

District takes hard look at its parks

Article by Jennifer Patrick
Photo by Laurie Driver
Little Rock District

All federal employees are learning to survive in today's changing business climate with its increasing workloads and demands, and decreasing work forces.

Instead of just surviving in this sea of change, Little Rock District is striving to meet the needs of recreation customers while efficiently managing its 205 parks.

District park facilities have just undergone a Park Operations Efficiency Review (POER). The plan was developed in 1995 to make the district's recreation facilities more efficient while still meeting the needs of the park users. Projected savings from measures being implemented as a result of the POER are expected to exceed half a million dollars annually.

"This is the first full-scale review process for a district to tackle, and it was a big job," said Dianne Batson, the district's Total Army Quality (TAQ) program manager. "We knew we needed to measure the efficiency of our facilities, provide alternative management options, and measure our success."

A TAQ team developed the review process and trained the recreation project managers.

Facing facts

"When we began gathering information on the parks, we discovered that the district had a tendency to just maintain our existing facilities rather than adjusting them or developing new facilities that would meet the needs of the public," said Miles Johnson, TAQ team member.

Team members learned that by improving existing facilities and changing others to cater to the needs of users, the district could maximize the parks' cost effectiveness and increase customer satisfaction.

"We found that funding was not the primary limiting factor for park operations and maintenance," Johnson said. "Comparisons such as cost per visitor hour and cost per visitor showed that some small parks which had been viewed as under-utilized actually cost little to operate when compared to the larger parks."

To get an accurate picture of how each facility was being used, economic indicators were compared to service and efficiency. Each project office in the district rated and ranked their own parks. The review process compared all of the facilities at a given lake project.

As in any ranking, some parks scored lower than others. Parks scoring below a pre-established rating were tagged for further study to find out why.

A park's low rankings could be caused by a number of reasons including high maintenance costs, low revenue, remote location, services not used by the public, or insufficient services to meet the users' needs.

Public involvement

The results from the review and the suggested improvements were presented at public workshops. Park users and surrounding communities became involved in the review process through the work-



Park ranger Jesse Robertson (left) helps a member of the public find a place on a map during a public meeting.

shops and public comment periods at every recreation project.

Meetings were attended by public officials, marina owners, local residents, special interest groups, and the media. The biggest group attending the meetings have been the park users.

About 25 people attended the public workshop at Beaver Lake in northwest Arkansas to discuss the changes at four parks, but the numbers didn't surprise Lake Manager James Beard. "You have to do something drastic to get a large turn-out," Beard said. "This is about what we expected."

But project office employees made sure everyone knew about the review process by hitting the civic and service group circuit.

"We worked to keep people informed about the proposed changes," said Tommy Park, Greers Ferry Lake manager. "I met with community groups in the area so I could explain the process and answer any questions. They said, 'We're not against you. What you are doing just makes good business sense.'"

Business basics

That's the idea behind the park review process — applying business practices to the recreation mission. Potential alternatives include partnerships with community groups, entering cooperative agreements with businesses operating on Corps property under lease agreements, relocating and consolidating existing facilities and seeking ways to improve overall park management practices.

Suggestions from the review process have started to bring positive changes to Little Rock District parks. At Clearwater Lake in Missouri, Highway K Park will undergo a minor change in campsite des-

ignations. Several under-used sites are being redesignated as a group camp area.

The area is already popular with canoeists, and a group camp area would better serve their needs. Although the modifications are expected to cost about \$2,000, annual revenues are expected to increase by \$3,000.

An agreement has been established so that maintenance at Bigelow Park on the Arkansas River is done under a community volunteer agreement. The city of Bigelow is responsible for cleanup, mowing and removing solid waste. The agreement is saving taxpayers about \$4,700 annually.

Fairfield Bay, a resort community on Greers Ferry Lake, and Fairfield Bay Community Club have leased Van Buren Park from the district. The district will still approve the park's operating plan, and the city has agreed to continue providing the same basic services for the public. The lease agreement will save taxpayers more than \$50,000 annually in operations and maintenance costs.

At the Millwood Tri-Lakes Project Office in a remote area of Arkansas, special event permits are being issued to vendors for the sale of recreation-related convenience items at parks where concessions are not available.

"All of the things we're doing across the district will not adversely affect our visitors — the changes will be invisible," Park said. "But by implementing these changes, we can save the taxpayer money while we become better stewards of our resources."

The POER is not over. While the major work has been done, the district will continue using the review process to meet the changing needs of customers and the changing demands of doing business.

Women's Equality Day, Aug. 26

Why Muslim women sometimes wear veils

By Dina Aman
Los Angeles District

(Editor's note: Dina Aman is a civil engineer with Los Angeles District. Her parents are from Egypt; she was born in the U.S. and raised as a Muslim. Aug. 26 is Womens' Equality Day. It is interesting to read Aman's explanation of the roles of Muslim women and compare them to American culture.)

Have you ever walked through a mall and seen a woman with a veil covering her hair? What crossed your mind? Did you think she was one of the many wives of a rich Saudi Arabian oil sheik? Did you feel sympathy for her because some man forced her to dress that way? Or did you shrug your shoulders and decide it was just one of life's mysteries?

The veiled women are Muslims who have adopted the Islamic dress code for modesty. Islam is one of the world's largest monotheistic (belief in one god) religions. Almost one billion people in 40 countries are Muslims.

Contrary to popular belief, women and men are regarded as *equal* in Islam, but with different responsibilities. This difference, however, doesn't mean women can't undertake similar tasks or responsibilities. A woman is recognized as an independent individual entitled to work, own a business, obtain an education, and participate in government.

In fact, Muslim women were given the right to vote *1,400 years ago*. They are entitled to equal rewards for performing the same tasks as men, and they may keep any money they earn. Discrimination against women is considered unjust in Islam and is not tolerated.

The family unit is important in Islam, so the role of the wife and mother is highly respected. The belief that paradise is at the foot of every mother elevates motherhood to a level not equaled elsewhere. A Muslim feminist would urge women to make *motherhood* their career.

