime contractor, the designers, the sub-contractors, and the six major vending contractors providing equipment for this project.

DeLozier is one of 14 devoted practitioners who received an Army Contracting Command Europe Award for contracting excellence. But according to DeLozier, no matter what the make up of the team, they all share the limelight for this production.

Dr. Benincaso Mother and Infant Pavilion PDT Members

- USAG Vicenza - DPW
- Regional Contracting Office - Vicenza
- European Regional Medical Center
- Navy Regional Office in Charge of Construction - Vicenza
- Vicenza Health Clinic
- Securitas di Scambi Dott.
- Prisma Engineering
- Andriolo SRL
- Homewood
- STERIS
- Phillips
- Hermann Miller
- Vicenza Resident Office

Topping Out, Topping Off

*Construction tradition from
Pre-Christian times continues
today in modern projects*

*Story and photos
by Justin Ward*

Today's European culture is steeped in pre-Christian history. Take for example the traditional Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter, which include elements not necessarily associated with Jesus Christ – such as the Christmas tree and the Easter bunny. According to various sources, these symbols date back to pre-Christian times when nature was deified and when early Christians wanted to include the pagan beliefs into Christianity in an effort to popularize the religion.

Other traditions from pre-Christian times continue today, even on construction sites.

One tradition is the “Topping Out” ceremony, which usually occurs when the only remaining assembly on a building is the final roof beam. A small tree or leafy wreath is then placed atop the structure, and a celebration is held to commemorate the successful construction of the edifice's framework.

It dates back to the time when Northern Europe was covered with a vast forest and those who lived here were dependent on the trees for survival. Low-hanging bows provided shelter; nuts and fruits from the trees provided food; fallen wood provided kindling for fire.

For centuries, the inhabitants of this area revered trees as deities. Scandinavian mythology suggests that the world sits upon the branches of an enormous tree that connects all living things through spirit. They even thought humans evolved from trees and that our souls return to the trees after death.

Before a wooden shelter could be constructed in those times, the builders would formally address

the forest, asking for its permission to use its trees. The topmost leafy branch of the tree used in construction would be set atop the roof of the structure so the tree spirit would not be rendered homeless.

As time passed, beliefs changed, but the tradition of placing a branch or small tree on



Col. Kurtis D. Lohide, commander, 435th Air Base Wing, Ramstein Air Base, thanks guests for coming to a recent Topping Out ceremony held at the base's general officer quarters.

A master carpenter stands near the rafters atop the newly completed building, reading an ode to the carpenter and the construction. After making several toasts to the future success of the building, he will bless the facility by shattering a glass against it.



the rafters or roof beams on top of a newly built structure remained, ostensibly to acquire a blessing of fertility for the land and the home from the forest god.

Whether out of habit or custom, the ritual has continued in Europe and has branched out to construction projects of all types in the United States and elsewhere, whether the structure is a home or a bridge and whether it's made from wood or steel.

In Germany, this tradition is known as a *Richtfest*, meaning the arranging festival. The term originated from the obligation of putting up or "arranging" the tree on the roof of the structure.

During this fest, dignitaries involved in the project are invited to make speeches and thank those who were involved in the construction. A master carpenter in traditional clothing is invited to recite a poem next to the tree that commemorates the construction. In between stanzas, he'll drink ceremonial wine or beer from a traditional glass and at the end of the tribute, throw it to the ground. With skill, the master carpenter will shatter the glass, thus indicating that the establishment has been blessed.

The Topping Out ceremony is one of many traditions throughout Europe that involve the blessing of structures through song and drink. And it is another unique aspect of the European society that Americans stationed abroad are able to experience.

Ramstein wins national award for installation excellence

Story by Justin Ward

Ramstein Air Base officials accepted in May the Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence, presented to one installation from each branch of service. Although the prestigious award was given to Air Force representatives, it recognizes all those team players who helped Ramstein become the best.

One of the key criteria to get the award is quality of life. And because of the recent transfer of airlift operations to from Rhein-Main Air Base to Ramstein, the construction of new quality-of-life facilities has significantly increased.

