

BRAC FAQs

1. [What did the BRAC 2005 decision mean for Ft. Benning?](#)
2. [How did Fort Benning leadership coordinate the moves mandated by BRAC?](#)
3. [How did environmental considerations factor into your planning efforts?](#)
4. [How much was the construction going to cost?](#)
5. [How does BRAC 2005 impact the Infantry School?](#)
6. [How did this round of BRAC compare with previous rounds?](#)
7. [How did Fort Benning address the increased work load required to implement BRAC?](#)
8. [What was the contractor and active duty working relationship?](#)
9. [What were the early BRAC considerations?](#)
10. [How will we know whether the transformation has been successful?](#)
11. [What are some challenges the off post community will face as a result of BRAC?](#)
12. [How did the off post community organize to support the Fort Benning growth?](#)
13. [What is left to do to meet the BRAC requirements by Sept. 11, 2011?](#)
14. [What challenges is the MCoE facing with the BRAC implementation?](#)
15. [Are the Dept. of the Army Civilians at Fort Knox relocating to Fort Benning, too?](#)
16. [How does Fort Benning compare with other BRAC impacted installations?](#)
17. [As leaders get reassigned to other installations, how does the MCoE manage continuity of the transformation effort?](#)
18. [One of the Commander's priorities is to demonstrate inspired leadership. What does he mean?](#)
19. [How did the term Transformation arise?](#)
20. [Why don't we hear more about Army Transformation efforts in major news media?](#)
21. [How has the military evolved in the past 60 years?](#)

1. What did the BRAC 2005 decision mean for Ft. Benning?

There were four BRAC actions that impacted Fort Benning. The biggest one was the relocation of the Armor School from Fort Knox to Fort Benning. We were also required to build an Armed Forces Reserve Center to consolidate all reserve component units on the installation as well as a small unit located on Macon Road that was scheduled for inactivation.

Another BRAC action was to consolidate all Drill Sergeant training at Fort Jackson, S.C. We closed our Drill Sergeant School and relocated our portion of that mission to Ft. Jackson where they consolidated all Drill Sergeant training for the entire Army.

The fourth action was to relocate a large equipment concentration site up at Ft. Gillem in Atlanta. That site belongs to the 43rd Equipment Concentration Site, part of the 81st Regional Readiness Command. The movement comprises about 1200 pieces of mostly wheeled equipment. The Armor School has a similar number of equipment

to be moved but includes heavy and mostly track equipment. So, we will have to build an equipment concentration site here equivalent to a large motor pool to house and maintain all of that equipment. [Top](#)

2. How did Fort Benning leadership coordinate the moves mandated by BRAC?

First thing we did was conduct an analysis to figure out exactly what we were receiving. We went to Fort Knox and engaged with the leadership out there. We went out and looked at all the facilities that the Armor School occupied. We looked at the ranges and training areas, where they trained, how they trained, so we could get a first hand initial impression of what was the scope and magnitude that we needed to try to construct down here. We did not have to necessarily replicate, but we had to provide the Armor School the same capability for facilities, training areas, maneuver space and ranges.

Then we did the same for the equipment concentration site. We went up to Fort Gillem and met with the organization. We looked at the type of equipment they had and looked at how they did business. That's how we scoped out initially what we needed to do. Then we collectively sat down with Fort Benning Master Planner, the Garrison Commander, and other key organizations that deal with unit stationing actions. Any new unit that comes to Fort Benning goes through a similar stationing action process. We looked at Fort Benning and said 'okay this is kind of what we need to do, how big it's going to be and where it can best fit.' [Top](#)

3. How did environmental considerations factor into your planning efforts?

Per BRAC law, before we could break ground on any new construction, we had to have an approved environmental study done. We developed the footprint for where we wanted all the buildings, training areas, ranges, and maneuver areas to go. We did an environmental impact statement that evaluated all the different environmental media — air quality, water quality, noise, cultural resources, and threatened and endangered species for the areas we planned to impact. We are a designated recovery population for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, an endangered species, and that was our biggest concern. We also have about 3000 cultural resource sites on Fort Benning. We did all the required assessments and our plan was approved with minor adjustments, and that gave us the authority to start the construction. [Top](#)

4. How much was the construction going to cost?

When the Army did the original BRAC analysis, it was estimated that it would cost approximately \$760 million for all the Fort Benning construction associated with BRAC. After we did our *own* analysis, we came up with about \$2.9 to \$3 billion. So right from the get go, we worked with the Army to discuss some gaps that had not

been considered. One major gap identified was that no new ranges, training areas or maneuver space was required to support the Armor School's relocation.

