

# Engineering IN EUROPE

## Wiesbaden's Big Dig

New townhome community marks first visible steps in 7th Army's move to Hessen

## Uncle Sam wants you ... to work in Israel

A spate of new projects in Israel leads Corps to look for talented American contractors



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Europe District  
Vol. 5 Spring 2009



## As priorities shift, challenge yourself to reach greater heights

Europe District Team,

We're working in an age of rapid transformation. Global rebasing, burgeoning partnerships in Eastern Europe and Africa, and new technologies and standards are transforming the way we work. At the same time, shifting contingency support priorities and an increased focus on volunteerism are transforming our personnel expectations.

This transformation is difficult. Not only must we continue to solve our customers' toughest engineering problems, we must also learn new systems and challenge ourselves to soar to greater heights.

I want you to know I'm proud of the work you continue to accomplish every day. I also want you to know where I think we need to start focusing our efforts in the future.

### **LEEDing the way to BIM**

As you know, we do more than deliver custom-made projects throughout Europe and Africa; we also uphold the highest standards to ensure our products and services are always forward-looking and environmentally responsible.

One of our biggest successes has been embracing the LEED rating system, which guides our design and construction of high-performance, environmentally-friendly buildings. For over a year now, we have required all vertical construction projects with climate-controlled facilities to achieve a LEED-New Construction Silver rating. And I'm proud of what you've accomplished.

Along the same lines, we're now looking at the Building Information Modeling process (BIM), which uses three-dimensional, real-time software to link a graphic illustration to the actual details of a project. Embracing this new system will require implementing more than just new software. It will require changing the relationship between architecture and engineering to allow for more data sharing and document referencing.

Similar to LEED, BIM will show us a new way to think about projects. And in the coming months and years, we'll advance our efforts to incorporate BIM into our operations. In the meantime, I encourage you to learn more about how this new standard can be integrated into your work to ensure we continue BUILDING STRONG to deliver progressive engineering and construction solutions.

### **Challenging yourself**

Along with embracing innovations and new technology, we've been asked to develop a high-performance culture that leverages and enhances the strengths of every individual through volunteerism. Most pressingly, we are looking for volunteers for two teams – our FEST-A team, who most recently returned from Afghanistan, and our NAD team in Afghanistan.

The accomplishments of our FEST-A team were truly amazing. They conducted master planning in southern Afghanistan to prepare for the surge of 30,000 servicemembers, including over 550 detailed designs, for about \$650 million in construction. Without a doubt, these experiences are challenging, rewarding, and good for marketability. If you're interested in gaining this kind of experience, I highly encourage you to join our FEST team.

Additionally, we are now supporting NAD's mission to provide key personnel to serve in Afghanistan. The overall population is much poorer than Iraq and even the smallest projects can have a tremendous impact on the lives of the locals. I have been to Afghanistan several times, and it is very interesting and challenging work. If you're not sure if this opportunity is for you, consider talking to our many trail-blazing District teammates who have deployed. We boast a unique pool of highly-qualified and exceptionally-motivated employees throughout Europe who demonstrate enthusiastic volunteerism every day, and I'm sure they can all attest to the dynamic and rewarding nature of deployment.

I am proud of our pioneering spirit and I am confident we have what it takes to fill these vital requests for volunteers around the world.

I am also confident that together we can continue the Corps' world-class outreach and prove to the nation and the world that we can follow through with our mantra of BUILDING STRONG ... Anywhere ... Anytime.

Essays!

  
JOHN S. KEM  
COL, EN  
Commanding

# U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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### On the Cover



Photo by Justin Ward

Excavators scrape dirt and grass off empty bunkers on the Wiesbaden Army Airfield's Basic Load Ammunition Storage Area April 16. The demolition of this site is the first large-scale action in support of 7th Army's move to Wiesbaden.

## CHECK OUT THE INN!

### Goodbye, American Arms Hotel Hello, new and modern Army lodge

Story by Danielle Stephens  
Special to Engineering in Europe  
Photos by Justin Ward



Although the venerable American Arms has been a Wiesbaden mainstay since the 1950s, it's time for an update, said Michael Dennis, District construction representative for the lodge. "If you've PCSed or visited Wiesbaden, you'll probably agree with the need for a new lodge."

In a little less than two years from the October 2007 groundbreaking ceremony, this new \$32 million, 164-room Army Lodge in the Hainerberg military family housing area will have taken shape as one of the most modern-looking buildings in Wiesbaden.

Its ultra-modern multi-colored glass, steel, and concrete façade will encase roughly 22,000 square feet of standard rooms, extended-stay rooms, and family suites, most with kitchenettes.

