RECORD OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION (REC)

This REC was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 32CFR651, and AR 200-1. The analysis documented in Section 4 is based on the description of the proposed action in Section 2 and any deviation from this description will require re-evaluation by the Installation Environmental Office prior to this action's implementation.

1. **ACTION TITLE:** Implement Army 2020 Force Realignment Decisions at Fort Stewart / Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia (FSGA / HAAF).

2. **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:** The U.S. Army proposes to implement Army 2020 Force Realignment (Army 2020) decisions at FSGA / HAAF. The 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) will inactivate by Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. In addition, numerous non-BCT units will be reduced and reorganized by the Army that will also have an impact to Fort Stewart through FY 2020.

   Background. In January 2013 the Army prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) that broadly analyzed environmental and socioeconomic impacts from alternatives to realign the Army's force structure by the year 2020. The Installation, home of the 3rd Infantry Division, currently includes two ABCTs (each comprised of approximately 3,850 personnel) and one Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), comprised of approximately 3,450 personnel; a Sustainment Brigade (approximately 4,200 personnel), combat support and service support units, and a Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB).

   The intent of Army 2020 is to prepare for reduced levels of resourcing and personnel, while also meeting national security objectives. Army 2020 initiatives involve the following motivations:

   - Reducing the Army's Force. The Army's Active Duty end-strength will decline from a FY 2012 baseline of 562,000 personnel to 490,000 personnel, and includes a reduction of at least eight BCTs from the current total of 45. The Army's Programmatic EA looked at total possible population loss of about 126,000 Soldiers and Army Civilians; however, the changes to the Army will be subject to periodic adjustment as national defense requirements are assessed.

   - Restructuring the Army's Force. The Army continues to modernize its forces and has identified, through the last eight years of conflict, that BCTs without a 3rd maneuver battalion conduct less effective wide area security, combined arms maneuver, and peace support operations. The addition of a 3rd maneuver battalion to ABCTs and IBCTs has been a key recommendation raised by BCT Commanders returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

   - Evaluating the Army's Engineer Units. The Army is also evaluating the force structure of engineer units to address capability gaps in BCTs. Brigade engineer battalions (BEBs) provide an assault gap crossing / breaching capability, limited horizontal construction, and route clearance capability.

   - Optimizing the Army's BCT Configuration. As part of the Army 2020 initiative, there may be other unit augmentations that occur between now and 2020 based on the need to establish the optimum configuration for the BCT.

   The Programmatic EA looked at possible force structure changes at 21 Installations, including FSGA / HAAF, although HAAF was only discussed in context of potential impacts to its CAB. The maximum possible upper (a gain of 3,000 personnel) and lower (a loss of 8,000 personnel) population changes were used to evaluate the greatest extent of environmental and socioeconomic impacts that could result at FSGA / HAAF from the Army 2020 initiative. The corresponding Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI), released in April 2013, concluded that FSGA / HAAF would have less than significant adverse environmental impact and beneficial socioeconomic impact if the Installation were to gain 3,000 personnel through FY 2020. Beneficial to minor adverse environmental impact and significant adverse socioeconomic impact were identified in the FNSI if the Installation were to lose 8,000 personnel through FY 2020.

   The April 2013 FNSI did not decide which Installations would gain or lose personnel, but instead is being used to support decisions to be made after its release regarding how the Army's force is to be reshaped. The Army's Programmatic EA and FNSI are thus intended to be the foundation for tiered site-specific NEPA analysis as each Installation implements Army 2020 decisions.

   Proposed Action. In June 2013 the Army decided to inactivate the 2nd ABCT and implement other known Army 2020 transformation actions at FSGA / HAAF. Augmentation of the existing 1st ABCT and 4th IBCT will occur as a result of the inactivation of the 2nd ABCT. Both the 1st and 4th BCTs will absorb the 2nd ABCT's

battalions, and will stand up an additional Battery within their existing field artillery battalions. The 1st and 4th BCTs will convert their brigade special troops battalions into brigade engineering battalions.

These related actions will result in a net decrease of 1,900 personnel at FSGA / HAAF (see Table 2-1 for break-out) through FY 2015.

TABLE 2-1. TOTAL LOSS/GAIN OF PERSONNEL BASED ON FOUR AR 5-10 STATIONING SUMMARIES RELATED TO ARMY 2020 FORCE STRUCTURE REALIGNMENT

[SMB 13-041, SMB 13-078, SMB 13-065, SMB 13-061]

	FY14	**FY15**	**TOTAL**
Fort Stewart	-199	-1764	**-1963**
HAAF	-7	10	**3**

Since the Installation does not know exactly what additional future connected Army 2020 actions may occur beyond the currently known net decrease of 1,960 personnel at FSGA / HAAF through FY 2015, the proposed action will also entail two possible scenarios that would result in a total loss of (1) 3,000 personnel or (2) 5,000 personnel through FY 2020. The Installation determined that these two scenarios offer a way to more precisely analyze impacts of possible future Army 2020 decisions if FSGA / HAAF does not experience a total loss of 8,000 personnel, as was evaluated in the Army's Programmatic EA. Note, the Installation anticipates the majority of personnel loss will be experienced at FSGA, with HAAF experiencing less than a 1,000 personnel decrease through FY 2020. Impacts at HAAF are, therefore, not expected to reach a level of significance[1].

