



News Release

Public Affairs Office
Honolulu Engineer District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440

Contact: Dino W. Buchanan or Joe
Bonfiglio
Telephone (808) 438-9862

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Chief of Engineers returns to Corps roots; says HED on the cutting edge of military construction

By Dino W. Buchanan, Honolulu Engineer District Public Affairs

“The work you do everyday definitely makes a lasting impression on our Soldiers serving our country. Nothing impresses a young Soldier more than coming home to his greatly improved living quarters and new training facilities. Enhancing his or her morale translates into an eager and highly motivated Soldier. You are ALL making that a reality.”

(Ft. Shafter, HI - NR-02-05) – Chief Engineer Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock made a three-day stop at Ft. Shafter, Hawaii in January to Pacific Ocean Division – a return to the site of his first steps as a commander in the Corps of Engineers. Lt. Gen. Strock served as the Pacific Ocean Division commander from 1997 to 1999 when POD was an operating division.

Prior to assuming his role of Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in July, he served as director of civil works, HQ USACE. In September 2001, he became the Director of Military Programs at Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington and later completed a six-month tour in Iraq in September 2003 as the deputy director of operations for the Coalition Provisional Authority.

During the general’s brief stay in Hawaii he toured Pacific Ocean Division (POD), Honolulu Engineer District (HED) facilities, several military construction sites, received briefings on POD / HED projects, praised contractors and issued a challenge to the Division and District employees.

Meet the New Chief

At Lt. Gen. Strock’s first tour stop, a town hall meeting for POD and HED employees, he conveyed his feelings about his return to the “very start” of his Corps career.

“Seeing all these familiar faces brings back so many fond memories of my tour as the POD commander,” Strock said. “Being here is as if I’ve come home from a long deployment.... it’s great to see you all.”

Throughout the one-hour town hall, Lt. Gen. Strock said the Corps’ expanding mission globally is made possible by its talented workforce.

“We have a great team of military and civilian employees,” Strock said. “Structures are important, but they don’t get built without great people to build them.”

Strock also emphasized the need for the Corps’ to make strides in perfecting its mission.

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2-2-2 NEW CHIEF

“We need to maintain our construction momentum, focus on mission execution, look for innovative ways to improve and reach out more effectively to our stakeholders,” Strock said at the town hall meeting. “My challenge to you – the people who are the backbone of our command efforts - is to be better, faster, cheaper and safer in every task we do.”

Lt. Gen. Strock praised the vital importance of work the Corps does for the Army, Air Force and the nation while also supporting the global war in terrorism. While outlining the Corps’ future priorities he described the Corps’ “reach-back support” as critical to the Army mission & supporting our deployed Soldiers and employees.

“The Corps’ is projecting a strong influence in rebuilding and creating new infrastructure in Iraq,” Strock said. “The use of tele-engineering has also greatly increased our abilities to provide direct support to our deployed forces in Afghanistan. We definitely are making a difference in both countries.”

At the conclusion of the briefing, Lt. Gen. Strock presented awards to 12 POD and HED employees.

“...on the cutting edge”

“The best part of my job is being able to talk to Corps people working in the field, listening to their ideas and their vast expertise,” Lt. Gen. Strock said as he rode en route to visit several major HED Corps’ project construction sites along with Pacific Ocean Division Commander Brig. Gen. Larry Davis and HED Commander, Lt. Col. David Anderson.

“The on-site tours are a great first-hand opportunity for our C.G. (Commanding General) to see the great work HED and our people do,” Lt. Col. Anderson said. “In the Honolulu District, we truly feel that we are the leading edge of Transformation for the Army and the Air Force. It is a great place to serve.”

Lt. Gen. Strock’s first stop was Hickam Air Force Base, where he received a briefing on the C-17 Beddown project from HED’s DOD Branch Manager Olson Okada, Pacific Air Force officials and a tour of several project construction sites by contractors.

“Meeting the customer face-to-face at a project worksite opens a vital door of communications - for direct communications between the Corps, contractor and customer,” Lt. Gen. Strock said. “Sometimes we may overlook these opportunities, which can be so useful to the completion of a project.”

