



# Transforming the Air Force

From what people have been reading in the news, many may think military transformation affects only the Army. And, who can blame them, considering the synchronized waltz of base realignment in Western Europe and “lily pad” formation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia?

But the Air Force is also dancing a transformation jig of sorts, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, is helping them get the moves right.

*Story by Justin Ward*

The Air Force is shifting its warfighting capabilities to meet the demands of a changing security environment.

One of the most noticeable displays of Air Force transformation in the European Command is taking place on Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, where the U.S. Air Force-Europe once had one of the most impressive fighter wings in Europe.

At one point, there were as many as 140 American F-16s stationed there helping enforce the no-fly zone in Iraq during Operation Northern Watch.

2003 changed all that.

The base, located about 7.5 miles east of Adana, the fourth largest city in Turkey, started to shift to airlift and logistics missions in support of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Essentially, refueling and cargo sustainment operations for expeditionary forces moved in while operations in support of Northern Watch moved out.

In all, it was much different than flying fighter jets.

“It’s more of an addition of mission,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Scott Warner, 39<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron commander at Incirlik. “We still have the capability to do that,” Warner said of operating the fighter mission, “but that mission has taken a backseat to the day-to-day logistics operation.”

The additional mission has dramatically altered the use of the existing facilities and has made for burgeoning business for Europe District, which has been tasked with a lot of the engineering, design, and construction projects there.

The District currently has two projects directly aiding the logistics mission. The first is an improvement to the airfield’s “Apron A” area, a parking, taxiing, and maintaining zone adjacent to the U.S. side of the flightline that, until recently, was partially constructed with asphalt sections.

Larger military and civilian aircraft had



Three F-16CJ Fighting Falcons from the 55th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron taxi at Incirlik Air Base for the last time in 2003. The fighters were returning home to Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., after supporting Operation Northern Watch for several years. *U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Joseph Thompson*



As part of the new logistics mission, Staff Sgt. Nolan Jones pushes pallets off a C-17 Globemaster III at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. Jones is assigned to the 728th Air Mobility Squadron's aircraft services team.

*Photo by Airman 1st Class Joseph Thompson*