



# 18th Engineer Brigade Joins V Corps

By Specialist Sean C. Finch

**W**hile many United States Army Europe (USAREUR) units are drawing down in size or preparing to move back to the United States as the Army transforms its forces, USAREUR's 18th Engineer Brigade will spend the next year building its numbers in support of its new mission as a major subordinate unit of V Corps. The brigade was activated as part of USAREUR in 1942. It later relocated to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, but rejoined the USAREUR ranks when it moved to Karlsruhe, Germany, in early 1977. The 18th officially became a V Corps organization on 16 February 2007.

The Heidelberg-headquartered brigade is moving in to pick up the mission that has long rested on the shoulders of the 130th Engineer Brigade and its subordinate units. The 130th—based in Hanau, Germany—has served as the V Corps premier deployable engineer organization since 1969. While some of its units, such as the 54th Engineer Battalion and the 535th Engineer Battalion, will merge with the 18th, most of the 130th will return to the United States. That transition is scheduled to take place over the next year.

Because the 18th is the only engineer brigade left in theater, it will be responsible not only for V Corps but also for any mission that USAREUR needs it for. In addition to routine engineer tasks such as reconstruction of standing structures, the unit will also become capable of undertaking heavy combat engineer missions in peacetime environments, such as building roads, and during deployments, such as clearing thoroughfares of deadly improvised explosive devices (IEDs). (In April 2006, the 18th completed a tour in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, where it undertook missions in Bagram, Kandahar, Sarana, and other locations.)

The unit may get involved in troop construction, because it has that capability. As an example, during the past few months it accomplished road work at the Hohenfels (Germany)



**A HMMWV carrying Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 18th Engineer Brigade, makes its way through the town of Mokren, Bulgaria, during an exercise in summer 2004.**

Training Area. Other troop construction projects could include billeting and forward operating bases.

The Soldiers of the 18th will also tackle vertical construction missions such as buildings, bridges, and other structures that enhance unit training exercises. Construction during exercises is a valuable tool for continuing to train and retrain engineer Soldiers in a peacetime setting, for keeping those Soldiers up to date on new building technologies, and for assessing the capabilities of new engineers.



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