A Muslim husband is expected to treat his wife kindly and with generosity. He can't force her to work and can't make any claims on her earnings or inheritance. In a husband-wife relationship, the spouses are equal in dignity and respect. Their roles are best conceived as attitudes and responsibilities, rather than specific work or activities.

One of a Muslim woman's responsibilities is to observe the same religious duties as a Muslim man. Islam places great emphasis on feminine modesty. From a Western point of view, the veil and long loose clothing appear oppressive, "backward," and against a woman's rights of expression.

But, guarding her modesty is consistent with a muslim woman's rights and power over her body. Her success is attributed to her intelligence, ambition, and abilities and not her physical beauty. A Muslim woman would take the expression "if you've got it, flaunt it" to refer to her ability to express ideas and opinions, and contribute to society.

The traditional form of Islamic clothing is called the *hijab* (pronounced hee-jab), which means to



Dina Aman, a Corps civil engineer, wears the hijab (Muslim hair covering) even with her hard-hat. (Photo courtesy of Los Angeles District)

cover or conceal. The *aura* (Arabic for private parts) for both men and women are to be covered. For a woman this includes her hair, chest, arms, and legs. Hair is considered part of a woman's allure. *Both* Muslim men and women are required to wear loose modest clothing that does not reveal the shape of their bodies.

A Muslim woman is not required to wear the hijab around her husband, other male members of the family, or boys under the age of 13. A girl begins following the Islamic dress code when she reaches puberty and is mature enough to understand the meaning and responsibilities of the hijab. It is a life-long commitment and must be taken seriously. However, a woman who does not observe hijab is not considered less pious and is not treated disrespectfully.

The hijab is a symbol of respect and identity, much like police uniforms and doctors' smocks. The hijab is a reminder to the Muslim woman of her beliefs and helps her remain god-conscious. She is identified as a Muslim, so she must guard the image of Islam through her conduct.

The *concept* of hijab is also practiced in other religions. The Virgin Mary and nuns like Mother Teresa are seen wearing loose clothing and a veil, so hijab is not a strictly Muslim tradition.

The view of women and hijab described here is part of the Islamic religion and must not be confused with *ethnic* culture. Misconceptions of Islam's view of women arise from how women are treated in various Muslim countries. For example, the law against women driving in Saudi Arabia has no Islamic basis and is unique to the Saudi culture. In some Islamic (and non-Islamic) countries, women are not given equal rights in education and government. This is a reflection of those particular cultures and should not be blamed on Islam.



Nancy Coutu was a former ranger with New England District. She was killed in Madagascar while working as a Peace Corps volunteer. (Photo courtesy of New England District)

NED honors former ranger

By Ann Marie Reyes
New England Division

Nancy Coutu, a former park ranger with New England District (NED) and slain Peace Corps volunteer, has been honored with a memorial in NED's Elm Brook Park in West Hopkinton, N.H. The ceremony unveiling the memorial was held June 15.

Coutu worked at Elm Brook Park during the summers of 1992 and 1993. She was killed by tribesmen in Madagascar on April 9, 1996, after serving nearly two years as a Peace Corps volunteer. Coutu joined the Peace Corps in August 1994 and would have finished her tour in the fall of 1996.

At the time of her death, Coutu was teaching 300 villagers how to grow vegetables and helping build a school, hospital, and roads on the island. She was posthumously named a Knight of the Malagasy National Order, Madagascar's highest civilian order. The honor has never before been given to a foreigner or a woman.

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is honored that Elm Brook Park has been chosen by Nancy's family as the site of this memorial," said ranger Dave Shepardson, manager of the Hopkinton-Everett Lakes project. "During her two summers with us as a park ranger, she contributed much to the park and especially to those who visited the area. She was a young woman who loved life and helping others, and brought joy to the lives of everyone she touched."

Coutu's father, Roger Coutu, talked about the things her family is doing in her name. Her mother, Connie Coutu, recently sent a truckload of clothing to Madagascar. Mr. Coutu and his coworkers have set up the Nancy Coutu Memorial Fund for scholarships. Fund-raisers such as a sky-dive and golf tournaments are scheduled to take place in the future. Last year, the scholarship fund raised \$15,000.

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Corps women lock in professionalism

Lock operator is one of the many quiet, but vital, services that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers performs for the nation 24 hours a day. Some lock operators are women. And two women are lockmasters.

Billie Boyd

Billie Boyd, lockmaster at Cheatham Lock and Dam in Nashville District, is an unassuming, down-to-earth woman. She didn't set out to make history; she just wanted to do a good job wherever her career led. So she was surprised when she made history on March 21, 1994, when she became the first female lockmaster in the Corps.

"I put pressure on myself, because I felt I had to prove I could do the job," Boyd said. "And, being first put pressure on me because of those coming behind me. If you fail, you kind of mess it up for everyone else."

Boyd supervises nine people (five lock operators, two mechanics, one seasonal worker, and one student aide) and considers everyone to be on the same team. "I respect each one and do what I can for them, and they do the same," she said.

Boyd thinks she has represented women well. She advises women to never give up and not worry too much about others' expectations, but she feels stereotypes are still the hardest obstacle.

"If you're a woman wanting to be in a traditionally male career field, you need to be capable of and willing to do the difficult and dirty jobs alongside the men," she advises. She has more advice for anyone (man or woman) aspiring to be a lockmaster. "Be sure to know what you're talking about before speaking, prepare for headaches because there will be some, and never quit learning."

Boyd began her federal career with four years in the Navy as a boat builder at Annapolis, Md., from 1978 to 1981. Boyd spent another year in Annapolis in a temporary civilian job as a boat builder, then another as a part-time truck driver. During her year as a truck driver, a retired Corps employee told her about the Corps.

Needing a full-time job, Boyd returned to Tennessee, where she had relatives. The first Monday morning she was back, she went to Louisville District to apply for a job. She was there every workday morning for the next two weeks to talk to people in the personnel office. Her persistence paid off, because after two weeks she had a job as a seasonal mechanic at Old Hickory Lake in Nashville.