"The lodge will include pet friendly rooms, a fitness room, guest laundry on each floor, and free continental breakfast," said Patrick Roybal, Europe District's former project manager for the new lodge. "It will include the typical standard amenities found in hotels on the economy but at more reasonable rates."

Besides the modern design, the lodge is the first to use standardized "puzzle-piece" room designs, which engineers say will be used for all future Army lodges in Europe.

Across the parking lot and landscaping area will be a \$10 million entertainment center that will include a restaurant, 16-lane bowling center, billiards hall, dance club, slot ma-

chines, and party/meeting rooms.

And the new access roads will connect it easily with the rest of the facilities in the Hainerberg area, including the PX, commissary, and DoDDS schools.

"The commissary and the PX and the shopping area are within walking distance," said Michael Dennis, District construction representative. "And for military families PCS'ing, that would be very convenient."

Since the site's groundbreaking, the Family and Morale Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC) and the local contractor, *Hessisches Baumanagement*, have worked hard to ensure that the lodge stays on budget and on schedule.

Unlike similar facilities stateside, the Wiesbaden lodge is built using German construction methods, said Dennis. For stability, the foundation is reinforced with multiple concrete columns that reach deep into the ground. And for soundproofing, the walls contain double layers of gypsum board.

It will also retain the force protection standards common in American military facilities, said Horst Engelke, a structural engineer with the District. The building's force protection windows and façades

"have been reviewed against the blast of vehicle bombs with a standoff distance of 45 meters," he said.

"The Corps of Engineers appreciates this opportunity to improve the quality of life for servicemembers, families, and civilians of the Wiesbaden Military Community," said Dennis.

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*"The Corps of Engineers appreciates this opportunity to improve the quality of life for servicemembers, families and civilians of the Wiesbaden Military Community."*

-Michael Dennis,  
Europe District construction  
representative for the new  
Wiesbaden Army lodge

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## Did you know?

The land now known as the Wiesbaden Army Airfield was a racetrack, well known throughout Europe for its excellent horse races. Around 1917, due to the decline in attendance, sponsors included aerial performances, in which some of the most famous German stunt pilots made their appearances.

For more history on the WAAF, visit [www.wiesbaden.army.mil/sites/about/history.asp](http://www.wiesbaden.army.mil/sites/about/history.asp)

“We believe that this lodge marks a significant contribution and we are pleased to be a part of this project.”

The construction of the lodge is part of a five-year transformation for the Wiesbaden Military Community that began in 2007. “There were projects awarded at the end of fiscal year 2007, but the construction for the Military Retention Intelligence Brigade, which was the first major unit to move to Wiesbaden, occurred in 2008,” explained Roger Gerber, director of transformation for the Wiesbaden garrison. “And now we are doing the renovation for the Signal Command. As for new construction, the lodge is the first major MILCON [military construction] project.”

In addition to the new lodge, the transformation currently includes roughly \$250 million in design and construction in Wiesbaden, including \$60 million in Army family housing renovations, a \$60 million command and control center at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield, and about \$130 million to construct up to 324 new housing units, said Gerber.

Another \$250 million in design and construction for more operational facilities intended for incoming units as well as more support facilities like a new PX and commissary will be put into the Wiesbaden community in the near future.

The new construction is part of USAREUR’s goal throughout Europe to “become more efficient in the main operating bases,” said Gerber. To accomplish this, some bases will be returned back to their respective host nations while others, like Wiesbaden, mushroom to accept displaced units.

As for the American Arms Hotel: “It’s been announced for return to its nation, but the date is left to be determined,” explained Gerber. The hotel is made up of two towers — one that is used as lodging, and the other as office space.

“We may turn one tower over before the other — that has not been determined yet,” said Gerber. “The office tower we are going to need until we are done with all construction and renovation in Wiesbaden.”



After almost two years of construction, the U.S. Army’s 164-room Wiesbaden lodge, said to be one of the most modern-looking buildings in the German city, is nearing completion. (Top right) The extended-stay rooms and family suites will include contemporary kitchenettes.



## Wiesbaden prepares new townhomes Project marks first visible steps in 7th Army's move to Hessen

Story and photos by Justin Ward

“*This housing project is monumental not only in its size, but also in its symbolism ... By building this community, we're setting the stage for the future footprint of the Armed Forces in Europe.*”

—Sibylle Ballnath,  
Project Manager,  
U.S. Army  
Corps of Engineers  
Europe District

With the demolition of a few empty storage bunkers south of the Wiesbaden Army Airfield recently, a new era has begun.

The flattening of the garrison's Basic Load Ammunition Storage Area is the first significant step to prepare a 99-acre tract of land for a new \$133 million military family housing community.

The project marks the first Army-funded townhouse community in Wiesbaden — a change in direction from stairwell living.

