

# Fort Carson's Latest Airborne Threat

Capt. Ryan Hignight, USACE - Omaha District, Public Affairs Officer

Enemies of the United States have another reason to keep their eyes on the sky. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District recently built and turned over a new hanger to Fox Company, 4-4 Attack Recon Battalion, located on Fort Carson, Colorado, to begin training for future conflicts.

Fox Company is the first Unmanned Aerial System, or drone, company located at Fort Carson. The unit recently moved from Fort Hood, Texas, to support the 4<sup>th</sup> Combat Air Brigade by “offering a more potent manned-unmanned teaming solution,” according to Capt. Evan Hoyt, Fox Company commander. “The ability, organically within the CAB, to recon and provide surveillance forward of the friendly forces with a solution for an attack asset that can stay on station long-term.”

“Prior to the completion of the hanger, the UASs were sitting in boxes not doing any good,” said Staff Sgt. Joseph Miller, Fox Company pilot and standardization operator. “It offers us a place to emplace all of our aircraft. We can put them together and check them operationally ... we calk walk around them performing checks.”

The Army Corps completed building the \$26 million hanger in early June and Fox Company moved in quickly and began immediate training. Though the largest portion of the building is the hanger, there is also a large administrative office block attached. The offices and classrooms are used by Fox Company's leadership to create and establish plans as well as to complete all required classroom training prior to flying one of the UASs.

One of the classrooms, the tactical training room, is comprised of desktop trainers that offer the operators the ability to train assigned tasks, checklist use, and sensor and payload operations. The operators can also operate as friend or foe during training exercises.

The hanger offers Fox Company a sterile and safe maintenance environment which allows the Soldiers to work on the equipment while providing a place to store equipment, according to Hoyt. The hanger also hosts a crane to move the heavy pieces of the UAS as well as a constant and clean power system. Clean and constant power is essential to the operation of a UAS and all of its systems.

Additionally, the hanger offers the members of Fox Company the opportunity to perform mission control. As the UAS are flown, ground operations can take the feed from the aircraft and send it to the flight operations inside the building.

“This is an unparalleled ability to operate stateside how we would operate downrange,” said Hoyt.

The building also contains a UAS flight simulator for the pilots to perfect their flying abilities while creating a real-world training environment.

The total size of the hanger and administrative space is almost 52,000 square feet. There is also a 2,250 square foot facility for Fox Company to store HAZMAT and petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) materials. To accompany the hanger, the Army Corps also designed and built an airfield apron and taxiway to allow the aircraft a way to take-off and land safely.

The entire facility is collocated with the 4<sup>th</sup> CAB which encompasses Apaches, Blackhawk and Chinook helicopters. Fox Company operates the only unmanned aircraft in the brigade.

“Colocation with other manned aircraft units allows us to enhance and be more effective in joint operations,” Miller said. “The new facility puts us on the airfield with base ops, weather flight operations, and allows us to get face time with them as needed.”

The Omaha District of the Army Corps has built the majority of the 4<sup>th</sup> CAB buildings and airfields at Fort Carson to include multiple hangars for various units, the air traffic controller tower and the brigade headquarters. There is ongoing construction on a new hanger for an Apache unit as well as the battalion headquarters building.

Construction is scheduled to continue for the next two-to-three years to complete the 4<sup>th</sup> CAB area-of-operations.

Fox Company’s UASs are battlefield multipliers that assist with completing the mission while protecting lives. The new hanger and administration building offers Fox Company the opportunity to contribute to the mission protecting 4<sup>th</sup> CAB’s manned aircraft by offering reconnaissance and attack possibilities.



Fox Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Combat Air Brigade, is Fort Carson’s newest and only Unmanned Aerial System unit. Members of Fox Company train on a UAS to perform reconnaissance and attack missions in support of manned aircraft within the Brigade. (Photo by Harry Weddington, USACE Photographer)



Members of Fox Company train in a UAS simulator in preparation of ongoing missions in support of the 4<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade. Fox Company, 4-4, recently moved from Fort Hood, Texas, to Fort Carson, Colorado, to support the 4<sup>th</sup> CAB. (Photo by Harry Weddington, USACE Photographer)