3. **ANTICIPATED DATE OF ACTION:** FY 2014 – FY 2020

4. **CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:** The following site-specific analysis is supported by the Army's Programmatic EA and associated FNSI, and substantiates that a higher level of NEPA analysis is not necessary to implement the proposed action. Coordination with local subject matter experts assisted with the determination that the proposed action will not result in adverse environmental and socioeconomic impacts that are greater than the predicted possible impacts discussed in the Army's Programmatic EA and the conclusions rendered in the accompanying FNSI. If there are additional changes that are not covered by the description of the proposed action in this REC Section 2 (above) for which the below information is provided, additional supplemental NEPA analysis is required before implementation.

    a. **Socioeconomic Impacts:** Demographic and economic impact of the proposed action will be mostly felt by Liberty County, and to a lesser extent within counties of Tattnall, Bryan, Long, and Evans due to their distance from the main cantonment area. The intensity of impact anticipated from the proposed action was measured using the same economic forecast modeling as the Army conducted in its Programmatic EA. The Army primarily utilized the Economic Impact Forecast System (EIFS) to determine and quantify the magnitude of impact, thus producing an estimate of the direct and indirect effects[2] resulting from the loss of 8,000 personnel. The Army's Programmatic EA and FNSI concluded FSGA / HAAF could experience significant adverse socioeconomic impact from losing 8,000 personnel through FY 2020.

[1] Page 1-2, Section 1.1, "Introduction", of the January 2013, *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment,* which provides an explanation for understanding the 1,000-Soldier/civilian threshold.
[2] Refer to the January 2013, *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment,* pages 4-10 through 4-17 of Section 4.0.4, "Valued Environmental Component Descriptions", for a complete explanation of how the Army quantified socioeconomic impacts to determine the threshold level of significance.

Described in the last paragraph Section 2, above, the Installation could experience additional personnel reductions that are not currently known at this time, but are likely to be less than the total loss of 8,000 personnel evaluated in the Programmatic EA. To help facilitate an understanding of at what point the Installation should expect significant socioeconomic impacts, FSGA / HAAF conducted additional EIFS forecasting of personnel losses ranging from 1,500, 3,000, and 5,000 (Tab 1).

Total sales volume generated in the local market will be reduced by approximately $56 million with the loss of 1,500 personnel and their dependents, expected to reach a total decrement of 3,735 in total population. Income losses will total approximately $67 million, with a direct and indirect total number of job positions reduced by 1,829. Under this scenario, the change in total population is expected to result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts, although changes to sales volume, income, and employment are not outside the historical range of the local market's economic variation.

The loss of 3,000 personnel and their dependents will reduce local sales volume by approximately $112 million, cause a $135 million reduction in income, and result in a total decrease of approximately 3,600 job positions. The total population (military and their dependents) will decrease by 7,470 under this scenario. Both income and population changes will cause significant adverse socioeconomic impact to the local economy, while sales volume and employment reductions are not outside the realm of historical economic fluctuations.

Significant adverse socioeconomic impacts are anticipated for every economic factor evaluated using the EIFS model as the reduction in personnel reaches 5,000. Total sales will decrease by approximately $186 million. Income will reach a total loss of $225 million and employment figures are estimated to decrease by 6,100 positions. Total population loss (includes military and their dependents) is expected to be reduced by 12,450.

Based on the analysis presented above, significant adverse socioeconomic impact is expected from the implementation of the proposed action. The magnitude of significance will increase with the continued reduction in personnel and will be felt in the local economy as well; however, personnel loss is not expected to go beyond 8,000, as analyzed in the Army's Programmatic EA[3].

b. **Facility and Infrastructure (Training and Garrison):** Force reduction at FSGA / HAAF will result in more training range capacity to support fewer Army units competing for training ranges and training lands[4]. A reduction in training activities would allow more opportunities for ecosystem management. As such, the proposed action is expected to result in minor beneficial impacts to training land use and is a consistent conclusion stated in the Army's Programmatic EA[5].