It also marks the first visible sign of 7th Army Headquarter's move from Heidelberg to Wiesbaden.

“This housing project is monumental not only in its size, but also in its symbolism,” said Sibylle Ballnath, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe District project manager for the site. “It may not look like a lot now. But that's what makes it interesting. Not often can a construction project look like so little but say so much.”

Of the many construction projects in

the works in support of 7th Army's transition from Heidelberg to Wiesbaden, this is the first large-scale one coming out of the design phase, Ballnath said. Until this point, 7th Army's move existed only in blueprints.

“By building this community, we're setting the stage for the future footprint of the Armed Forces in Europe,” said Ballnath. “I'm excited to be playing a part in that transformation.”

By early 2012, plans call for up to 324 new townhouses, duplexes, and single family homes to be built for the staffers of 7th Army's operational facilities. The



Artist's renditions of the exterior (left) and interior (above) of the new \$133 million Army family housing community to be built south of the Wiesbaden Army Airfield by 2012.

community will include a mix of three- and four-bedroom quarters ranging from junior enlisted to general officer.

Recreation areas will include 10 playgrounds, seven picnic areas with grills and shelters, two sports fields, two community plazas for yard sales and shuttle bus service, and a running path.

When fully funded, the two-phased construction project will be the Army's largest ever in Wiesbaden.

"This is an extremely important project," said Roger Gerber, director of transformation for the Wiesbaden garrison. "It is critical that these houses are built before the move of 7th Army to Wiesbaden."

The design is typical of American suburbia, said Ballnath. Each unit will have an attached garage, small front and back yards, built-in closets, built-in kitchens, and hardwood floors.

Typical of new housing in Germany, the units will be fashioned from precast concrete walls and include a thermal insulation composite system and wooden pitched roofs with concrete tiling.

"We're working on options now to standardize the whole subdivision so that the houses have the same features and overall appearance," said Tammie Stouter, the Corps' regional program manager for Wiesbaden. "We'll have anywhere from two to four contractors building these houses throughout the phases, so what we don't want is a house on one street looking completely different from a house on another street."

Tight environmental considerations regulate that the units meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver rating because of the selective materials used, the water and energy efficiencies designed, and the sustainability of the existing outdoor environment, said Stouter.

Pre-construction plans for the community include a new access road for the South Gate (the old road will serve as construction transit), a relocated public bus

stop, a rerouted agricultural road, a dust protection wall, and a new perimeter fence.

Other actions include protection of an endangered species; surveying and clearing unexploded ordinance; examining and collecting small archeological relics; and the complete upgrade of the water, sewer, electrical, heating, and telecommunications infrastructure for the new community.

"To transform the Wiesbaden military community into the headquarters for command and control of all Army forces in Europe, we are building operational and community support facilities as well as upgrading our family and single Soldier housing," said Gerber.

Future projects in support of 7th Army's move to Wiesbaden currently include the 290,000-square-foot 7th Army Command and Control Facility to accommodate over 1,000 personnel, the Consolidated Intelligence Center, a Network Warfare Center, and some additional projects to improve the community's quality of life.

The bulk of this construction is



**The demolition of the Basic Load Ammunition Storage Area is the first step in preparing for the \$133 million housing community, the largest ever on the Wiesbaden garrison.**

**SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS**

# **UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU... TO BE HERE**

*Story by Lou Fioto, Special to Engineering in Europe  
Photos by John Rice*

Uncle Sam wants you to see the home of Judaism and Christianity. He wants you to earn good pay in a sunny climate doing work you are proficient in and enjoy — work that is personally and professionally rewarding and that you know will help an important ally. What could be better than that?

Yes, Uncle Sam wants you. He wants you to bring your talent and expertise to Israel.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is overseeing more work than ever in Israel. But it still needs the support of talented contractors to execute the construction. Could it be you?

What started as construction oversight support after the Wye River Memorandum in the late 90s led to a spate of military construction projects in Israel for the Corps of Engineers' Europe District office. These projects, including runways, barracks, and high-tech command centers, not only help the Israeli Ministry of Defense — a strategic U.S. ally — execute its mission, but they also assist contractors with their bottom line.

And if that weren't enough, said Maj. Sebastian Pastor, deputy area com-

mander, Israel Area, there are also wonderful travel opportunities, cultures to learn more about, and lifelong business partnerships just waiting to be explored.

"There are so many rewards of living and working here that I don't think I could name them all if I tried," said Pastor. "We oversee valuable and technically challenging work for great customers in perhaps the most historically interesting country in the world. And the beaches are awesome."

Moti Shukron of M+W Zander, a full-service architecture, engineering, and construction services firm, agrees

that working on valuable and technically challenging facilities in Israel is a reward in itself.

