

# Work goes on throughout the 104th ASG

## Construction, renovation projects aimed at enhancing living and training areas

By Karl Weisel

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Despite speculation about the future shape of U.S. forces in Germany, construction and renovation work continue in the 104th Area Support Group.

"Regardless of what comes down the pike there are still good news stories to be told," said Lt. Col. Steve Steininger, 104th ASG director of Public Works. "There are scaffolds all over the place. ... We're still continuing to improve Army housing. ... This is home and we're still continuing to improve it."

Even in communities such as Giessen and Friedberg which will eventually be returned to the German government as part of force realignment in U.S. Army Europe, renovation work continues, he said. "Giessen got about \$4.5 million last year of external funds for well-being improvements. That includes barracks, housing, community facilities. This year they received another \$3+ million. ... Even with the closure there will still be people there to 2007-2008.

"It's important that people understand that capital investments are being revisited by the Secretary of Defense and the European Command," said Steininger. While future major construction projects may be re-evaluated in light of the current decision-making process in Washington, D.C., ongoing work continues throughout the communities of the 104th ASG.

"There will be shuffling; there will be changes," he said. "The only thing that has remained constant is that there will be change."

Improving security and access control to military installations has been a major project since Sept. 11, 2001. Community members from Baumholder to Giessen, Hanau to Wiesbaden have seen major improvements to entrance gates, fences and lighting — all aimed at beefing up force protection. The upgrades at installation entrances are also in anticipation of the new Installation Access Control System, which will tighten access



Photo by Karl Weisel

Construction worker Jan Kampf prepares the surface for new streets and sidewalks on Hanau's Pioneer Kaserne. Projects are ongoing throughout the communities of the 104th ASG.

through the use of ID scanners, to be put in place this fall.

Work on motor pools, training facilities, barracks, community facilities and government housing continues undiminished, he said. "As long as we continue to find the funds, we'll continue to improve our facilities," said Steininger.

Working closely with the base support battalion Directorates of Public Works, tenant units and supported organizations, the engineers at the 104th ASG DPW oversee the overall project work. "We are engaged in all of the communities," said Steininger. "We use a master plan to synchronize the requirements, funding and work." Because construction and renovation money is allocated in one-year cycles, it's vital that the construction requirements are tracked, properly funded, contracted and resolved.

"In Hanau, for instance, we will patch,

paint and improve all housing and barracks across the 414th BSB," he said. "We're fixing the streets, the curbs and playgrounds.

"We're still doing well in environmental and facility sustainment," he said. "The work you see on the ground now is based on successful acquisition of money and resources." While a lot of the FY03 funding went to finance "higher order needs" such as the war on terrorism, FY04 money will be slated primarily for Sustainment, Revitalization and Maintenance work, he said.

"Next year resourcing should be better," Steininger said. "Again, we have a plan and we know where we're going in improving our base operations, warfighting and training facilities."

As in years past soldiers and families are encouraged to make use of the Self-Help Improvement Stores for their know-how, tools and advice on self-help projects where repairs can be tackled individually or by interested groups. "God helps them that help themselves," said Steininger, loosely quoting Benjamin Franklin.

"The 104th ASG DPW also does a lot of the design work for projects across the ASG. We also basically manage all of the environmental projects through the Corps of Engineers," Steininger said. "We're constantly doing studies on or adjacent to our property to ensure there is no environmental damage. We're continuously boring and monitoring groundwater quality. We will continue to remediate existing environmental challenges and issues, because we are good stewards of the environment — good ambassadors of the American people."

Even with the impending closure of some installations in the 104th ASG the importance of sustaining facilities remains — to ensure both the quality of life and safety for those who reside here.

Work on the airfields in Wiesbaden and



Photo by Karl Weisel

Vito Denatale (left) and Ingo Faber of the SBS firm lay on coats of paint to a vehicle maintenance building on Fliegerhorst Kaserne.