After four months, Boyd was accepted into the one-year lock operator training program. When she finished the program she was assigned to Kentucky Lock. In 1987 she moved to the Cheatham Project as a lock operator, and became lockmaster in 1994.

Boyd credits her husband, Norman, with helping her adjust to being a lockmaster supervising nine people. Norman, a former towboat captain who also supervised nine people, draws on his experience to advise his wife, which she said has helped numerous times.

Being a lockmaster is pretty much what Boyd thought it would be, but she had hoped restructuring would reduce paperwork. Instead, she says it seems there is more paperwork every day.

Red tape is what Boyd likes least about her job. She also wishes there was less constraint on the budget at field offices.

One of Boyd's goals is to finish the hydraulic and electric rehab at Cheatham. After 45 years, it needs a lot of maintenance and new machinery. She would also like to see regulations changed to require pleasure boaters to wear life jackets.

Boyd enjoys several things about her job. She enjoys having input into what is done at the Cheatham project, and she likes being a voice for



Billie Boyd (left) is lockmaster of Cheatham Lock and Dam in Nashville District. Bernadette LeBleu is lockmaster of the Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier in New Orleans. (Left photo courtesy of Nashville District; right photo by Art Belala, New Orleans District)

the employees. Boyd also feels she is treated as an equal by her peers and says that Roger Deitrick, her supervisor, lets her do her job and treats her fairly. She also likes to make sure her employees are treated fairly and, if she thinks they are right, she will back them up.

Boyd takes her work seriously, but appreciates that she still has time to do things with her husband. They enjoy fishing, hunting, and raising bird dogs.

Bernadette LeBleu

"No, I had no idea that I'd end up where I am now," said Bernadette LeBleu. "I figured I'd be the first at something; I just didn't know what."

On March 30, LeBleu made history when she became lockmaster at Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier. She is the first female lockmaster in New Orleans District, and the second woman lockmaster in the Corps.

"I was excited when I found out that I'd gotten the job," LeBleu said. "It was an honor, a great privilege and an accomplishment. I started at the bottom and went through every aspect of the job to get where I am."

LeBleu's history with the Corps started 20 years ago in 1977 when she took a civil service test and started as a clerk at Freshwater Bayou Lock. She showed an interest in learning different aspects of running the lock.

"Back then, it didn't take long to get my office work done, so I'd go down to where the guys were working in the shop," said LeBleu. "Pretty soon, the lockmaster saw my interest and he set up a training program for me."

Also, she'd watch the operators at the lock wall and fill in for them during their lunch breaks. "After I saw that I could easily learn their job, I realized I was making \$2.50 an hour and they were making about \$6.40," said LeBleu. "That sounded good to me!"

In 1979, LeBleu became the first woman to qualify for an operator position at Calcasieu Lock. She was promoted to a senior operator after five or six years, then worked as a mechanic at the Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier from 1991 to last January, when she took over as acting lockmaster. In a few months, she was chosen to be official lockmaster.

"I did have to put more into the job, to prove my-

self, but I think any woman has to do that when she takes on a man's world," said LeBleu. "I had to prove I could pull my load. I enjoyed being the mechanic here, and getting dirty fixing things and finding out what makes them work. Running a lock, you're apt to do anything from digging ditches to messing with the sewerage, so you have to be a jack-of-all-trades."

Supervisors saw LeBleu's hardworking manner and willingness to help out when needed, but she says not everyone she encountered was so supportive. "When I first started as an operator at Calcasieu, there was an older group of men who believed a woman's place is in the home. I got a lot of wisecracks and sly remarks; they tried to make me give up. But the more you tell me 'no,' the more determined I get. They pushed me into it even more."

LeBleu believes that time has improved the situation. "I've worked with men for 20 years now, and I enjoy it," she said. "I think we're on an even keel here. Times have changed to where more and more women have to work. And when the new group of younger guys came in, I didn't have any problems; I was one of the guys."

LeBleu said the biggest support for her career came from her husband of 25 years, Amos, who was in the Army and now works as a deputy sheriff. They have two daughters and two grandsons.

"They say that behind every successful man there's a good woman, but behind me is my husband," said LeBleu. "I worked swing-shift for 12 years, and my husband was pretty much the primary parent. He tended our girls and did everything that needed to be done — the housework, the laundry — because we were a *team*, not just a man and a woman. He pitched right in and when the road got rocky, he was there to keep me going. I was hard-headed enough to hang in there, but it helped to have his support."

"Amos helped me raise our girls the way I was raised by my parents, to believe there's nothing you can't do if you put your mind to it. I know everyone's heard that a woman's place is in the home, and I agree with that," said LeBleu, then laughed. "A woman's place is in the home — she should go there directly after work!"

(Gloria Stanley of the Nashville District public affairs office and Joyce Tsai of the New Orleans District public affairs office collaborated on this article.)

Ancient art studied at Corps project

There's something mysterious about rock art, the ancient symbols and pictures carved into rocks in the American west. Some speculate that they were decorations, signposts, biographies, or graffiti, but their exact meanings have been clouded by time. In most cases, something more spiritual is represented by these prehistoric symbols, especially to Native Americans.

Whatever their meaning, there are a number of these enigmatic messengers from the past at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' John Martin Dam and Reservoir project in Colorado.

The American Rock Art Research Association (ARARA) recently held its annual conference in La Junta, Co. The 250 attendees took numerous field trips to rock art sites, including John Martin.

Park rangers Vergial Harp and Jennifer Johnson, and Albuquerque District archaeologist Greg Everhart guided the field trips at John Martin. Fifty-five rock art enthusiasts and professionals from 10 different states, plus Canada and Germany, toured the John Martin site.

Rock art is a popular term for petroglyphs (incised or pecked) and pictographs (painted), although the term is not accepted by anthropologists and archaeologists. Everhart led the participants through narrow crevices into a hidden valley where there are a huge number of petroglyphs, and explained the significance of several rock art glyphs and panels.

