

## Preserving History



**D**uring the hectic BRAC transition days, while attempting to maintain mission productivity, during the packing and shipping, the career decision making, the house hunting and real estate transactions and the new base move-in process, one thing that can usually be overlooked is the collection, transfer and disposition of an organization's 'memorabilia'. In a BRAC relocation context, memorabilia refers to an organization's historical records, assets and achievements upon which that organization's heritage and pride is forever connected.



Others may have a 'bottom up' look, which may recognize the importance of an item to a low level organizational element (branch/division/laboratory group), but may not fully appreciate the historical relevance to the organization as a whole. Another potential stumbling block is the lack of memorabilia asset update. Many organizations tend to not have a structured memorabilia 'capture' program. Thus, there may be a lot of important memorabilia with the workforce, an offsite locations, in warehouses etc.... These will need to be identified and 'captured' prior to any workforce transfers.

A robust memorabilia preservation program should be started early in the BRAC program. Initiate communications with all work organizations and request that they identify those memorabilia items that have historical, emotional and performance recognition value. Also ask for additional items that convey a sense of pride and accomplishment throughout the organization's existence. Generate an inventory of these items and coordinate with security in order to establish proper safekeeping. At the same time, communicate and coordinate with the receiving base and organizations to assure appropriate transfer and final placement with proper ceremony and publicity. When the time is right, pack and ship the memorabilia items separately to preserve accountability and minimize loss or damage.



One cannot disassemble, pack, transport and reassemble pride and a long history of accomplishments, but as BRAC managers we can assure that the symbols and performance recognition vehicles are handled with honor and then to reestablish their 'place of honor' at the new location.



As the BRAC process begins to 'get into gear', workforce attitudes deteriorate - and they will, incidents of theft and destructive vandalism can increase significantly. Portable items such as plaques, pictures, trophies, prototype products and historically valuable records are prime loss candidates. It doesn't take a large number of individuals to cause a significant memorabilia loss!



Workforce preoccupation with BRAC relocation and realignment activities also tends to minimize the importance of memorabilia protection as perceived by the workforce. Many employees do not necessarily understand the historical importance of memorabilia items within their environment.

Throughout this memorabilia preservation process, keep the organization's management and the entire workforce totally informed of its progress and prepare them for the visual changes that will result. It is extremely important to accurately convey the memorabilia preservation process and demonstrate a solemn sense of respect and dignity for the affected base, the workforce and the surrounding community.