

Florida Army Reserve building 'goes under knife'



John Neville, Public Affairs

What's the next best thing to getting a brand new reserve center? Getting an Army Reserve Full Facility Restoration.

That's exactly what the 81st Regional Support Command received in April following the

\$5.1 million renovation on their Army Reserve Center located in Gainesville, Fla. The project—managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District—was such an improvement that the city of Gainesville presented Army officials a beautification award for Excellence in Restoration and Adaptive Reuse.

The city recognized the project based on:

- aesthetic and artistic appeal;
- originality, innovation and creativity;
- long-term strategy, maintenance and serviceable materials;
- general improvement of the area, property, or neighborhood, and compatibility with area neighborhoods;
- appropriate use of land and effective planning;

The two-story structure was originally constructed for the Navy in 1948, but Army Reserve units based in the area have used the building as a training and staging complex for the last 50 years. While the building never lost its functionality, it was in need of an interior and exterior facelift and replacement of critical facility support systems.

"The intent was to provide a functional facility with an appearance that complements the adjacent surrounding and provides quality of life for the Soldiers during training," said Gene Dohrman, the Louisville District project manager in charge of managing the job.

The rework of the facility included new HVAC, electrical and telecommunication systems, along with a new roof and exterior coating system. Private offices were added, a break room was upgraded, and classrooms were reconfigured for utilization flexibility.

The finished structure is awaiting a U.S. Green Building Council's Silver certification for optimized energy performance and water efficiency. Low-flow faucets, a heat-island reduction roof, and energy-efficient windows will cut energy costs and shrink the structure's carbon footprint.

"It is important that the Corps join the nationwide coalition of construction industry leaders promoting buildings that are environmentally responsible and healthy places to live and work," Dohrman said.

Even the materials used in the renovations were purchased from vendors located within a 500-mile radius of Gainesville, shrinking the project's total energy output even further.

While cutting utility costs and reducing total energy output is important, the customers—the men and women in uniform who will be fulfilling their obligation to country within the building's walls—needed to be satisfied with the facility's outcome.

"The people who have moved in are very happy," said retired Sgt. 1st Class Bruce Swanson, a seasoned noncommissioned officer who was affiliated with the facility for seven years. "The Soldiers are really enjoying it. When you gotta work in Vietnam era furniture, then you're not going to really want to come to work. The new place has really lifted up the spirits. This makes them want to come to work. It's a much more professional environment."

The Army Reserve Full Facility Restoration program is a major building block of the Army Reserve initiative designed to enhance unit readiness and retention and improve the Soldier's quality of life. Completed projects extend the usable life of USAR facilities by 25 years, and increase the facilities' ability to support unit and individual training. Proposed projects are centrally funded from the Army Reserve SRM fund allocation.

For additional information concerning the Army Reserve Full Facility Restoration program please contact Walter Kilmer DAIM-ODR at 703-602-8492 703-602-8492 .