We weren't the only installation doing this. Every installation in the Army [*impacted by BRAC*] conducted similar assessments. If there was a gap between what the BRAC commission determined and what the real requirement on the ground was, they came up with a delta in the funding. Then the Army went back to look for additional monies to do that.

A full-time program manager and ultimately a full-time planning team led by an Engineer Colonel was dedicated to manage our BRAC program and help work with higher headquarters and the Army staff to garner the funds required for the shortfalls that were identified for the construction program. [Top](#)

5. **How does BRAC 2005 impact the Infantry School?**

With the establishment of the Maneuver Center, the Infantry School is transforming. Fort Benning was known as the Home of the Infantry Center and Infantry School. Now the Infantry School is a subordinate organization of the Maneuver Center. So all the personal and special staffs from both Centers that provide support for the general officer and center leadership is now consolidated under the Maneuver Center. Support is shared among the Armor and Infantry school commandants and the commanding general of the Maneuver Center. The Infantry School will also transition in a couple of other ways.

One is the basic training brigade. The 192nd Infantry Brigade is migrating under the Armor School, relinquishing control of basic training to the Armor School. We also created a Directorate for Training Sustainment to consolidate services. DOTS supports the functions of fuel, fix, arm and move to support the training mission of both the Armor and Infantry Schools. This ranges from transportation assets used to move either equipment or people, ammunition and weapons support, and taking care of equipment and maintenance.

We took the Captains Career Course of both schools and consolidated that under the Directorate of Training, creating the Maneuver Captain's Career Course. That course of instruction no longer falls under the authority of the schools. It's a Maneuver Center asset. The Infantry Center and Armor Center used to own their own futures and experimentation capability under the Soldier Battle Lab and Mounted Maneuver Battle Lab. Now we've created the Maneuver Battle Lab that consolidates the experimentation capabilities of both the Infantry and Armor. We also created a new organization called the Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate that controls the MBL, as well as determines and develops future force capabilities for

future Infantry and Armor requirements. We also merged the Non-commissioned Officer Academy for both locations to create a consolidated NCOA under the Maneuver Center.

So even though the Infantry School did not move, there's major transformation of the Infantry School and how it's supported on Fort Benning as it transitions under the new organizational construct of the Maneuver Center of Excellence. [Top](#)

6. How did this round of BRAC compare with previous rounds?

This BRAC was much different from previous rounds of BRAC. Previous rounds of BRAC as a rule were closing installations and eliminating functions. This round of BRAC didn't eliminate nearly as many functions as previous rounds of BRACs. The goal of this round is to relocate assets from around the Army such as bringing units back from overseas, Europe and Korea, and reestablishing them back in the U.S. Additionally, this round of BRAC focused on reducing the number of federal activities that occupy leased space and bring them onto federal installations. We weren't really bringing down the force as in previous rounds of BRAC but rather redistributing them to other active installations. [Top](#)

7. How did Fort Benning address the increased work load required to implement BRAC?

As we saw the requirements, the Commanding General and Garrison Commander would either contract or enlist government support. The planning team eventually evolved to include active duty military, civilians, and contractors at both Fort Knox and Fort Benning. [Top](#)

8. What was the contractor and active duty working relationship?

To have the contractor-to-government interaction is not unusual, but from a Fort Benning perspective it was a big spike in business as usual. We were projecting a \$2.9 billion construction program associated with BRAC, as compared to a normal annual construction, maintenance and repair program of about \$50 to \$60. We did not have the staff to support that kind of effort, so we had to expand our capability. The federal government uses contractors to support surges. Once the surge is over and the construction and planning efforts start to normalize, we will start to divest ourselves from that temporary contractor workforce. [Top](#)

9. What were the early BRAC considerations?

Fort Benning was not the only location considered for the location to establish the Maneuver Center of Excellence. Fort Benning was one of three locations assessed for

consolidating the Armor Center/School and Infantry Center/School. Fort Knox was considered as well as Fort McCoy, Wis. After the BRAC commission's analysis, Fort Benning came out as the top candidate.

The Armor School has only ever been at Fort Knox. Fort Benning had the tank school here but never the Armor School. So the Armor community has only been at Fort Knox. General Wojdakowski put it in perspective for the Fort Benning community. He said you have to understand and be considerate of the concerns and the angst of the Fort Knox Armor and Cavalry community. What if the decision would have been to move the Infantry School to Fort Knox. What would have our emotions and thoughts been? [Top](#)

10. How will we know whether the transformation has been successful?

The original guidance that the Commanding Generals from Fort Benning and Fort Knox provided is that the training and quality of life for the soldiers and families of the Armor School will be as good or better than it is at Fort Knox today. I think that is always going to be our litmus test. Also, the off-post community bought into this from the beginning. They came together to provide their support to this regional challenge. In order to support the growth related to the BRAC decision, they started a joint planning partnership called the Valley Partnership. This organization included representation from the affected regions in both Alabama and Georgia. It is unprecedented that all these communities came together and said we are here dedicated to support Fort Benning's challenges associated with BRAC. Fort Benning never developed any plan without socializing it through the Valley Partnership communities and through the integrated planning cell.