In charge of many of these new quality-of-life facilities is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District.

In the past two years, the district has helped design and construct a 120-person dormitory, a passenger terminal, a new fitness center, and two new general officer quarters. Most important to bringing quality of life to Ramstein, however, is the replacement of family housing units.

"MILCON housing replacement repair started in [fiscal year] 05 and will continue until [fiscal year] 09," said Brian Dykes, regional program manager. "The total housing program at Ramstein over this period is \$258.9 million and will ultimately involve the construction of 850 new housing units. It's by far the biggest program we're working on."

Col. Kurt Lohide, 435th Air Base Wing commander, agreed that quality of life is one of the most significant highlights of the base. "I believe Team Ramstein can be particularly proud of the IEA since it validates our efforts to make Ramstein the best base in the Air Force in terms of quality of life, customer service and innovation," said Lohide.

Along with the award, each installation received a check for \$1 million to be put toward further improving quality of life.

1st Lt. Tracy Page from the *Kaiserslautern American* contributed to this story.

Grafenwöhr: Setting standards



Graf is one of the DoD's largest ongoing military construction projects; its success could mean changes in the future of Corps construction

Story by Justin Ward

In three and a half years, the million-dollar construction projects at Grafenwöhr will have ended. The engineers and construction personnel who worked tirelessly together will have parted ways. And in three and a half years, the troops stationed on the northern Bavarian post may just view the technologically advanced facilities as modern convenience.

But in three and a half years, word will have spread about the implementation of the Efficient Basing initiative here. To those engineers and construction personnel who were involved in the construction ramp up of one of the most well thought-out installation development projects in recent military history, the Efficient Basing initiative will not be chronicled in the annals of times past. To them and to all their partners, coworkers, stakeholders, and other engineering and construction personnel, in three and a half years, Efficient Basing Grafenwöhr will be a project paradigm.

Once complete, USAREUR's EB-G initiative will consolidate a brigade combat team from 13 installations in central Germany to a single location. The impetus behind the project was to enhance readiness and gain efficiencies for the Army by lowering transportation costs, eliminating over 5 million square feet of inventory, and reducing USAREUR's operations costs by up to \$19 million per year.

"What's unique about EB-G, though, is collocation," said Edward Argueta, the EB-G program manager. "You have engineers sitting next to the construction side, and the interaction that setup has allowed has paid dividends."

Collocation has facilitated communication not only between the project and program coordinators, Argueta said, but also with the customer as well as the host nation. The shorter channels between parties have helped make possible a better understanding of the time, scope, and cost requirements, which, therefore, has helped EB-G move forward and adhere to customer expectations.

One fitting example of the success that has been spurred from the increased communication is the construction of the new physical fitness center – a complex so enormous that its footprint, including playing fields, is almost equal to about half the size of the entire footprint of the garrison facilities.

The complex, which cost \$13 million and which involved 16 different contractors and subcontractors, is a veritable campus, complete with indoor and outdoor tracks, a double basketball court, and an all-weather sports field.

Because of the emphasis placed on military construction at Grafenwöhr and the accommodating appropriations, this massive development went from charrette to grand opening in less than four years.

Collocation has also received flattering attention from Herr Peter Fröhlich, a senior leader in the German Ministry

of Construction, who has suggested expanding collocation to more construction and engineering partnerships between the German bauamts and the American military.

The success that collocation has brought to Grafenwöhr will also be looked at by the Corps of Engineers as a new way of implementing the meta-analysis that comes with DoD transformation. It is one step the Corps is taking to inject innovation and agility into its line of business.

And, in the end, the customer who benefits most from all this transformation is, of course, the Soldier.

“We’re obviously a part of the DoD initiative to realign the forces worldwide,” said Argueta. “In fact, the EB-G end state is quality of life to the Soldier and his or her family. That’s ultimately what we’re here for. And I’m proud as an individual to help deliver that piece of quality of life.”

