

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



Photo by John Rice

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.

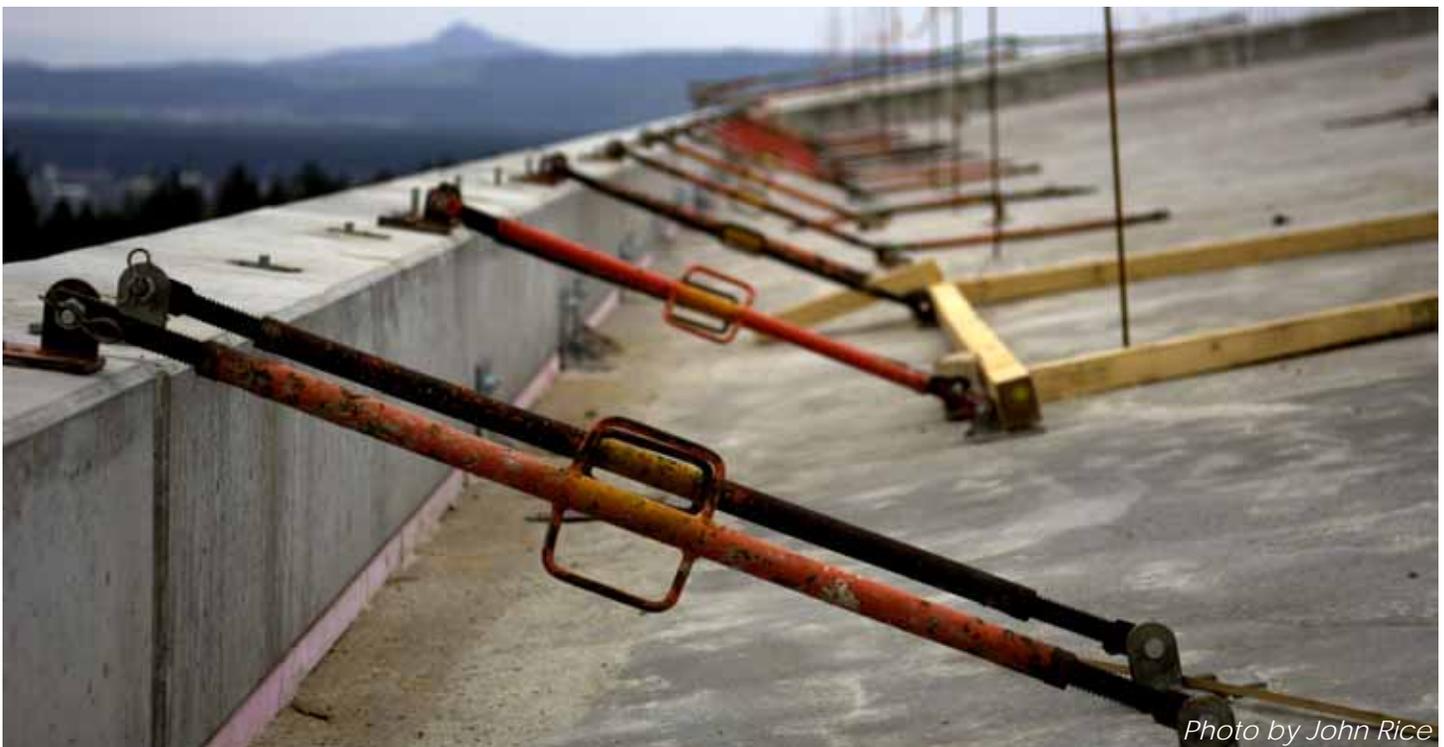


Photo by John Rice

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.