The new hospital is a great success story. General Wojdakowski said if this is a world-class installation with world-class training then there should be a world-class medical facility to support the soldiers and their families. He lobbied very hard for this major initiative. We had the second oldest hospital in the Army. We didn't want to push soldiers off post so we worked with the Army leadership to garner the money required to build a new facility. The original plan was to renovate Martin Army Community Hospital and build an addition in the existing parking lot to handle the increased capacity. That would have been a major inconvenience to patients while construction was ongoing. There would have been trailers all over the footprint. Now the new hospital is being built off site with very little if any impact to patients. [Top](#)

11. What are some challenges the off post community will face as a result of BRAC?

Housing, education, and medical — those are the big three the off post community took on as its challenges.

We were looking at a considerable growth in active duty military, Department of the Army Civilians, contractors and their dependents. As part of the BRAC process, the Army conducted a housing market analysis and determined there was no requirement for increased on-Post housing because the off post community had the quantity and quality housing required to absorb the projected residential housing growth. Once the decision was made that all this growth was going to live off post, the local communities also became responsible for the associated school age children growth. We were anticipating in excess of 6,000 new students and this became a huge challenge to develop the plans for new schools or expand upon existing ones across multiple school districts located in two states. And then the medical services piece of it. A large government, civilian, and contractor work force comes with the Armor School relocation. The DA civilians, contractors, and their dependents cannot utilize government medical facilities so that means off post has to be able to support all of the medical services. I believe once the relocation is complete, it will be evident that our local communities stepped up to the plate and hit a home run in support of Fort Benning's BRAC growth and will be reflected in the quality of the new housing, schools and medical services available. [Top](#)

12. How did the off post community organize to support the Fort Benning growth?

The local communities came together early and formed the Valley Partnership, dedicated to support our BRAC growth. Gary Jones was their dedicated point man and was instrumental in the planning process. The Valley Partnership said they would provide us with the quality housing, schools and medical services needed to support the quality of life for our soldiers. They were committed to taking care of the Soldiers and their families because of the monumental task they perform to protect our freedoms and liberties. The commitment to provide quality schools proved to be a major challenge. The challenge was how we build the schools quick enough. As a general rule, 75 to 80 percent of the school age children growth associated with BRAC is projected to occur in 2011. So the schools have to absorb all of that growth in one school year. The communities have done yeoman's work to get in front of the surge. We now have sufficient housing. The medical community has the unique ability to generate revenue quickly to provide the necessary services and the counties have solid plans to handle the surge in school age children growth. [Top](#)

13. What is left to do to meet the BRAC requirements by Sept. 11, 2011?

As Fort Benning grows by 20 percent in the coming year, we've got to put the finishing touches on the five million additional square feet of infrastructure we've built over the last

two years – barracks, headquarters, classrooms, instruction buildings, simulations facilities, dining facilities, gyms and tracks, ranges, roads and fording sites, and all that. Our Soldier Ready process makes every living and working space completely habitable with furniture, phones, all that. We are planning to grow the installation support staff and services by roughly 20 percent also to maintain the same level of support we have now and what Soldiers and Families on Fort Benning have come to expect. [Top](#)

14. What challenges is the MCoE facing with the BRAC implementation?

We need to exercise all the new buildings on Harmony Church as soon as possible. Because they're new, they're still under warranty by the contractor. Whatever problems we might find, the contractor dutifully fixes. It's like when anybody buys a house, the contractors aren't perfect and so a light switch might not work, and the toilets might not flush or something. [Top](#)

15. Are the Dept. of the Army Civilians at Fort Knox relocating to Fort Benning, too?

As DA Civilians at Fort Knox become available after Armor courses begin to move here, we'll help those employees transition to other jobs or out of the Army. DA Civilians may receive retraining through the Priority Placement Program or receive separation bonuses. We're trying to help those personnel ease through that transition period. [Top](#)