"The critical nature of the projects is reflected in the high standards of quality and project management that are required by the specifications," Shukron said. "By meeting the requirements of the Corps' safety and construction quality control program and by constructing the projects to both American and Israeli regulations, [we] ensure excellence in the finished product."

Shukron also said M+W Zander is very proud of the valuable work it has completed with the Corps of Engineers, including the largest Military Operations in Urban Terrain



# SUPPORTING THE ENVIRONMENT

(MOUT) site in the world.

"We are very proud of the challenging projects we have designed and constructed for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Israel over the years," said Shukron. "We fully understand and appreciate how important these facilities are to the State of Israel and security of the Israelis."

Similar comments come from Se Ung Kim, president of Cosmopolitan, Inc., a family-owned overseas construction contractor that has built U.S. government facilities since 1973 but only recently ventured into Israel.

"It has been a privilege and an enriching experience to work for and with USACE in the Holy Land," said Kim. "Living and working in Israel has truly benefitted us personally as well as pro-

fessionally. My wife travels with me; ... my son, Brian Kim, serves as our firm's project manager; his wife is also here in Israel with us."

Cosmopolitan is currently building new aircraft hangars at Nevatim Air Base, located in the northern part of the Negev Desert.

"We are impressed as well as humbled by the friendliness of the people as well as the unforgettable terrain," Kim continued. "We are eager to pick up more work here in Israel. In the past year we have developed many strong local subcontractor relations as well as resources in other neighboring countries. ... We look forward to remaining here and furthering our business relationships with the USACE."

## Europe District's perspective

Two Europe District project engineers working in Israel, Gary Jones and Ofer Davidi, come from different backgrounds but will tell you the same thing.

Jones, an American from Cincinnati, is working on an \$8 million vehicle maintenance complex, which includes a major repair building of over 32,000 square feet. He has also worked on a project to upgrade ammunition bunkers and will soon begin working on a \$20 million project to build maintenance shops, hangars, and headquarters to support unmanned aerial vehicles.

Davidi, an Israeli, is working on several projects totaling \$50 million. They include a hangar project for maintenance of Boeing 707s and C-130s, a

## Did you know?

The Wye River Memorandum, which implemented in 1998 an earlier agreement between Israel and the Palestine Authority, was brokered at the Aspen Institute, located on the Wye River – a branch of the Chesapeake Bay on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The original Wye River is in the United Kingdom, creating part of the border between Wales and England.



The dry storage base known as Nachshonim, located east of Tel Aviv, was one of several large design-build projects ordered by the 1998 Wye River Memorandum and completed through a partnership with a U.S./Israeli joint venture firm. The base is designed into 10 pie slices, with roads connected to the center like spokes on a wheel.

squadron complex and memorial center for the Israeli Air Force, a hangar project for an airdrop unit, and a commander's office complex. Previously, he helped build F-16 squadron complexes on Israeli Air Force bases.

Both will tell you that working in Israel is challenging, exciting, and rewarding.

"Working here in Israel has been a great experience," Jones said. "I came here after doing a tour in Iraq, and the work has a bit of the 'tip of the spear' feel that I experienced there. ... Of course the fantastic upside is that we live in great housing with our families, have great beaches, wonderful cultural and recreational opportunities all around, and have warm, sunny days most of the year. I think USACE is building a strong reputation here for delivering quality construction,

and the fact that we are strengthening the capabilities of such an ally is just icing on the cake."

Said Davidi: "For me, working in Israel with the Corps is like 'dancing in two weddings', which is an Israeli expression. First, I get to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an organization with years of experience and a business culture that adds a lot to the construction environment in Israel. Second, my work with the Corps is supporting my homeland, which gives me great joy."

Perhaps the biggest worry for American contractors considering projects in Israel would be security threats, said Jones. But the violence, he added, is rare and localized to those areas closest to the Gaza Strip.

"The rockets out of the Gaza Strip have been aimed at Israeli towns, but they are inaccurate and limited in range. They don't reach the part of the country where most of us live and work," Jones said. "Security is serious business here, and the Israelis do it well. There are guards at the entrances to most malls and shopping centers, and you pass through metal detectors and have your bags checked just like I did at a Reds game back home in Cincinnati. The embassy employs roaming guards who check our homes regularly, 24-7-364. They don't on Yom Kippur, when nobody in the country drives anywhere.

"Even though as U.S. government employees we receive danger pay, I feel so secure here that I let my daughter walk the several blocks to her friend's house at 11 p.m. without a second thought," he continued.

Exciting challenges in an historic and exotic locale. Rewarding jobs that are helping to make a difference in the world. Great opportunities, good pay, excitement, adventure. Prestige and a sense of accomplishment. What more could you ask for?

