

Engineers Field the HYEX

By Carolee Nisbet

On 17 June, the 77th Regional Support Command, Fort Dix, New Jersey, celebrated the first acquisition of commercial hydraulic excavators (HYEXs) for an Army Reserve unit. Five of the HYEXs were added to the inventory of mission, training, and emergency-support equipment used by the 77th's 854th Engineer Battalion.

The commander of the 77th termed the new equipment a combat multiplier that will let soldiers of the 854th complete more missions faster and better. The HYEX is deployable, and it replaces 12 to 15 pieces of equipment in the unit's inventory that are obsolete. It gives the unit the ability to accomplish tasks that they couldn't do before.

The Army opted to switch to the new equipment to save time and money. It would often take as much as half a day to change the extensions on their old equipment, but now it takes less than five minutes. This decreases time spent on projects, which decreases project costs.

The 854th received three types of HYEXs:

- Type I, weighing in at 52,410 pounds, comes equipped with a hydraulic quick-disconnect coupler; a hydraulic thumb clamp; and heavy and utility buckets for general digging, trenching, and lifting.
- Type II, a slightly heavier 62,000 pounds, is equipped with a hydraulic quick-disconnect coupler, a hydraulic rock drill, and a heavy-duty bucket for quarry operations.

- Type III, the heavyweight of the trio at 71,900 pounds, is equipped with a hydraulic quick-disconnect coupler, a heavy-duty bucket, a rock bucket, and an impact breaker for use in quarry operations.

Although the HYEX is not new to public industry, it is new to the Army inventory. It represents a critical step in expanding and improving the unit's ability to train soldiers while meeting its peace and wartime missions. In addition, the heavy-duty equipment will enhance the unit's capability to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other humanitarian missions.

A versatile type of construction equipment, the excavators were specifically adapted for military use. During the next year, other engineering units will receive the HYEX. Because of their interchangeable extensions, the three types of excavators can cover every needed job for land construction from drilling, hammering, breaking, lifting, and filling in.

According to the commander of the 77th Regional Support Command, fielding this equipment at Fort Dix is a testament to the post and to the U.S. Army Reserve forces.

Ms. Nisbet is the public affairs officer at Fort Dix, the U.S. Army Reserve Command's largest training installation, and the editor of the Fort Dix Post.

The photograph was provided by members of the 358th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Salt Lake City, Utah.



HYEX Type II