Down the road a bit for Grafenwöhr is the completion of the largest quality of life improvement on the installation so far – the Netzaberg Village complex – which involves delivering to the end customer by 2007 several schools, a



Workers construct what will eventually become a new commissary on Grafenwöhr, to be completed by 2008. Construction projects on the installation will hit their peak in fiscal year 2007, with the majority of currently planned projects completing in 2008 or 2009.

child development center, and a youth center. By 2008 on Netzaberg the chapel and religious center are expected to be completed.

“That’s on a very tight timeline,” Argueta said.

In addition to those basic facilities that must be constructed, he said, the entire utility and road infrastructure that connects the initiative to the rest of the installation must also be

constructed, making for an even more involved undertaking.

But with the development of relationships that bloomed through using collocation, the outlook is sunny for Netzaberg and for Grafenwöhr. And in three and a half years, the engineers and construction personnel involved in the initiative will take pride in knowing they played a large part in furthering the DoD’s transformation goals.



Construction continues on the Netzaberg Village school complex, which is slated to be completed in 2007, just in time for the expected influx of Soldiers and their families. The complex will accommodate about 3,200 students in several buildings, including a kindergarten, an elementary school, and a middle school.

Grafenwöhr's Netzaberg Village:

Once complete in 2008, this housing complex will include a child development center, a chapel complex, a kindergarten, elementary and middle school, and a youth services center.

