

Major General Keith J. Thurgood
Opening Remarks, Media Round Table, 14 July 2011
Fort Hamilton, New York

“First, I thank you very much for the invitation. It is great to be here at Fort Hamilton again. The last time I was here I was actually the commander of AAFES. So hopefully we’ve made some improvement to the PX. I’ll have to run over and see what that looks like. So ma’am, thank you for that introduction.

This is the largest transformational effort in the Army Reserves since World War II, and I think one could argue - the most complex thing that we’ve done in the 102 year history of the Army Reserve. It’s big and it’s massive, and as the Secretary mentioned, we are doing this while we are fighting a war and transforming the Army. So this is no small task.



To put all this in context, and we’ve done that teaming with our partners, with the Army Installation Command, with our local communities, our garrison commanders, the Army Corps of Engineers, so it has been a really collaborative team effort, I think, to make this happen in a relatively short period of time. And from that, it is going to help enable us to accomplish our mission in better and bigger ways than we ever have before. This installation, in particular the building we are sitting in today, we spend about \$52 million on this building. It is a state of the art facility that is networked, it’s virtual and I like to say, we’re bring the training to the Soldiers now instead of taking the Soldiers to the training.

As the Secretary mentioned, not only are we going to see the economies and the impact on the local economy, but it is really about taking care of the Soldiers, it’s about taking care of our Families, and our Civilians who now been in the fight for going on ten plus years. And while *change and transformation is never easy, the challenge of BRAC is no exception.*

The Army Reserve seized the opportunity that BRAC provided to propel our transformation and the things that we’re doing from a strategic force and traditional way of thinking to an operational force supporting the combatant commanders, and the current fight both on a regular, rotational basis.

BRAC has also provided an impetus for change in the Army and Army Reserve at large. And because of BRAC we are constructing 125 new joint and multi-component reserve centers and closing we’re 176 older Army Reserve facilities. And of those 125 Armed Forces Reserve Centers, the Army Reserve has the lead for 73 of those facilities.

Concurrent with BRAC, the Army Reserve is also transforming organizationally. We've established new commands and units and realigned command and control structure.

In the years since the law was enacted, we've gone from 10 Regional Readiness Commands to four Regional Support Commands. We've reduced our overhead while growing our operating force, and we're better now aligned to support the Army's current operational and future needs in full spectrum operations.

The Army Reserve now as a result of BRAC and this overall transformation, we've activated eight Sustainment Brigades and five Sustainment Commands as part of the Army's overall modular conversion effort.

So, BRAC has presented the Army Reserve with a challenge but in that challenge there have been seeds of opportunity. And we've used that to help propel our transformation and accelerate our change into the organization that we need to be, the operational force that the Nation needs the Army Reserve to be.

So as we finish now, and we drive to the finish line, as the Secretary said we're 60 plus days away from concluding this effort, our focus remains on supporting our Soldiers and their Families, and our troops that are in the fight today.

The efficiencies and the transformational ideas that BRAC has brought to us will help us do that even faster and make it in the long run, easier. So I am delighted to be here and to be part of the dialog today."