Uncle Sam wants you. Why don't you answer the call?

***"Security is serious business here, and the Israelis do it well. ... The embassy employs roaming guards who check our homes regularly ... ."***

**-Gary Jones, Europe District project engineer, Israel Area Office**



**SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

**FALLEN SOLDIER'S DEEP  
CROATIAN ROOTS  
AID LOCAL CHILDREN**



CRO



*"The humanitarian assistance projects for me are the highlight of my career, both military and civilian. I've worked military construction for many years and there is obviously a sense of accomplishment with that, but nothing like you obtain from doing a humanitarian assistance project."*

**—John Thomas, Construction Representative,  
Mediterranean Area Office**

**F**orty years ago on a barebones basketball court in the small village of Debeljak, Croatia, 7-year-old Ivica could always be found honing his hook shot and strengthening his spin move.

Often he would practice with friends, other times alone, and sometimes late into the evening. He became well known within the community for his basketball skills and dedication to the game. The court was his. Those who knew him recognized his ambition and knew he would make something out of himself.

Since his time playing hoops, Ivica Jerak moved to the United States and became a highly-decorated Soldier in the U.S. Army, moving up to the rank of master sergeant. He served with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Fort Bragg, N.C., just before deploying to Iraq in 2005. And it was there, while serving in combat operations, that he was killed by an IED.

Today the small Croatian village still knows the name Ivica Jerak, and the basketball court is now the focal point of the whole community. But now, it sports a new backboard, new layer of asphalt and new lights to allow for community league night play.

It also has a memorial plaque with his name on it.

"Hopefully [these renovations] will somewhat lessen the pain for the community by providing a small reminder of the master sergeant for his service and dedication not only to America but also to Croatia," said John Thomas, the Corps of Engineers' construction representative for the project.

### **Hammers and nails**

The U.S. European Command (EUCOM) funded renovations were unveiled in a mid-March ceremony attended by Jerak's mother, Milka, his wife, Hye, and several dignitaries including the U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Robert Bradtke, the Croatian Army commander, the Croatian Minister of the Sea, Transportation and Infrastructure, and local politicians.

Those renovations include the restoration of cracked flooring in four school classrooms — the same elementary school Master Sgt. Jerak attended — new perimeter fencing around the school's playground and basketball court, new concrete curbs, and the purchasing of sports equipment.

"The Corps is always ready to help execute and turn over the projects for our customers and for the local community," said Thomas. "We enjoy working on these projects and are heartened by the fact that we're helping strengthen relationships between these communities and our military."

The \$130,000 project, managed by the Europe District, not only supported an impoverished community and paid tribute to a fallen Soldier, but also nurtured the small community's economy by cultivating relationships with several budding construction companies.

"It's been a wonderful time working with the local contractor and the local people," said Thomas. "Everyone has been extremely available to do anything necessary to get the work done."

The humanitarian assistance project was nominated by the U.S. Embassy

# SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Zagreb's Office of Defense Cooperation staff, which is responsible for coordinating security assistance activities and defense cooperation programs with the Croatian Ministry of Defense.

The project took five months to complete and will be able to remain the focal point of the small community for generations to come, said U.S. Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) commander Maj. Gen. Frank Kisner in his speech at the event.

"These renovations will keep Master Sgt. Jerak's memory in our hearts

and improve the lives of the children and the citizens of this great village," said General Kisner.

### Smart power

The EUCOM humanitarian assistance project, sponsored by SOCEUR, is part of a larger program being employed more frequently in the region, which was fragmented by ethnic violence in the mid-1990s, said Charles Brady, EUCOM's humanitarian assistance program manager.

"We want to make an outreach and show them what a professional mili-

tary does," said Brady. "And here's an example of where a military force is fixing, not breaking. Here's a military that's looking to rebuild friendships."

The humanitarian assistance program supports the U.S. DoD's mission to build relationships, Brady continued, and, more importantly, to build partner nation capabilities.

"We aren't the teachers. We aren't the community leaders," Brady said. "We simply help those local populations where we can to allow them to ensure that there's an environment that's inhospitable to terrorists — to

**A site inspection group gathers near the newly renovated playground in Debeljak, Croatia. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe District managed the \$130,000 EUCOM-funded renovation.**



**Above, Croatian and American dignitaries including the U.S. Ambassador to Croatia pose in front of a plaque outside a newly renovated playground in Debeljak, Croatia, dedicated to the memory of native son and U.S. Soldier killed in Iraq in 2005, Master Sgt. Ivica Jerak.**

**Before the playground officially opened March 16, a few adventurous local school-aged children found a way inside to test the equipment. The playground equipment was furnished through a partnership with the U.S. Embassy Zagreb and the local community.**



provide them with essential services that they could then leverage to be able to sustain themselves.”