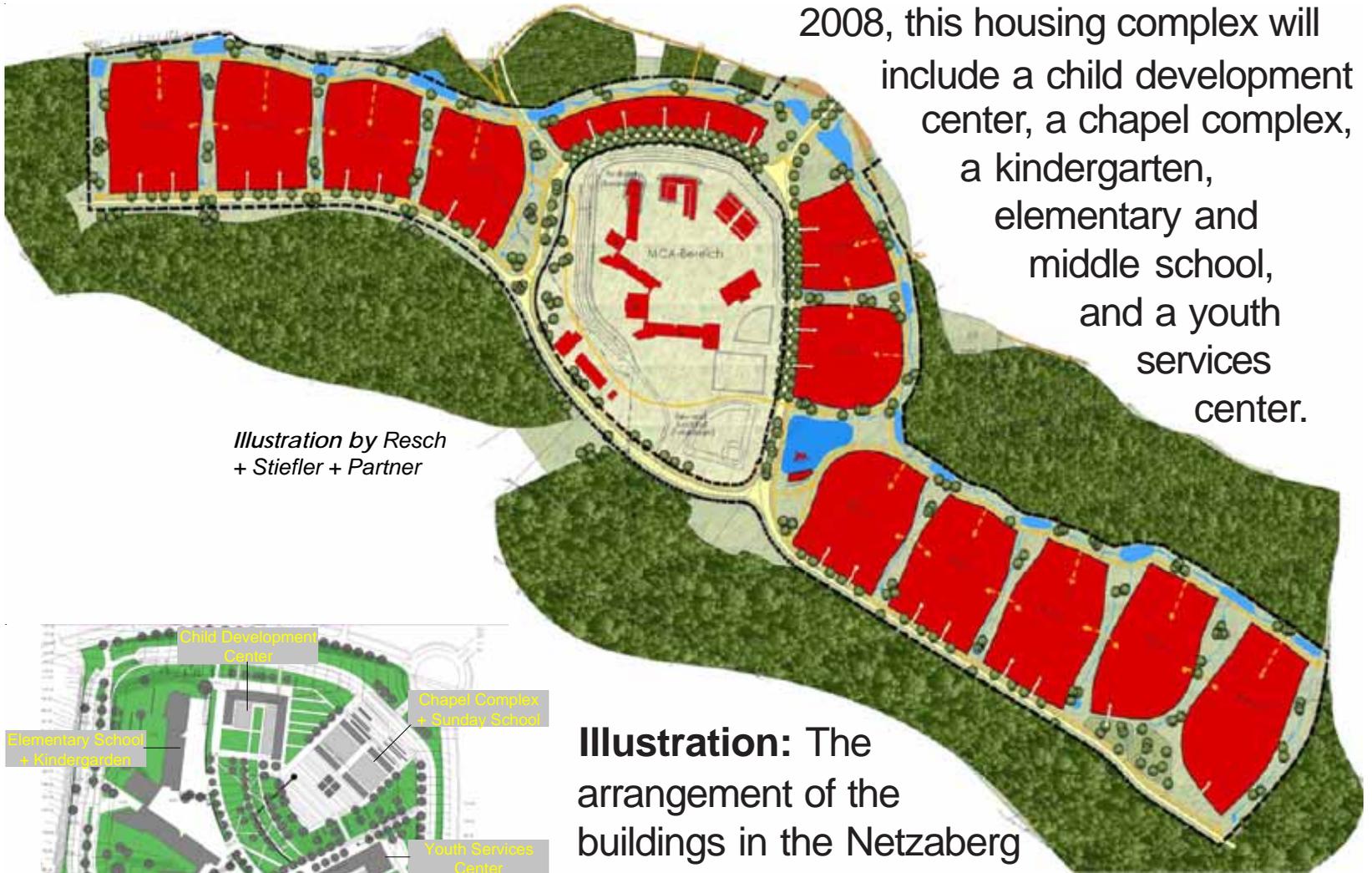


Illustration by Resch + Stiefler + Partner



Illustration by Baur Consult

Illustration: The arrangement of the buildings in the Netzaberg Village complex was based on convenience and proximity.

Aerial Shot: As seen from above, the school complex on Netzaberg as well as part of the youth services center and the chapel complex, are already under construction.



Photo by Justin Ward

In top form: Graf's \$13 million fitness complex healthy in services, design

Story by Justin Ward and Adriane Foss of the *Bavarian News*

Photos by Reinhard Mederer



Grafenwöhr's \$13 million physical fitness center that opened March 22 symbolizes to the Soldiers and civilians who will use the facility the importance Army leadership places on quality of life.

"Quality-of-life initiatives are incredibly important to retaining the cream of the crop," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston, who welcomed guests to the grand opening. "We always say we enlist a Soldier, but we reenlist a family."

But the facility can also symbolize the expertise that the Corps of Engineers Europe District brings to its projects.

From the construction side, the structure had to be designed to have a low impact on off-post residents, said Walter Bogdanow, deputy area engineer for the project. These constraints involved accounting for both sound and light pollution and eventually called for adjustments to how the building was oriented and how sound absorbing berms were incorporated.

From the technical side, the

designers as well as the customer wanted a facility that was both technologically modern and relatively simple to operate, said Peter Barth, a project manager at Grafenwöhr. To carry out this mission, Barth said a bus system was put into place that connects each electrical component to a centralized computer that manages and executes all of these tasks. "One person can control the entire facility - the temperature, lighting, [public address] system, monitoring, lighting for the sports field," said Barth. In essence, it's to use technology in lieu of manpower, and it has helped make the facility competitive with those in the States.

The commander of the U.S. Army Garrison, Grafenwöhr, Col. Brian Boyle, compared the facility to modern commercial fitness clubs in the States, saying, "There are very few facilities anywhere in the U.S. or overseas that can match the variety of equipment, skill of our fitness trainers, or the size of the new physical fitness center at Grafenwoehr," said Boyle.

"A quick Internet check of high-end stateside commercial gyms and fitness clubs will quickly reveal how much money Soldiers and family members will save on monthly fees by using the new center at Graf," he said.

Graf's new fitness center was designed with the environment and the local community in mind; its large windows allow natural light in, thereby lowering lighting costs.



Egg drop

Partnership tool to teach students about engineering combines education, fun

Splat! Albumen, yolk and broken shells covered the pavement, oozing. The ground looked like the aftermath of a blundering cook's attempt to prepare breakfast.

However, this culinary mess was not a display of cooking skills but rather an omelet of engineering talents.

The Corps of Engineers, Europe District partnered with the Wiesbaden American Middle School in May to test the engineering abilities of the students in the first-ever Egg Drop Challenge. The goal was to teach the students about problem solving, engineering, and team building, said Katie Ergenekon, District volunteer who led the coordination for the event.