Some of the petroglyphs at John

Martin are historic names and dates dating from the 1880s to the 1930s when there were major influxes of settlers into the region. Most of the rock art, however, is prehistoric and includes representational and non-representational forms, some of which may date to the Archaic Period, about 5000 B.C. to 200 A.D.

Most of the petroglyphs at John Martin are abstract — geometric, curvilinear, or linear lines and dots pecked or incised into the local outcrops of Dakota sandstone. Other

glyphs are of the Plains Biographic style and include footprints (several with six toes), turtles and buffalo, and lines that appear to represent the Rocky Mountains. There are human figures that may be stick figures, outlined forms, or carved into the stone.

At the project, there are only four known pictographs, all on one panel and all painted red. These include two human and two bird representations, two with arms and wings pointed down and two with them raised upward. These are thought to

possibly represent an Indian myth of the magical transformation of humans to bird-like figures.

The project also has a few incised linear glyphs that some researchers have proposed to be Ogam, a linear combination of lines and symbols representing an alphabetical system of Celtic origin. But this is controversial because there are no known Celtic artifacts in the American west to support the theory.

As each tour was welcomed to the site, Harp discussed the purpose of John Martin Reservoir for irrigation, flood control, sediment detention, recreation, and fish and wildlife conservation. The Corps staff also explained the federal role in managing land, and the Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) and other federal laws.

ARPA requires that sites on federal lands not be disclosed unless they can be adequately protected. Everhart emphasized the importance of this in reducing excessive and unsupervised visitation and vandalism, and said that one of the most important protection tools is education.

Rock art has withstood the elements for centuries, but theft and vandalism are the biggest threats to it. Everhart, who began photographing the site in 1979, said he has been told that a vertical slab of rock with petroglyphs once stood like a gateway marker to the rock art site. That slab was taken years ago.

(This article was written by Greg Everhart and Vergial Harp.)



These are several of the many petroglyphs at John Martin Dam and Reservoir in Colorado. (Photo courtesy of Albuquerque District)

Corps quality meets international standards

Louisville District's Engineering Division is the first organization in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to earn ISO 9000 registration. Products or services purchased from ISO 9000-registered companies must meet consistent quality standards.

"Our customers expect and deserve services that meet and exceed their needs," said Joe Keith, assistant chief of engineering and in charge of the registration process. "Going through this process showed us that, although we were producing quality products, we had room for improvement. During the past 12 months we've studied our procedures and conformed them to ISO standards. This process assures our customers that we have a quality system in place and it's being followed by everyone. Even a new employee can quickly get up to speed with this system of documented practices."

ISO 9000 business standards provide the framework for an international quality management system, according to Ed East, HQUSACE point of contact for Corps engineering ISO 9000 activities. ISO 9000 was developed by the International



Standards Association in Geneva, Switzerland. It was developed in response to consumer and manufacturer concerns in the emerging European Common Market.

"Defined and refined during the years, ISO 9000 standards can now be applied to any product, service business or industry," East said. "The basis for these standards are U.S. military specifications.

"Any enterprise that develops and conforms to an ISO 9000-based quality management system, which can be independently audited, can be registered," East said. "Registration demonstrates that the organization has a quality system in place, and conformance to that system enhances its ability to develop and deliver the products and/or services its customers need and expect."

The Corps initiated an investig-

ative study of ISO 9000 for the engineering function. After a favorable recommendation by its private consultant for the investigation, Logistics Management Institute, of McLean, Va., Corps tested the ISO initiative in four districts — Louisville, Savannah, Portland, and Kansas City.

Louisville District sought registration under the ISO 9001 model for design, development, production, installation and servicing. The district had to comply with 20 elements under ISO 9000 to become registered. Elements included management responsibility, design control, contract review, process control, inspection and testing, and internal quality audits.

The elements do not specify how an organization's processes happen, but help the organization define ap-

propriate quality standards, how processes are documented, and assures consistent adherence to both. Compliance ensures optimal quality assurance which leads to lower costs, greater customer satisfaction, and higher profits.

Last October the Corps went through a preliminary audit of procedures put in place since beginning the registration process. Several deficiencies were discovered. Action was taken to correct and ensure future compliance. The final audit was performed in mid-February and the Corps received a certificate of registration on March 27. ISO requires periodic follow-up audits.

According to Phil Hasselwander, chief of engineering, ISO provides the basis for the Corps to continuously improve the quality of their products. "Registration isn't mandatory, but there were too many advantages for us not to look into it. It outlines good business practices and demonstrates our commitment to quality."

(This article was prepared with input from Geri Cozine, Louisville District, and George Halford, HQUSACE)

Bike trek

Corps group follows Patton's liberation route

By Marnah Woken

Transatlantic Programs Center,
Europe

In the spirit of friendship, liberty, and freedom, 300 bicyclists came together in Periers, France, June 14-21 for the "Voie de la Liberte," or Liberty Bike Tour.

Following the same route taken by Gen. George Patton and his 3rd Army during the liberation of France and Belgium in World War II, the event began in Periers near the Normandy Beaches and ended in Bastogne, Belgium, at the Battle of the Bulge Memorial.

Four employees from Transatlantic Programs Center, Europe participated in the eight-day, 1,100-kilometer (682-mile) tour.

"I think stopping at Omaha Beach the morning we arrived really had an impact on me," said Corps project manager Doris Marlin. "Pulling up on the beach and seeing 9,700 white crosses, most of them dating the first few days of the D-Day invasion, set everything in motion for me."

"Seeing so many crosses without names really had an impact on me," said Jaime Hernandez, a program analyst. "There were so many people who fought and died to liberate the country, and no one knows who they are. That really made me stop and think about the importance of what I was about to do."

Dressed in bright pink jerseys, bicyclists from France, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Iceland, Canada and the U.S. traveled the famous route in three Peletons (French for bicycle group), according to Fred Wissel, a supervisory civil engineer.

"The Peletons were generally grouped by nation, with 100 cyclists in each Peleton," Wissel said. "We rode about 100 miles per day averaging 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) per hour, depending on the topography. If the roads were fairly level, we would often average 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) per hour. If it was hilly, our uphill speed would be 12-15 kilometers (7.5-9.3 miles) per hour."