16. How does Fort Benning compare with other BRAC impacted installations?

We're different from most installations because we have a huge transient population. It's different than if you go to Fort Bragg or Fort Hood because they have a permanent party population. You touch them once when they come on the installation, and then you touch them once when they leave the installation, two or three years later. The transient has to be touched every single time he comes to a course, so if it's a three-week course, for example, you've got to touch him on both ends and then you've got to feed him in the middle because he doesn't have a POV, he can't drive downtown and get his own food, he has to live in your transient barracks. We have 21,000 Soldiers on average every day here, transient status, it's a different way, different challenges. You have to issue different equipment, and because you're training them, you have to get ammunition. All those kinds of things. You transport them in buses, cattle cars, and all these kinds of things. It's a huge machine. [Top](#)

17. As leaders get reassigned to other installations, how does the MCoE manage continuity of the transformation effort?

There's a large "circle of friends" in this business. Everyone pulls and pushes together to get where we need to go. It takes great collaboration between the Chief of Staff, the Garrison Commander, the School Commandants and all the staff. All recommendations go to the Commanding General and he makes the decisions. There's an incredible amount coordination that goes on in the Chief of Staff's office with the Infantry School, and the Armor School, all

of the general staff, the Directorate of Logistics, the Directorate of Public Works, and all those types of organizations. [Top](#)

18. One of the Commander's priorities is to demonstrate inspired leadership. What does he mean?

We're more like the starfish in "Starfish and the Spider," the book in which the spider weaves a very intricate web and is very deliberate in everything it does. A starfish is an organism that is very decentralized. There's no central brain, that's why you can cut a starfish into four pieces and it grows new legs and then goes about its business. When a starfish moves, there's no central brain that says we're going in that direction. One leg begins to move in that direction and the other ones just begin to move in that direction. It's an odd organization. We've tried to make the MCoE more like a starfish. We attempt to influence those around us to move in the same direction, not necessarily by ordering them. That doesn't always work. This approach runs counter to what a military organization is used to. This is more collaborative. And, it has to be. This is also coming from the battlefield. We have got to become an agile, adaptive, innovative, and flexible organization. Our enemies taught us that. If we are not flexible and adaptive, the enemy will run around us and will kill us. And so we have got to become more adaptive to react to what he's doing, and get ahead of him if we can. If we're rigid or inflexible, then we're just going to get taken down by the enemy every time they can. [Top](#)

19. How did the term Transformation arise?

In the Army, it was first widely used by General Shinseki when he was the Chief of Staff of the Army around 1999 as he grappled with moving the Army into the future. The term has many meanings and connotations and it's pretty liberally used. In our context here at Fort Benning, it means fundamental change. The change required to physically move a branch of the Army, to create new infrastructure, merge two distinct and proud cultures, and make it all work in short order. We have to look at everything we do, our processes, how we communicate, how we lead, and transform everything holistically within that context. That's tough to do.

For the Infantry and Armor, it's been a long time coming. Our best military professional judgment has been calling for this for decades. We've been fighting together for more than 60 years on every battlefield in Europe, across the Pacific, in Korea and Vietnam, in Somalia and Panama, the Middle East and now Afghanistan and Iraq - as a combined arms teams. A combined arms team does everything together - lives, trains and fights together as a team. It's only fitting that we join that tradition here at Fort Benning and start at the beginning - together as a combined arms team. [Top](#)

20. Why don't we hear more about Army Transformation efforts in major news media?

Though America at large might miss the story, the communities in the Chattahoochee Valley know what's going on with regard to BRAC and Fort Benning Transformation. Unlike Americans far from a military reservation, our surrounding communities see the benefits of BRAC and Transformation every single day. Three quarters of our Soldiers and all our DA Civilians live off post – in the community. We join the Mr. and Mrs. Smiths and Joneses at soccer practice and PTA, Rotary and Wal-Mart, Springer Opera and CSU. We buy houses, coach little league, and sit in the same pews.

What the American people want to know and be confident about is how their tax dollars are providing for a common defense, how we're integrating their kids into our formations, and how this next generation will be properly trained, properly led, properly equipped, and that we'll do the best we possibly can to take them into combat and bring them back as safe as possible. And if we lose them in combat, they expect that we did all we could and it was done for the right reason. So I think from that standpoint, Transformation pales in comparison to what Americans watch on our graduation fields – confident, talented young men and women joining a team of professionals. [Top](#)

21. How has the military evolved in the past 60 years?

The World War II generation was a great generation for several reasons. They joined the Army in a time of war, although it was a draft Army. Today's Army is all volunteer. Every one of these soldiers who join the Army know they'll be put in harm's way in very short order. Every one of them knows they're going to Iraq or Afghanistan. And they still come. These kids made the right decision despite the fact that we're in the middle of war, despite the fact that the people that birthed them, housed them, and fed them all said no, they still made the right moral decision and joined this great Army in order to become a part of something bigger than themselves – that's powerful and inspiring. [Top](#)