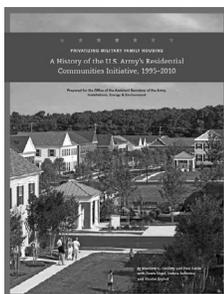


RECOMMENDED READING

# A History of the U.S. Army's Residential Communities Initiative, 1995–2010

by Matthew Godfrey and Paul Sadin, with Dawn Vogel, Joshua Pollarine and Nicolai Kryloff  
(©2012, U.S. Government Printing Office. 349 pages)

REVIEWED BY PETER L. HOLLAND, CRE



THE ABILITY OF CENTRALIZED BUREAUCRACIES and governments to implement change and undertake major initiatives effectively and efficiently is being widely questioned in this presidential election cycle. From time to time, however, there is contrary evidence that a business-like and

structured approach, when applied to the public sector, can deliver dramatic and remarkable results. Many doubted, and continue to doubt, that a free market model for military housing could work. However, extracting the best work that the private development community can deliver and applying that capability and creativity to a public service imperative has proven the viability of a free market response to an intractable problem. Public-private partnerships merely result from the conclusion that the collaboration of the private sector and the public sector can deliver improved results if each focuses on what it does best. And the successful story told in this work is in no small measure due to **the dedication and focus of a fellow Counselor of Real Estate, Mahlon “Sandy” Apgar, IV.** Armed with lessons learned as a senior executive at McKinsey and Co., he played a pivotal role in taking what became known as the Residential Communities Initiative program from concept to reality. According to Apgar, “The supreme test for all parties has been whether soldiers and taxpayers benefit. They have and they will.” ULI also played a role in the strategic concept and Jones Lang LaSalle capably assisted with execution.

This book, prepared earlier this year for the Assistant Secretary of the Army responsible for housing, describes a sometimes arcane and always complex effort to improve, or in fact transform, military housing. With a volunteer army, inadequacy (an understatement on my part) of existing military housing, and a variety of organizational, mission and structural changes within the military such as BRAC, military leaders identified the need for this

## About the Reviewer



**Peter L. Holland, CRE**, is a principal at the Hartford, Connecticut-based consulting firm of Bartram & Cochran, a business that undertakes advisory and brokerage assignments for clients worldwide. Holland has more 25 years of consulting with Fortune 100 companies, and has not-for-profit experience in real estate and shared services including site selection, procurement and sourcing, global outsourcing, business continuity and facilities. He is skilled aligning real estate strategies in support of an organization's key mission and financial operational objectives.

For more than 20 years, Holland was associated with The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., one of the nation's largest insurance and investment companies. At The Hartford, he was senior vice president and chief procurement officer responsible for real estate and facilities, procurement, global sourcing, business resiliency, and corporate services. Holland also was COO and CFO of CoreNet Global, the premier organization for corporate real estate professionals and related advisory, service provider and economic development professionals.

Active in The Counselors of Real Estate® since 2006, Holland currently serves as Chair of the Connecticut Chapter.

## A History of the U.S. Army's Residential Communities Initiative, 1995–2010



*"The supreme test for all parties has been whether soldiers and taxpayers benefit. They have and they will."*

—Sandy Apgar, CRE

daunting and noble initiative. Regrettably but predictably, past efforts had failed. Housing that might have been acceptable under the exigencies of WW II was failing members of the military, many of whom now had families and saw military service as a career. Service men and women identified poor housing as yet more clear evidence that a soldier's work was less than valued by politicians and civilians alike.

There are any number of successful projects described in the book, many at installations widely known to the public with or without military service. Among the projects tackled under this initiative were Fort Carson, Colorado (located in the Broadmoor area of Colorado Springs); Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Meade, Maryland; and Fort Lewis, Washington. In Fort Meade, 2,500 families now live in modern, safe, energy efficient and affordable housing. Fort Lewis alone, for example, covered 85,000 acres and had a population in 2001 of 20,000 active duty soldiers, 9,192 family members and almost 5,000 civilian employees. Almost 300 out of the 3,600 homes at Fort Lewis were on the National Register of Historic Places. Using Columbia, Maryland as a model, Apgar insisted that the new developments build on, and advance, the best thinking available in New Urbanism.

While the book is as an advocacy piece, this advocacy and attendant detail are not misplaced. Important work was accomplished. The book provides an impressive level of detail, sometimes to the extent that the details camouflage the greater message and the overall theme. A reader needs to

work through multiple chapters in order to fully grasp the effort as an integrated whole. As a record of the history and as a process to emulate in other public and private partnerships, the exacting descriptions can be instructive. The book, then, is more than a history; it will serve as a manual on how to get the job done for years to come. Much has been accomplished in the realm of "P3" but much more remains to be accomplished in the future. Programs are now under way to extend the lessons learned with military family housing to hotels and barracks. There is no reason not to believe that taxpayer dollars can't be leveraged for these forms of housing as well.

I can't conclude without offering kudos to the team of authors for the complete index, chapter summaries, photographs, table of military abbreviations (almost five pages and without which the book would be impenetrable), and a very complete list of resources including interviews, public records, electronic records, bills, statutes, etc. All too often this aspect of a history and a reference are neglected.

For those already engaged in public-private partnerships, this book will be of value. For those interested in knowing more and entering this field as practitioners or advisors, the book will be more valuable still. ■