The Army will implement the "Army Facility Strategy 2020" at FSGA / HAAF. This facilities strategy outlines a broad plan for facilities management to support the Army's transition. The Army will look to maximize the use of existing space, with only limited new construction to support unit realignments at FSGA / HAAF. Facilities not in full use or at locations where units are inactivated could be re-purposed, demolished, or out granted to other Services (Navy, Air Force, Marines) or other federal agencies to increase efficiency of facilities operations[6]. It is not anticipated that FSGA / HAAF will require major military construction as a result of Army 2020. Individual facility renovations and / or demolitions will be evaluated for potential environmental impact on a case-by-case basis, as is typically performed through the Installation's DA Form 4283 process.

c. **Overall Environmental Impact:** Excluding socioeconomics, impacts are not expected to result in greater than minor adverse impacts to the environment from implementation of the proposed action. Local environmental resource experts have agreed with the analysis presented in the

[3] Refer to the January 2013, *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment,* page 4.20-13, Section 4.20.11, "Socioeconomics", for a complete analysis of impacts from a reduction of 8,000 personnel.
[4] Found in Section 2.3.3, "Live-Fire Training", page 2-3, of the *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment,* January 2013.
[5] Provided in Section 4.20.13.2, "Environmental Consequences", page 4.20-22.
[6] Found in Section 2.3.2, "Garrison Construction & Demolition", page 2-2, of the *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment,* January 2013.

Army's Programmatic EA as a consistent representation of the anticipated environmental impacts that should be expected when implementing Army 2020 decisions at the installation[7].

d. **Overall Cumulative Impact:** The site-specific evaluation presented in this REC represents the anticipated direct and indirect impacts expected from implementation of the proposed action at FSGA / HAAF. This site-specific evaluation is consistent with the conclusions provided in the Army's Programmatic EA and FNSI; therefore, the cumulative impacts discussion found on page 4.20-24 through 4.20-25, Section 4.20.16, "Cumulative Impacts", of the *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment*, offers an appropriate understanding of anticipated cumulative impacts expected in the local economy and to the environment when implementing the proposed action.

5. **JUSTIFICATION FOR USING A REC:** The proposed action is adequately covered in an Environmental Assessment (EA) entitled, *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment*, dated January 2013. The EA may be reviewed by accessing the following website: http://aec.army.mil/Services/Support/NEPA/Documents.aspx.

6. **POINT OF CONTACT:** The point of contact for this REC is the Fort Stewart / Hunter Army Airfield Environmental Office, (912) 767-2010.

SIGNED Monica J. Brown
Monica J. Brown
Force Management Division
Directorate of Plans, Training, Management, and Security

Date 09/10/2013

CONCUR Thomas C. Fry
Thomas C. Fry
Chief, Environmental Division
Directorate of Public Works

Date 09/10/2013

[7] Refer to the January 2013, *Army 2020 Force Structure Realignment Programmatic Environmental Assessment*, pages 4.20-1 through 4.20-25, for a discussion of environmental consequences expected from the loss of up to 8,000 personnel.

Economic Impact Forecast System and Rational Threshold Value Summary

Reduction in 1,500 Personnel

Region of Influence Economic Impact Significance Thresholds	Sales Volume (Percent)	Income (Percent)	Employment (Percent)	Population (Percent)
Economic Growth Signficance Value	27.26	8.46	18.58	4.56
Economic Contractions Significance Value	-12.15	-6.26	-7.34	-2.63
Forecast Value	-4.03	-3.4	-3.37	-2.99

Economic Impact Forecast System and Rational Threshold Value Summary

Reduction in 3,000 Personnel

Region of Influence Economic Impact Significance Thresholds	Sales Volume (Percent)	Income (Percent)	Employment (Percent)	Population (Percent)
Economic Growth Signficance Value	27.26	8.46	18.58	4.56
Economic Contractions Significance Value	-12.15	-6.26	-7.34	-2.63
Forecast Value	-8.06	-6.8	-6.74	-5.99

Economic Impact Forecast System and Rational Threshold Value Summary

Reduction in 5,000 Personnel

Region of Influence Economic Impact Significance Thresholds	Sales Volume (Percent)	Income (Percent)	Employment (Percent)	Population (Percent)
Economic Growth Signficance Value	27.26	8.46	18.58	4.56
Economic Contractions Significance Value	-12.15	-6.26	-7.34	-2.63
Forecast Value	-13.43	-11.34	-11.24	-9.98

Economic Impact Forecast System: Summary of Projected Economic Impacts

Reduction in 1,500 Personnel

Region of Influence Impact	Sales Volume	Income	Employment	Population
Total	$ (55,841,800.00)	$ (67,431,300.00)	-1,681 (Direct) -148 (Indirect) -1,829 (Total)	-3,735
Percent	-4.03	-3.4	-3.37	-2.99

Economic Impact Forecast System: Summary of Projected Economic Impacts

Reduction in 3,000 Personnel

Region of Influence Impact	Sales Volume	Income	Employment	Population
Total	$(111,683,600.00)	$ (134,862,600.00)	-3,362 (Direct) -297 (Indirect) -3,659 (Total)	-7,470
Percent	-8.06	-6.8	-6.74	-5.99

Economic Impact Forecast System: Summary of Projected Economic Impacts

Reduction in 5,000 Personnel

Region of Influence Impact	Sales Volume	Income	Employment	Population
Total	$(186,139,300.00)	$ (224,771,000.00)	-5,603 (Direct) -494 (Indirect) -6,098 (Total)	-12,450
Percent	-13.43	-11.34	-11.24	-9.98