Numerous ceremonies were held throughout the tour in villages and towns. "It was great to see everyone cheering as we rode through the towns," Wissel said. "Everyone seemed really supportive, but our presence seemed to be most significant to the older generation that lived through the war."

Seeing the reactions of the townspeople, who lived through the liberation more than 50 years ago, also had a significant impact on Gordon Simmons, a structural engineer.

"My feelings about the tour really changed after riding through the towns and seeing everyone's reaction," Simmons said. "In one of the villages, an elderly woman came out



Participants in the Liberty Bike Tour ride into Bastogne, Belgium. (Photo by Fred Wissel)

of her house waving her cane. She was so happy to see us, she just seemed to be alive with energy. It was much more emotional than I expected. I went into this thinking it was going to be just a bike ride, without really thinking too much about the historical significance of it."

"The emotion in the townspeople gave me a sense, to some small degree, of what it must have been like when the liberation came through," said Marlin. "There were a lot of happy people in the towns. That gave me a sense of pride to be part of the group commemorating and honoring that part of history."

Organized by French authorities in 1986, this was the ninth Liberty Bike Tour. According to officials, as many as 700 cyclists have participated in past tours.

About 70 Americans participated in this year's tour. All four Corps employees finished with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

"It was a totally exhausting experience, both physically and mentally," said Wissel. "After the first several days, it really got to be a mental battle to convince myself that I wanted to get back on the bike the next morning. On the other hand, it felt like a mental high. It really gave me a good feeling to be an American knowing that our country helped France and Belgium during the war."

"Participating in the tour really had special meaning for me," said Marlin. "My father was in World War II, so I wore his military identification tags during the trip. Every-



(Left to right) Fred Wissel, Doris Marlin, Jaime Hernandez, and Gordon Simmons pose for a group photo in Bastogne, Belgium, after the eight-day, 1,100-kilometer (682 mile) Liberty Bike Tour. They are in front of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial. (Photo by Daryl Winebrenner)

where I went I kept remembering my father's face. When I saw an elderly veteran holding a flag I remembered my father's face."

"You can't complete something like this without feeling pride and thinking, wow, I did something fantastic here," said Simmons. "It was the hardest mental and physical thing I've ever put myself through. I wasn't sure I was going to make it. But,

after this ride, I now have a better confidence in myself and a better feeling all the way around."

"The feeling of accomplishment is incredible," Hernandez agreed. "I'm very proud of myself for doing this and keeping up with the group without much training. I have a great sense of belief in myself and feel like I can do almost anything after this."

Article by Verdelle Lambert
Photos by Jonas Jordan
Savannah District

Already the largest industrial complex in Georgia, Warner Robins Air Force Base is poised to become a megabase in the 21st century. Savannah District is playing an important role in that growth.

Robins AFB is 16 miles south of Macon, Ga., and covers 8,722 acres. Almost 16,000 people work at the base. More than 40 units are based there, including units from the Air Combat Command, Air Mobility Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Department of Defense, Defense Logistics Agency, Air Force Reserve Headquarters, Navy, Army, Federal Aviation Administration, and others.

In January 1996, Robins AFB became the main operating base in the U.S. for the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft (Joint STARS or J-STARS). In April 1996, the Air National Guard's 116th Fighter Wing relocated to Robins where it was re-

named the 116th Bomb Wing and flies the B-1B bomber.

"Bringing operational units in like the B-1 wing and the Joint STARS wing is viewed much like you would the stock market," said Col. John W. Mogge, commander of the 78th Engineer Group at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center. "Diversity is a hedge against closure."

"In the next 10 years Robins will be what we call a megabase," said Mogge. "Consolidating missions to a megabase saves money in the long run, so we'll probably get more missions. Part of the reason to move the Guard here was simply the air space required. It wasn't possible to fly the B-1B at Dobbins Air Reserve Base (ARB), so when the unit converted from F-15s to the B-1B they had to find a new home."

Host unit

Warner Robins Air Logistics Center is one of five air logistics cen-

ters. It is the largest unit at Robins, has command jurisdiction over the base, and serves as host to the other organizations.

A unit of the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC), the center is responsible for the repair and modification of the F-15 Eagle, C-130 Hercules, C-141 Starlifter, U-2 Dragon Lady, all Air Force helicopters, and all Special Operations aircraft and their avionics.

The center also provides logistics support for all Air Force missiles, vehicles, general purpose computers, and avionics and electronic warfare systems.

Savannah District is managing five AFMC construction projects totaling about \$32 million. Half of that, about \$16 million, is earmarked for dormitories.

"We've just renovated one dormitory and turned it over to AFMC," said Tim Corley, senior project manager for Robins AFB and Dobbins ARB. "We're preparing a request for proposal (RFP) for renovating another dormitory and

Air Force megabase grows, Savannah District builds

the demolition and renovation of three other dormitories, plus a chiller plant. The RFP was issued May 20, with award of the construction contract on or about August 15."

"One thing that will be key to Robins' future success is completing our general development plan," said Mogge. "It's a mosaic of 11 different element plans that will provide the basis for future construction, siting, and redevelopment of the base during the next 10-15 years."

Taking care of business

In 1996 the Corps' Engineering Strategic Studies Center conducted the Customer Satisfaction Survey of Military Customers. In all targeted areas, the satisfaction of Robins AFB customers was the highest of all Savannah District customers, and significantly higher than the Corps' average. One targeted area was the field office led by Ric Powers. Powers is also area engineer for Fort McPherson, Dobbins, and the project office at Dahlonga, Ga.

"I have an outstanding group here who live, breathe, and sleep customer relations, customer satisfaction, and customer service," said Powers, who updates the Air Logistics Command section on the status of Corps projects. "That's why we've been so successful; we always

give 110 percent of what our customers expect. They know they can depend on us to turn over quality facilities on time and within their budget. We also do a lot of extra things. We help them troubleshoot some of their jobs, and we chase down warranty issues. Bottom line — we do whatever it takes to get the job done."