At the site of the future C-17 Flight Simulator building, Lt. Gen. Strock passed out command coins to contractors and thanked them for their support of the nation’s airmen and construction of the Corps project. He explained to the contractors and HED project managers that Corps projects in Hawaii – including C-17 Beddown construction – put them on the “cutting edge” of military construction

“Our relationship with the Air Force and the base command at Hickam (AFB) is great,” said HED Chief of Engineering & Construction Jim Beresson. “Having the general meet with PACAF officials about these projects clearly demonstrates our continuing commitment to support of the Air Force and its construction needs.”

Later in the day at the Honolulu District’s Schofield Barracks Resident Office, Lt. General Strock received a briefing on Army construction in Hawaii from HED Chief of Army-Hawaii Branch Andrew Kohashi and Schofield Barracks Department of Public Works Chief Col. Floyd Quintana.

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3-3-3 NEW CHIEF

At the briefing Kohashi indicated that HED's future military construction workload will be increasing with the anticipated arrival of a Stryker Brigade at Schofield Barracks.

In response, Lt. Gen. Strock said that making use of Corps assets could help alleviate any backlog or delays.

"Utilizing other Corps districts or divisions can help alleviate work load stress," Strock said. Brig. Gen. Davis concurred.

"We need to reach out to others (districts/divisions) to make sure we deliver the desired projects on time," Brig. Gen. Davis said.

During walkthrough tours of several Corps projects at Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Army Air Field, Lt. Gen. Strock listened intently to contractors about project progress and related issues. At the construction site of the future Mission Support Training Facility at Schofield, Lt. Gen. Strock implored contract workers to continue their exhaustive efforts in support of Soldiers.

"Believe it or not, the work you do everyday definitely makes a lasting impression on our Soldiers serving our country. Nothing impresses a young Soldier more than coming home to his greatly improved living quarters and new training facilities. Enhancing his or her morale translates into an eager and highly motivated Soldier. You are ALL making that a reality."

Lt. Gen. Strock's final stop of the daylight tour was the F- Quad enlisted barracks at Schofield where he saw first-hand some of the new enlisted Soldier rooms, recreational and mess hall facilities as part of the Schofield Barracks Whole Barracks Renewal project. Several senior enlisted Army Soldiers escorted Lt. Gen. Strock through new 1 Plus 1 rooms and explained the room upgrades.

"These new rooms and facilities are motivational tools for our Soldiers," Lt. Gen. Strock told project contractors. "No doubt about it."

"Priority Number One"

Throughout his visit Lt. Gen. Strock continually asked contractors, project managers and military officials what the Corps could do to help in regards to new, existing or future Corps construction projects. Replies varied in scope and complexity, but most had a central theme of getting a steady information flow between all parties involved in construction projects. Lt. Gen. Strock, Brig. Gen. Davis and HED Commander, Lt. Col Anderson all agreed that the Corps is constantly improving the way it communicates to its stakeholders.

"It's been my experience that the relationship between the contractor and the Corps is the most important aspect for the successful completion any project," Strock said. "The Corps strives to ensure the information flow is seamless at all levels."

In his closing remarks at the town hall meeting Lt. Gen. Strock told the POD / HED assembly that the Corps "continues to do vital work for the Army, the nation and the world."

"Priority number one is supporting the global war on terror," Lt. Gen. Strock said. "Our military construction (MILCON) budget almost doubled in 18 months due to the global war on terrorism. As the new Chief, my intent is to build upon the momentum, vision and values sent forth by the previous two chiefs (of Engineers) and keep striving to improve our processes and people. Together, we will make that happen."

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4-4-4-NEW CHIEF

“I shall return... again”

Lt. Gen. Strock’s final message to the POD and HED gathering was simple.

“Maintain the momentum we have achieved so far, focus on mission execution and take care of each other, “ he said. “Always remember who we serve and the mission before us.”

Making reference to his return to Hawaii and the roots of his Corps career after a long absence, Lt. Gen. Strock said, “I promise you it won’t be so long next time.... I shall return.”

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