This capacity-building is one of the many benefits of the assistance program, which funds more than \$20 million in projects throughout Europe annually, Brady said.

The Europe District is currently working on 12 projects throughout seven countries in the EUCOM theater of operations totaling about \$4.5 million. The projects — averaging about \$375,000 — include just over \$1 million in projects in both Albania and Georgia and another \$700,000 in the former Yugoslavia.

Under the U.S. Africa Command’s humanitarian assistance program, the District is executing another 18 projects in five African countries, totaling about \$2.6 million.

Their projects include 34 new or renovated water systems, 13 school projects, four medical clinics, and a variety of miscellaneous orphanages, grain banks, sanitary facilities, and community centers.

“The humanitarian assistance projects for me are the highlight of my career, both military and civilian,” said Thomas. “I’ve worked military construction for many years and there is obviously a sense of accomplishment with that, but nothing like you obtain from doing a humanitarian assistance project.”

## Projects **BENE**-fit garrison, community

With millions in projects, Belgium area office members are transforming Chièvres Air Base into a state-of-the-art installation

*Stories by Rachel Goodspeed*

Before World War I, there was nothing but fields.

In the 1940s, the Germans turned a single grass runway into an airfield called air base 404.

And in the 1950s and 1960s, NATO decided to place their military force's central command, known as SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) nearby, increasing the value of the airfield and starting the first of several waves of improvements to the base.

Today, a massive makeover wave is once again underway in this sleepy farming community in central Belgium with the intent to make Chièvres Air Base one of the most modern military facilities in Europe by early next decade.

After recently being dubbed an enduring installation and receiving an influx of new troops from Stuttgart, Germany, and a bevy quality-of-life enhancements desired by the community, Chièvres is now undergoing more than \$30 million in construction and renovation projects to ensure it has the capability to train, mobilize, deploy, sustain, support, recover and reconstitute assigned and mobilized operating forces, said Fritz Kroesen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe District regional program manager for U.S. Army Garrison BENELUX.

### By your leisure

In August 2007, construction began on the air base's biggest Corps-managed construction project ever — a three-story, \$16

million Army lodge that will serve the base, NATO, SHAPE and diplomatic communities, Kroesen said. The lodge, expected to be completed this spring, will also replace the commercially-leased Hotel Le Maisières, saving the Army close to \$2 million a year, he said.

"As with any project, we faced some challenges with changes and some design and site condition issues," Kroesen said, "but so far, we've been able to keep the lodge on track."

Army Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) officials anticipate a June grand opening of the 94-room facility, which includes four rooms that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The lodge will accommodate 30 standard rooms, 60 family suites with kitchenettes, and two extended-stay rooms with kitchenettes.

It will also offer other modern Army lodge amenities such as high-speed Internet access, on-site laundry, microwaves and refrigerators in rooms, AFN television, and state-of-the-art building management systems. More importantly, the lodge complies with anti-terror force-protection regulations — something the Hotel Le Maisières does not.

### MWR Army Lodge

Cost: \$16 million

Size: 76,000 square feet

Amenities: 94 rooms

- 30 standard rooms
- 60 family suites w/kitchenette
- 2 extended stay w/kitchenette

**Grand opening — Summer 2009**



"This lodge will be a huge improvement for Soldiers and their families; and more importantly, it's a lot safer," Kroesen said. "Projects like this are great examples of the quality service the Corps provides."

In addition to the lodge, construction on a \$16 million commissary for the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) is nearing completion, Kroesen said.

The facility, scheduled to be completed in August, will be twice as large as the existing commissary, said Julio Ochoa, project engineer.

The commissary will have a modern sales area, produce and meat departments, and a deli/bakery that will include a rotisserie for shoppers, he said.

"This new facility will make a positive impact on the community with the increase of product availability," Ochoa said. "There aren't many places to eat around here, but once the commissary is complete, people can come here and pick up something."

Additionally, the facility will have high-efficiency refrigeration equipment as well as a central heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system that will make for a more cost-efficient and energy-efficient building, he said.

### Brussels sprouts

With these two large projects nearing completion, project managers can turn their attention to the other numerous projects in the greater BENELUX area, including some outside the fence.

The Corps is playing a small part in the development of the new NATO headquarters in Brussels, said John Curtis, regional program manager for NATO headquarters. Currently, Curtis is "on loan" to the State Department to help with the design of a U.S. wing to a new nerve center.

"Our role is smaller than we'd hoped it would be, but the State Department wanted to ensure that they were being properly represented during the design process," Curtis said. "They looked to the Corps and we're excited to be playing a part in this monumental project."