"I think the relationship between the Corps and Robins is outstanding," said Mogge. "I've been a lot of places all over the Air Force, and this is clearly the best I've been around. I think we deal with the facts. We trust that each part of the relationship will do its job, and when we hit the rocky points, we just get the facts on the table and solve the problems. I think the Corps has excellent leadership and management here."

Joint STARS

One of the high-profile units at Robins is the 93rd Air Control Wing, which flies the E-8C Joint STARS aircraft. While flying in friendly airspace, the E-8C can look behind hostile borders to find and track ground targets in complete darkness and in all weather.

The wing received its first aircraft March 22, 1996, and will receive one to three a year until there are 19 E-8Cs at Robins by 2006.

Savannah District is building facilities to support the Joint STARS mission — 30 projects worth \$107 million. Twelve projects are complete, eight under construction, five in design, two being advertised, and three in programming.

"We just turned over a multipurpose hangar to the customer; construction is at 50 percent on the fuel system maintenance hangar, and 15 percent of the design work has been completed on a third

hangar," said Corley. Other projects turned over to the customer include a flight simulator facility, a mission simulator facility where the crews train on Joint STARS radar, a squadron operations building, and a tactical training squadron facility.

Joint STARS construction began in December 1992 and will continue through fiscal year 2000.

"I think the military construction work will decrease when J-STARS is completed," said Powers. "I think we'll get more involved in the construction management of operations and maintenance projects. I've been working on that with Colonel Mogge as time allows and projects come up. I'm confident we'll be able to meet their needs and desires. We have done one large O&M project for the Air Force Reserve Command, renovating Building 220. That was a \$9 million project."

B-1B bomber

"We've completed master planning for the beddown of the B-1B Bomber," said Derek Cudd, project manager. "We've also completed the designs for the first four military construction projects, which recently bid for just under \$27 million."

"The beddown is a high-profile program for the Georgia Air National Guard (GAANG)," said Cudd. "They came to us because this is a pretty big undertaking. They aren't just moving from Dobbins to Robins, but also changing to a new aircraft (a larger one than they're used to) and we could get the job done in a timely manner."

The GAANG B-1 base will be a base-within-a-base, 134 acres of Robins AFB surrounded by a class B security fence. "In the master

plan we laid out everything — buildings, streets, aprons, infrastructure, utilities, drainage, weapons storage areas, future expansion," said Cudd. "We also designed the horizontal construction — roadways, hydrant fueling, apron, taxiway, a consolidated aircraft support system (which powers the plane for testing without running the engine), and laying utility lines. The only thing left to build are the buildings, and the customer has elected to do that."

According to Cudd, the design work, including the master plan and modifications, cost about \$2 million.

Air Force Reserve Command

Savannah District's other high-profile job is the Air Force Reserve Command headquarters, a 10-acre, three-building complex.

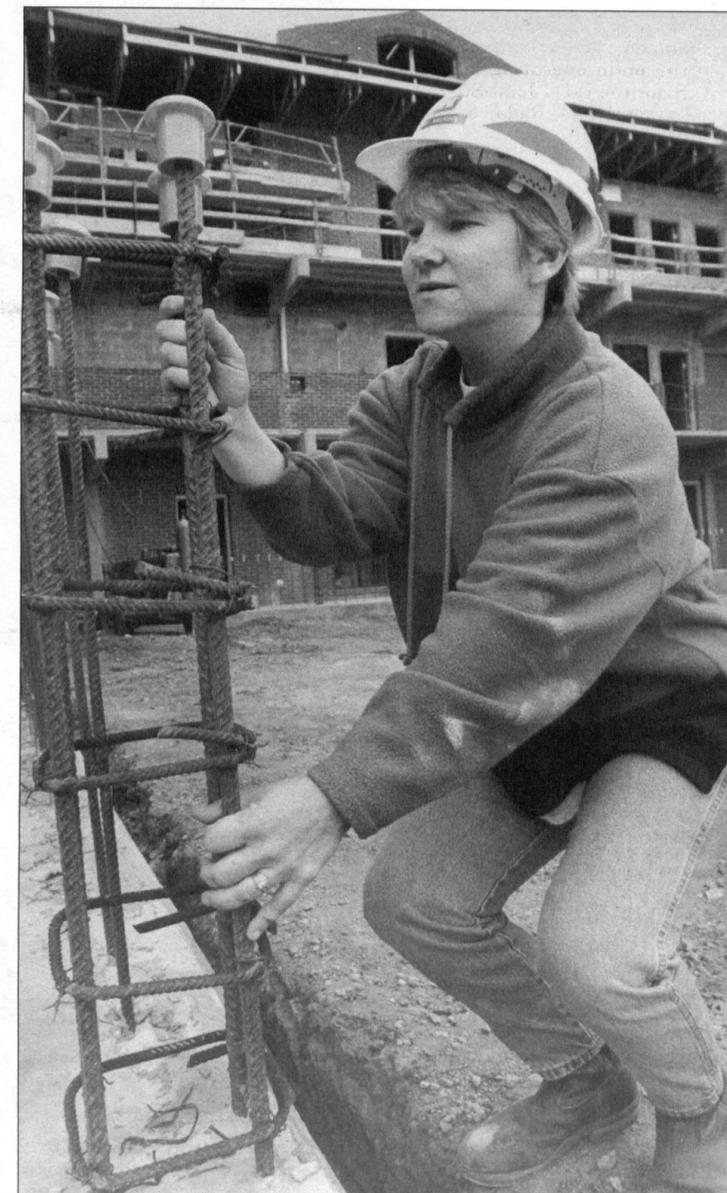
"We recently renovated Building 220, the existing historic building," said Jack Bach, project manager. "The second building, the professional development center, is under construction and scheduled to be completed in September. The third, Building 210, the largest, is still in design. All three buildings will cost about \$25 million. That includes construction, interior furnishings, and systems furniture."



Above is the J-STARS flight simulator. Inside the simulator cockpit are trainers Dennis Jolissain (right) and Irv Robinson.



