

# Project Profile



## USG® Drywall Suspension System

**Application/Building Type:**

Government Buildings

**Project Name:**

Navy's Great Lakes barracks  
Recruit Training Command

**Location:**

North of Chicago, Illinois

**Design Firm:**

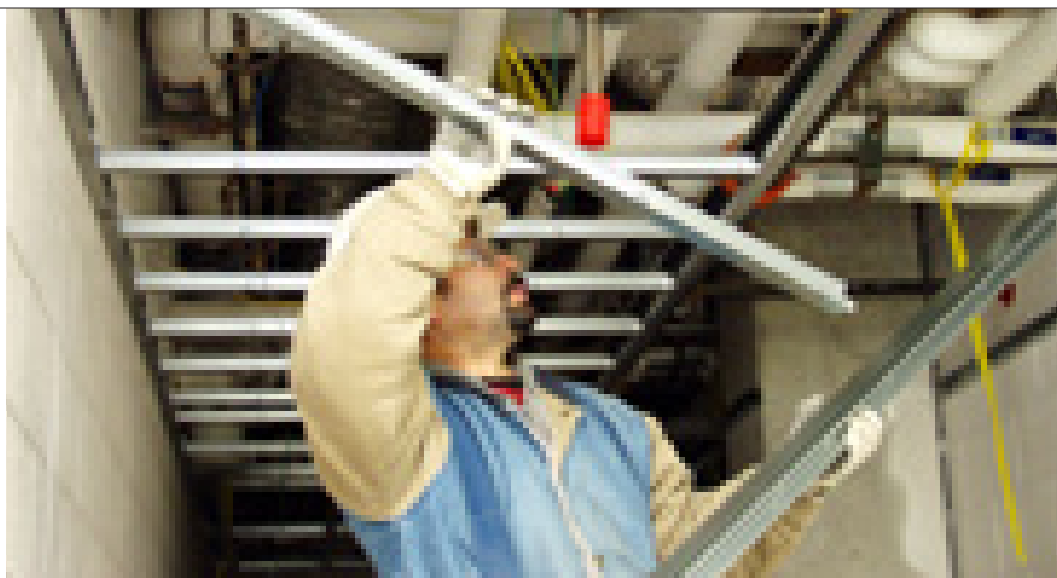
USG Interiors Inc.

**Contractor:**

Era Valdivia Contractors Inc.

**Featured Products:**

USG™ Drywall Suspension System  
SHEETROCK® Brand Gypsum Panels



usg.com

### Remaking the Navy's Boot Camp

Who has the contract for the walls and ceilings on this project? Era Valdivia Contractors Inc., Chicago, is installing 700,000 lineal feet of suspended drywall ceilings and 1.5 million square feet of gypsum wallboard, primarily [SHEETROCK® brand gypsum panels](#).

"There are seven barracks, and we have completed the fourth one," said Bud Geers, project manager, Era Valdivia Contractors. "We started two barracks in June, and the seventh will begin in the first quarter of 2005."

The barracks being erected at Recruit Training Command are part of the Navy's new training-centric vision for basic training, which calls for centralizing facilities and reducing time-wasting steps. The new barracks combine living quarters with classrooms and galleys. Consequently, recruits will train, eat and sleep largely under one roof, rather than having to move between separate barracks, drill grounds and mess halls. The old arrangement saw recruit divisions marching away much precious time.

Thus, from both operations' and facilities' standpoints, the Navy's Great Lakes barracks project is monumental. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony J. Principi, said the new facilities "will save money, improve training and efficiency and send a better sailor to the fleet." Naval Training Center Rear Adm. Ann E. Rondeau called the project a "mammoth endeavor" that will enhance "the efficiency of the training our sailors receive."

The new barracks and training facilities replace buildings constructed from the mid-1940s through 1960s. They have a projected useful life of nearly 100 years.

### Efficient Ceiling System Used

Like the Navy, Era Valdivia Contractors—a walls-and-ceilings and industrial painting firm—is also focused on efficiency. To accomplish such large ceiling installations quickly and profitably in each barrack, the firm turned to USG Interiors Inc., Chicago, for help.

The [USG Drywall Suspension System](#) offers a better, faster and less expensive way to install drywall ceilings. Being pre-engineered, the system dramatically reduces the time spent measuring, bending, cutting and connecting components. Main tees snap together quickly, and cross tees fit snugly into the main tees' pre-notched slots, eliminating the need to tie hat channel and black iron together (pictured above). Furthermore, the system utilizes 12-gauge hanger wire rather than cumbersome 9-gauge wire, which speeds up installation.

"It's better than the old system—a lot faster than channel and black iron," said Rafael Hernandez, job foreman, Era Valdivia Contractors. "We have been able to complete our work in less time. The system installs at least twice as fast as traditional systems."

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The system is like an erector set, with components arriving on site pre-cut and pre-engineered to meet job requirements. Not only is it efficient, but it is also economical. According to the manufacturer, the [USG drywall suspension system](#) reduces installed costs (labor and material) versus conventional cold-rolled channel drywall ceilings by as much as 40 percent.

Era Valdivia crews experienced such results on the Great Lakes project. Hernandez assigned four to six installers to each work 42 separate 350-foot-by-60-foot flat suspension ceilings. Two ceilings exist per floor on each of three floors of the barracks. Geers said the crews hung each 350-foot-by-60-foot ceiling in three days.

### **Impressive Results**

"You can't beat this system," said Hernandez. "Everything is coming out perfect. It's coming out straight and level, and we haven't had any callbacks."

Clearly, today's innovative ceiling products set apart the quality walls-and-ceilings contractor from the average firm. Achieving perfectly flat ceilings the old-fashioned way is time-consuming and expensive—and now completely unnecessary. Pre-engineered drywall suspension systems enable contractors to achieve dramatic ceilings—both curved and flat runs—in significantly less time.

For Era Valdivia Contractors, using a drywall suspension system has proved to be a good business choice, bringing profit to the bottom line, along with a quality solution.