### DeCA Commissary

Cost: \$16 million

Size: 45,800 square feet

Amenities: 50% larger

- Bigger produce section
- Bigger deli department
- New rotisserie

**Construction end – Summer 2009**

# District delivers quality projects to BENELUX



With a new lodge and commissary under construction, a massive international school in design, and millions of dollars in new projects, the Corps' Belgium regional team has a lot on their plate – or rather, a lot of opportunities to showcase the Corps' capabilities to U.S. military and NATO officials, said Frederick Kroesen, Europe District regional program manager for U.S. Army Garrison BENELUX.

The team has about \$37 million in new design and construction projects, not including the many Operations and Maintenance- (OMA) funded work and renovation projects, Kroesen said. So far, roughly \$6 million in OMA-funded improvements have been awarded with six more projects in the making, he added.

Renovations, infrastructure repairs, and improvements are being constructed in support of new and existing buildings for the NATO Special Operations Coordination Center (NSCC) on Chièvres Air Base. A new communications building currently in design will provide the NSCC with a server room and network operations center, while new intelligence training buildings will provide classroom and instructor space.

Robert Sommer, project engineer, is currently working through major design challenges, but said he expects the facilities to be built on time with high quality, "for a very important customer."

Meanwhile, the District is renovating the BENELUX garrison's barracks and repairing the Armed Forces Network radio and television transmitter tower on SHAPE.

Interior improvements to the base vet clinic, the limited training area, and the Warriors in Transition facilities are also being managed by the District.

The BENELUX garrison Director of Public Works (DPW) and tenant organizations are entrusting the District to deliver these projects along with numerous other small enhancements, Kroesen said.

Overall, local garrison officials are impressed with the work the District performs for them, he said.

"The DPW has indicated that they want to use our services," he said. "That tells us that we're doing something right."



# SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

Additionally in Brussels, the Corps is working on designing and constructing a \$6 million gym and an art and music classroom building for the DoD Education Activity's Brussels American School, which serves more than 300 students from kindergarten through grade 12 from 21 different countries, according to the school's Web site.

Project engineer Douglas Bonham said he is working a design change that will enhance the project by enabling faster and much quieter construction — a real benefit for the teachers and students who will be continuing their studies directly next to the large construction project.

## Further afield

In the past 50 years, the District has constructed only one facility on SHAPE — the child development center built in 1999, Kroesen said. However, in March Col. John Kem, Europe District commander, and other Corps leadership met with 37 NATO nation representatives to discuss the design of a new \$130 million SHAPE international school, which hopes to ultimately produce diplomas recognized by all European countries.

Roughly 4,200 students from 38 nations attend the existing SHAPE International School. The school was constructed in piecemeal fashion over the past 42 years and was supposed to be temporary, said Maj. Gen. Leonardo di Marco, deputy chief of staff support for NATO SHAPE, during the conference.

Officials hope to replace the aged and sub-standard facilities with a modern school conducive to excellent learning and teaching standards.

"The improvement of the educational facilities here at SHAPE is a common vision for this project," the general said.

A recent feasibility study conducted by Parsons, an engineering and construction firm contracted by the District, noted 83 percent of the facilities should be demolished as the structures do not meet health, safety, educational, environmental, and energy-efficiency standards.

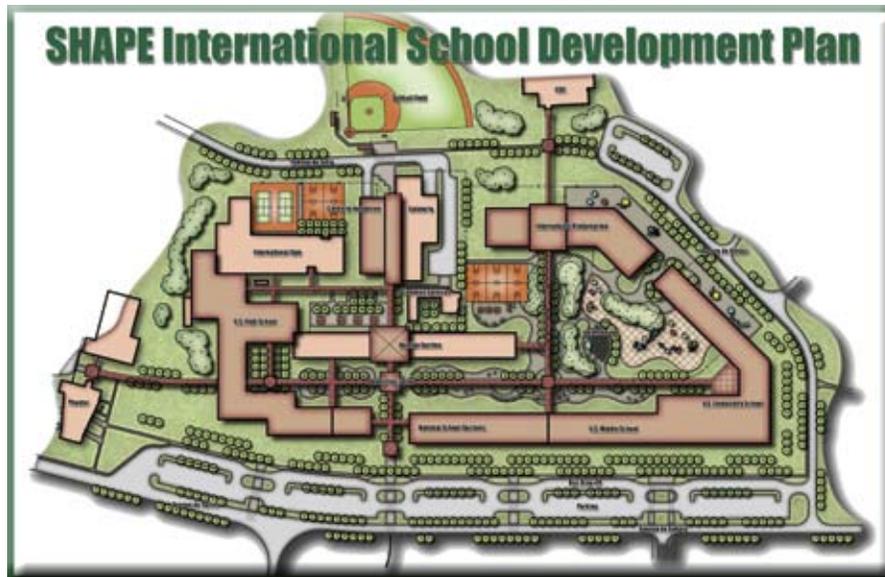


"All you have to do is walk around the campus and you'll realize that this is needed," Kem said during his presentation of the design process to the NATO representatives.