The design of Building 220 won Savannah District the 1995 Design Agent of the Year award from the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence.



Project manager Amy Vaughn (above) says the dormitory behind her is scheduled to be completed in September. The flight-line dining facility (left) was turned over to the customer in May.

Corps woman wins weight wars

Article by Alicia Gregory
Photos by Jonas Jordan
Savannah District

"Do you think I'm fat?" I asked my husband in bed one night.

"What?" he said, pretending he didn't hear the question. He knows questions like that are dangerous.

"Do you think I'm fat?" I repeated.

"What do you mean, fat?" he asked nervously.

"You'd give me an honest answer if you loved me," I snapped. "Do you think I am fat?!"

There was a very long pause. "A little," he said in a soft, small voice. "I love you," he pledged, waiting for me to respond.

I rolled over and cried myself to sleep.

The next morning I dusted off my scale and weighed myself. I was more than 100 pounds overweight. I spent the next couple of days binge-eating whatever was in the pantry and looking at old photographs taken when I had a nice figure.

I have battled my weight since puberty. The only reason I wasn't fat in high school was that I was bulimic. When I wasn't binging and purging, I was on some new miracle diet that promised a quick and easy way to lose weight.

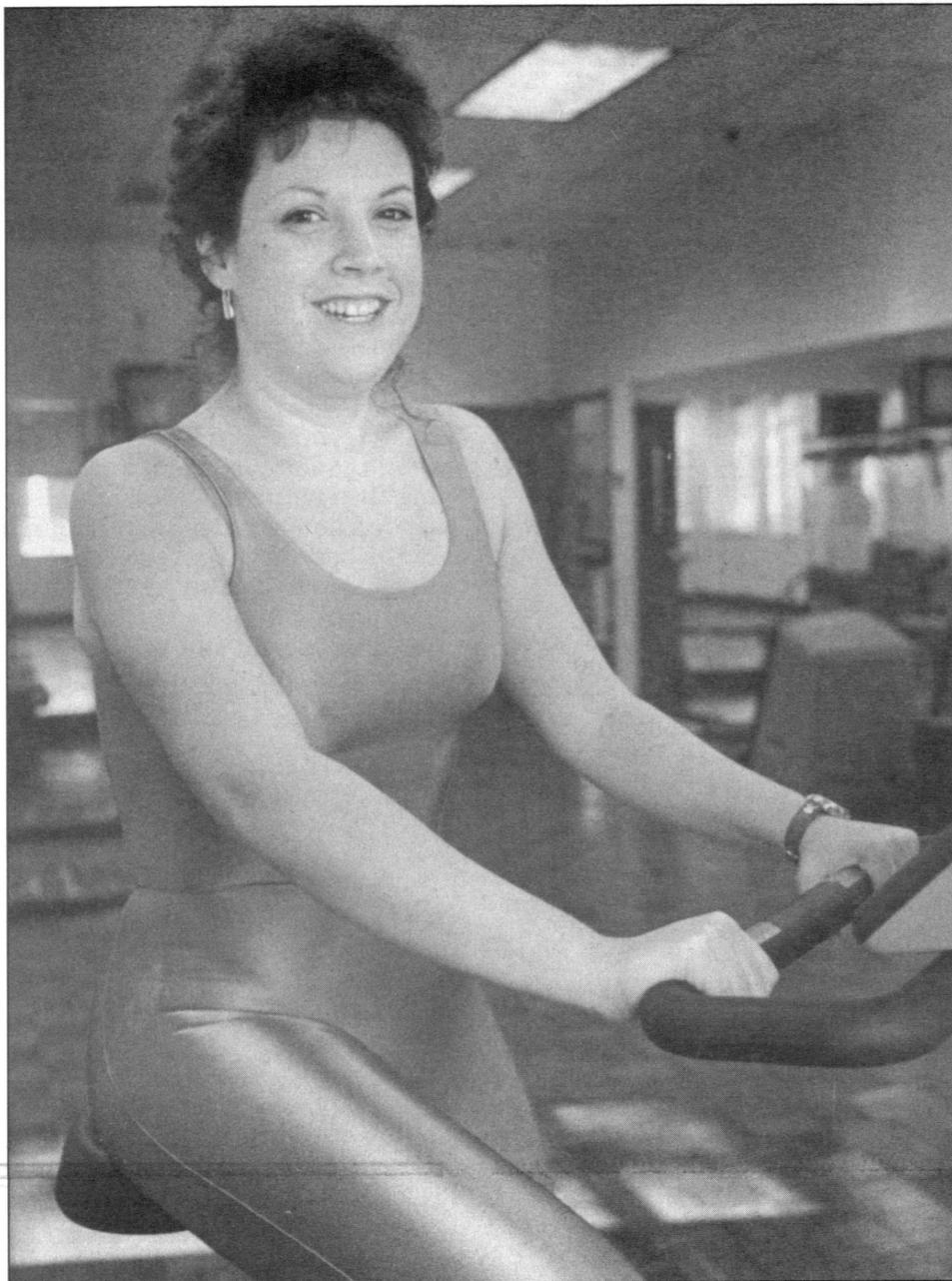
I think I've tried just about every gimmick diet imaginable. I even tried those that claimed you could "Lose weight without really trying! No exercise, eat as much as you want and still lose weight!" All I ever lost was my money. I actually dieted myself up to 235 pounds.

This time I wanted to lose the weight and keep it off. I have tried losing weight for my parents, to be popular in high school, and to be more attractive to my husband. This time I was going to do it for me.

Once I made the decision to lose weight, I consulted a doctor. After a thorough examination, he prescribed appetite suppressants and referred me to a dietitian. The dietitian didn't tell me anything I didn't know. I just wasn't practicing it.

The first three months went well. The appetite suppressants helped keep me on track with my diet. I learned new ways to cook and started reading labels on the foods I bought.

My co-workers were a big help, too. Every day Jeanne Hodge



With a sensible diet and consistent exercise, Alicia Gregory has lost nearly 100 pounds.

would ask, "Have you exercised today?" Some days I didn't want to exercise, but with her help and persistence I always did.