The middle school's vice principal, Ken Younkin, said, "It was really interesting ... to see how excited the kids got about it. It was a neat combination of education and fun."

This was the second time this year District engineers volunteered at the middle school. Previously, during

Engineering Week in February, employees went to the school to talk about the concept of engineering. This time, however, the engineers led a more hands-on activity.

The students were divided into four-person teams and asked to construct a device that could protect an egg from a 17-foot drop.

But there were limitations that were put on the design and construction of the devices that made things a little more difficult.

First, the devices could only be constructed using a limited amount of Popsicle sticks, paper, string, rubber bands, paper clips, and tape.

Second, the students were advised to

*Story by Marisa Richards
Photos by Justin Ward*



keep their devices small, as excess weight and height could subtract points from their overall score.

Third, the devices had to be constructed to be accurate, as distance from the target was also a limiting factor.

Other than that, they were free to design the device any way they pleased. This included having fun and using the knowledge they learned during Engineering Week about structures.

One 7th grader, Tyler Haner, said he constructed his device to resemble a triangle because, "the engineers said that the triangle was stronger than the square."

Another student said about the engineers' visit in February: "That stuff you taught us early in the year works."

Of 115 teams that participated, 26 of them successfully completed the two-story drop at the middle school. From there, the surviving devices were carefully carried to the Amelia Earhart Building where they were dropped from the 4th floor. If the egg survived the drop, the device was then taken to the next higher floor and dropped.

The winning device, called "The Eggiis," was constructed by a 7th grade team in Linda McIntyre's



▲ A student roars in disbelief while witnessing the crash of yet another unsuccessful egg-protecting device during the first day of the two-day egg drop at the Wiesbaden American Middle School.

▼ Students proudly line up to prepare their teams' devices for the 17-foot drop out of a window at the Wiesbaden American Middle School.



SUPPORTING EDUCATION

class. The Eggiis, which survived the 8th floor drop, was designed by Kaitlin Foster, Emmy Kelly, Carissa Corrigan, and Brittney Mitchell.

But even the teams that didn't make it to the Amelia Earhart Building finals still had fun and learned about the field of engineering, Ergenekon said. "We think it is important for the students to realize their effort was not in vain, even if their egg broke."

In an e-mail from Ergenekon to the school, she wrote the challenge generated confidence for the school's students and teachers as well as the Europe District volunteers. She also wrote she was glad to hear comments from the students such as "engineering is kind of fun" and "I wouldn't mind being an engineer."

The vice principal was equally supportive of the event and added that the students, "see [engineering] as a career. It gave them an appreciation for the career field."

He added that the partnership between the District and the school was very positive. "We have made a connection."

► District volunteer Katie Ergenekon triumphantly displays an egg that remained intact from the two-story drop behind the Wiesbaden American Middle School.

▼ District volunteers Kellis Nobles and Katie Ergenekon reveal to eager students the messy consequence of an unsuccessful device.





◀ Col. Margaret Burcham, district commander, prepares to drop “The Phoenix Reborn” from the second story window of the Wiesbaden American Middle School during the egg drop competition there while sixth-grader Anya Holvanic looks on.

▼ A egg-shaped gravestone, commemorating the yolk spilled on the parking lot behind the middle school, congratulates teams on a job well done.



◀ District volunteer James “Dusty” Stehr proudly informs a student waiting on the second story about a successful drop.

A photograph of two young women in the foreground, looking shocked with their mouths wide open. They are surrounded by other people in the background, some of whom are also looking in the same direction. The scene appears to be outdoors, possibly at a school event.

Splat! Sunny side down

Six graders Nichole Rhonden and Stephanie Cintron gape at the sight of one of their classmate's egg-protecting devices crashing onto the pavement behind the Wiesbaden American Middle School from a second-story drop May 15. The event was held to spark the imagination of active young minds and give them a realization that engineering and science can be fun.

Photo by Justin Ward