Erlensee (Fliegerhorst), chapels, dining facilities in Baumholder and Wackernheim (McCully Barracks), a new American Forces Network Hessen Headquarters on Wiesbaden's Army Airfield, street repairs in Hanau and Baumholder, and any number of other construction work are all signs that the command is dedicated to maintaining a

high standard of living while soldiers and their families are stationed in this part of the world. "Your garrison, your base operations agencies are investing in your well-being. Just look around — you can't help but notice it," Steininger said.

Community members should also be

assured that "services of the DPW aren't changing one bit because of the deployment" of soldiers from the 104th ASG to Southwest Asia. "It's normal procedures for us — we haven't changed one iota. We're still offering the best quality of life we can provide." (David Ruderman also contributed to this story)



Photo by Karl Weisel

Army Reservists from the 412th Engineer Command plan and design a host of construction projects for the future while working at the 104th Area Support Group's Directorate of Public Works.

## Planning for the future

### Mississippi Reserve engineers design projects for communities throughout the 104th ASG

By Karl Weisel

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New construction, renovations and environmental work involve a lot more than simply pouring concrete and hammering nails. Long before the first stone is set in place, planners work diligently to draw up design plans, prepare cost estimates and provide the overall direction for follow-on work.

A team of Army Reserve professionals from Vicksburg, Miss., is saving the 104th Area Support Group and other U.S. Army Europe communities time and money by providing the expertise for a number of future construction projects aimed at improving training areas and enhancing soldier readiness. Five members of the 412th Engineer Command, who have been in Europe since about March 12, have spent the last several weeks ensconced at the 104th ASG Directorate of Public Works poring over design plans and compiling the data needed to guide other Army Reserve and National Guard engineers in completing projects throughout the ASG.

"One of the things the design team does is to make a synopsis of the scope of work including plans, pictures and estimates of the total costs to do the construction," said Lt. Col. Charles Carson, design team chief for the 412th Engineer Command. "It takes a good bit of planning — working with the customer to see what's required to construct the project.

"We're working with the DPWs and we'll go to other areas

once we've completed our work in this one," said Carson. "We're looking at projects as far out as '06 and '07."

Among the proposed projects are everything from designing new training ranges to relocating railroad tracks. "The projects have to be short-term because the time reservists have to complete the project can't be extended," he said. "The maximum time length is about three to four months. We can do anything from road upgrades ... to bridging. We have such a wide spectrum of engineers."

Projects may also involve demolition work, he said.

### Two benefits

"There are two benefits to using the Reserve Troop Construction Program bringing reserve soldier into the European Command area of operations," said Carson, who in civilian life works for the Construction Division of the Vicksburg District's Corps of Engineers. "Troops get trained in the mission requirements and installations get construction at a much cheaper cost."

"Since we've been deployed we've done 20-30 projects," said Sgt. Craig Ryals, a member of the team serving in Hanau and a land surveyor with an engineering consulting firm in his civilian capacity. "We know they need the work done quickly. That's really the reward — working toward a common goal quickly.

"I'm very comfortable with the team," Ryals added. "They have a lot of knowledge."

After the actual construction or renovation work is completed, Army

reservists serving as quality assurance and control inspectors report back to the unit with a report on the finished project, said Ryals, who served in the Stuttgart area during two previous deployments. "It's good to see a project you designed actually completed," he said.

Members of the Mississippi-based engineering command have also had the opportunity to see a little of the local countryside during their deployment, said Carson, explaining that the unit deployed to Hungary and Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1996 serving with USAREUR Forward. "For the most part we've enjoyed this tour. It's not often you get to see the country, and Germany has an awful lot to see," said Carson, adding that he had the chance to see a little of Italy during a temporary duty assignment from Heidelberg to Vicenza.

Although civilian employers back home have been relatively understanding of the military requirements of the activated reservists, it can be extremely stressful for the family members left behind. "That's probably the most difficult part of the deployment," he said, "not knowing how long you're going to be here and the stress on the family."

Since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, employers seem to have become more understanding of the crucial role played by the Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers. "They see the demand on the regular Army and the need for continuity in protecting the country. I think it has helped the employee-employer relationship."



Photo by Spc. Jeremy Watson

Spc. Sarah Boote pitches in on a "Self-Help" project to improve the administrative areas of the 39th Finance Battalion on Hanau's Pioneer Kaserne.