To bring this facility to SHAPE, the District will have many challenges to overcome, said Paul Jerome, DoD Dependent Schools-Europe (DoDDS-E) project director. For starters, rather than each nation footing the bill for a separate facility or the school lobbying for NATO funding to replace or renovate the buildings, nations who want to participate in the future school will pool their funding to design the combined facility.

"This is a unique approach to getting a facility up on a NATO installation," he said. "You can't just turn to page 12 and say, 'This is the next step' [because] this has never been done before."

To start the process, Jerome said DoDDS-E and District project manager Philip Cohen will meet with all the nations that have expressed interest in the concept and re-evaluate the scope. Cohen said he expects to kick off design in June and estimate 15 to 18 months



to complete design.

"What has been done up to this point is not design," Kem said. "[The feasibility study] has answered the questions, 'Is it feasible?' and 'Can we build this?'"

The answer, according to the study, was a definite "yes" with Parsons determining that the entire facility could be constructed in one- to two-year phases on the school's current site without interrupting school operations.

The new facility would integrate facilities for the DoDDS-E elementary, middle and high school, the international departments, and an international kindergarten. The schools will also share facilities such as a theater, cafeteria, gym, and other common areas.

The benefits of this integration are improved efficiency, improved security, on-site parking, and most importantly, the replacement of deteriorating, antiquated facilities.

The project would most likely take a total of four to five years from design start to construction completion.

"We're excited to be part of this project," Kem said. "We're looking forward to the challenge."





## District offers real-world experience to students

Like most seniors at Wiesbaden High School, Sara Callahan is thinking about the future. She was always interested in architecture and by her junior year she had already taken every architecture class offered at the school.

Her goal was to get into a college with a top-rated school of architecture. To do that, she thought she needed more.

"I was looking for something more hands-on," she said. "Something where I could use what I'd learned and maybe get some more experience."

With class options exhausted, she started looking outside the schoolroom.

Then through a local program called the "Career Practicum," she discovered the Corps of Engineers' Europe District office offered exactly what she wanted.

"I've already worked on the Grafenwoehr barracks and just finished up a project for a housing complex in Turkey," she said.

Through the career practicum program, Callahan volunteers six hours per week in the District's engineering office to gain practical experience, learn about the field she wants to major in and, of course, assist District architects and engineers with their busy workload.

"The student wins by working on real-world projects, providing real support, becoming a valued team member and experiencing the application of educational theory toward actual professional practice," said James Noble, chief

of the technical engineering section. "We, the US Army Corps of Engineers, win by being able to help develop the next generation of professional engineers and architects. Professional sustainability."

Altogether, roughly 60 students from the high school participate in the program each year.



Photo by Justin Ward

**Through her high school's Career Practicum program, senior Sara Callahan volunteers six hours a week at the Corps of Engineers' Europe District office, giving herself school credit and hands-on architecture experience.**

## German state showcases American history

From Nov. 21, 2008, until March 29, the city of Hanau opened an exhibit titled "Americans in Hessen" that showcased the American presence in Hessen since World War II.

"This is one of the most spectacular exhibitions mounted in our young history here in Hanau," said Hanau's Lord Mayor Claus Kaminsky, welcoming German and American visitors.

Europe District's small display in the "Americans in Hessen" exhibit shows ongoing construction efforts in the German state. The display was intended to symbolize to exhibit-goers that U.S. Army employees continue to live and work in the German state.

The display consists of a Corps shovel, hard hat, and framed construction poster of a Wiesbaden Army Airfield renovation project.

Although the exhibition closed in Hanau on March 29, it will be on display throughout the next year, in at least three cities in the state of Hessen, including Wiesbaden, Friedberg, and Darmstadt. For more information, visit [www.amerikaner-in-hessen.de](http://www.amerikaner-in-hessen.de).



Photo by Rebecca Lippman

**An illuminated construction poster, shovel and personalized hardhat are mounted on display at the Americans in Hessen exhibit in Hanau.**

# “What’s concrete made of?”

Wiesbaden Resident Engineer Neil Ravensbergen gives a tour of the Wiesbaden lodge to Aukamm Elementary School second graders March 31 in an effort to show the youth the ongoing construction efforts in their community. The children showed their curiosity by asking many construction-related questions.