Once Jeanne started helping, I noticed I had other cheerleaders. Team members outside of public affairs started to notice my weight loss. At first they asked if I had done something different with my hair or they'd make a comment about my clothes. Once they realized I was losing weight, they complimented and supported me. I got a few comments like, "Should you be eating that?" or "Try this exercise." It was almost as if they wanted me to succeed as much as I did.

I received encouragement from my family, too. My husband cooked dinner and took on more responsibilities around the house to allow me time to exercise. But it really hit home when my five-year-old son

said, "Look momma, I can put my arms around you!"

When I had lost 50 pounds (half way to my goal), I got off the diet pills. At first I started to gain some of the weight back, but I kept to the diet and soon got back on track.

The next six months were very hard. Some weeks I would lose, other weeks I wouldn't, even though I worked out and watched what I ate. My moods depended on how much weight I lost, and my husband bore the brunt of many of my mood swings. I often cried over nothing — not my style at all. Once I actually blamed him for my not losing weight. My family learned to tread

lightly at those times.

Finally, I came off my plateau and began losing weight again. As I dropped the pounds, I ran out of clothes to wear — not that I was complaining!



Alicia Gregory weighed 235 pounds before starting her diet and exercise program.

I always felt people were staring at me when I bought clothes. The selection of clothing in my size was poor and when I did find something it was expensive. Nothing ever looked good on me no matter how much I spent.

It felt wonderful when I could buy my clothes in the misses's or junior's section instead of the women's. I started buying clothes that complemented instead of hid my figure. I started to like the way I looked. I spent more time getting ready for work, and my family started complaining it took hours for me to go anywhere.

I have lost 95 pounds so far and I recently started teaching an aerobics class. It seemed like an unattainable goal once, but I finally did it.

The hard part now is keeping the weight off. My biggest fear is gaining it all back. I have even heard others say I lost weight before and gained it back. I don't want to slip back into those bad habits that got me to more than 230 pounds.

But maybe a little fear is good. It helps me remember where I was, and where I could be again. I have learned and practice positive self-talk. I find exercise a pleasure instead of a chore. I'm not on a diet; I've learned to eat healthy.

I still have about 10 more pounds to lose, but I know I'm up for the fight, with determination and help from my friends.

(Alicia Gregory works for the public affairs office of Savannah District.)

"It really hit home when my five-year-old son said, 'Look momma, I can put my arms around you!'"

White House volunteers

HQ employees work at most famous residence in U.S.

Article by Nicole Barnes
Photo by F.T. Eyre
HQUSACE

Several headquarters employees are frequent guests at the White House. No, they don't attend meetings in the Oval Office or sway the President's decisions, but they have almost as much visibility as he does. They are volunteer workers in President's Park.

Harriet Barton, a program analyst in the Environmental Division of Military Programs, is the veteran of the group with five years as a guide. She recruited three other volunteers from Environmental Division — Verne Brandt, program analyst; Nancy Porter, environmental specialist; Sara Goodwin, an environmental engineer; and Anne Butler, a realtor with the Directorate of Real Estate.

President's Park covers the White House and grounds, the Ellipse, the Visitors Center in the Commerce Building, Lafayette Park across from the White House, and Sherman Park between the Ellipse and the Treasury Building.

The volunteers work closely with the President's Park rangers and the Secret Service. Crowd control is handled by the Park Police mounted on horses. The Secret Service monitors security and are on hand to resolve potential problems.

The volunteers all say they enjoy the work and the rewards that come with it.

"Being a volunteer and helping others is my way of giving thanks to all the people who have been a positive influence in my life," said Butler. "Besides, it's part of the circle of life; by volunteering we follow the golden rule."

As a President's Park volunteer, Brandt has toured the world without leaving D.C. "You meet people from all over the world," he said.

Goodwin said she has gained historical as well as geographical knowledge of the city. "I've learned where the ATM'S are located, how to arrange wheelchair rentals, and where the closest restaurants are to the White House," Goodwin said. "I know that the youth hostel is at 10th and F streets, where to park, shop, and of course the hours that memorials and museums are open. I now see the capital the way tourists see it."

The group does most of their volunteering on Saturdays. A typical Saturday starts at 7 a.m. with thousands of visitors standing in line to get tickets to the White House and information about President's Park from the Visitors Center. The volunteers check the assignment board which lists their duty positions for the day.

The ticket booth at one end of the White House Visitors Center opens at



Headquarters volunteers pose in front of the White House. Left to right are Anne Butler, Harriet Barton, Verne Brandt, and Sara Goodwin. Skip Miller (right), is a ranger in President's Park.

7:30 a.m. and Brandt is usually there handing out tickets for tours. There are 17 tours throughout the day and 350 tickets per tour. Brandt informs the visitors to meet at the designated area on the Ellipse 10 minutes before the time on their tickets.

All kinds of situations come to Brandt's duty station. On one typical morning, the Smith family wanted to go on the 11 a.m. tour instead of the 10:20 a.m. tour. At the same time, the Jones' dad needed an extra ticket, although there is a limit of four per family. Brandt explained the situations to the ranger on duty, and both families got what they needed.

Butler's duty station is often the information booth at the White House Visitors Center. Butler informs visitors about the White House and the surrounding museums and monuments. Tourists can pick up free brochures there, get answers to their questions, and even find out about the best restaurants. Butler's ability to speak Spanish sometimes comes in handy when dealing with foreign visitors.

At 8 a.m. Goodwin is at the East Gate Tour Operations where she prepares tourists that have congressional passes. Goodwin informs the tourists that no photos can be taken, and no strollers, food, or drinks are allowed in this portion of the tour. There is a designated area outside of the East Gate where baby strollers can be parked. Goodwin answers the tourists' questions with a smile throughout the entire day.

Barton and Porter usually serve as escorts. They lead visitors in their assigned number tour across the street from the Ellipse waiting area to the White House East Gate. Porter lines the visitors up two-by-two along the White House fence, while Barton answers questions. Then they return to the Ellipse to escort the next tour.

"The most rewarding thing is

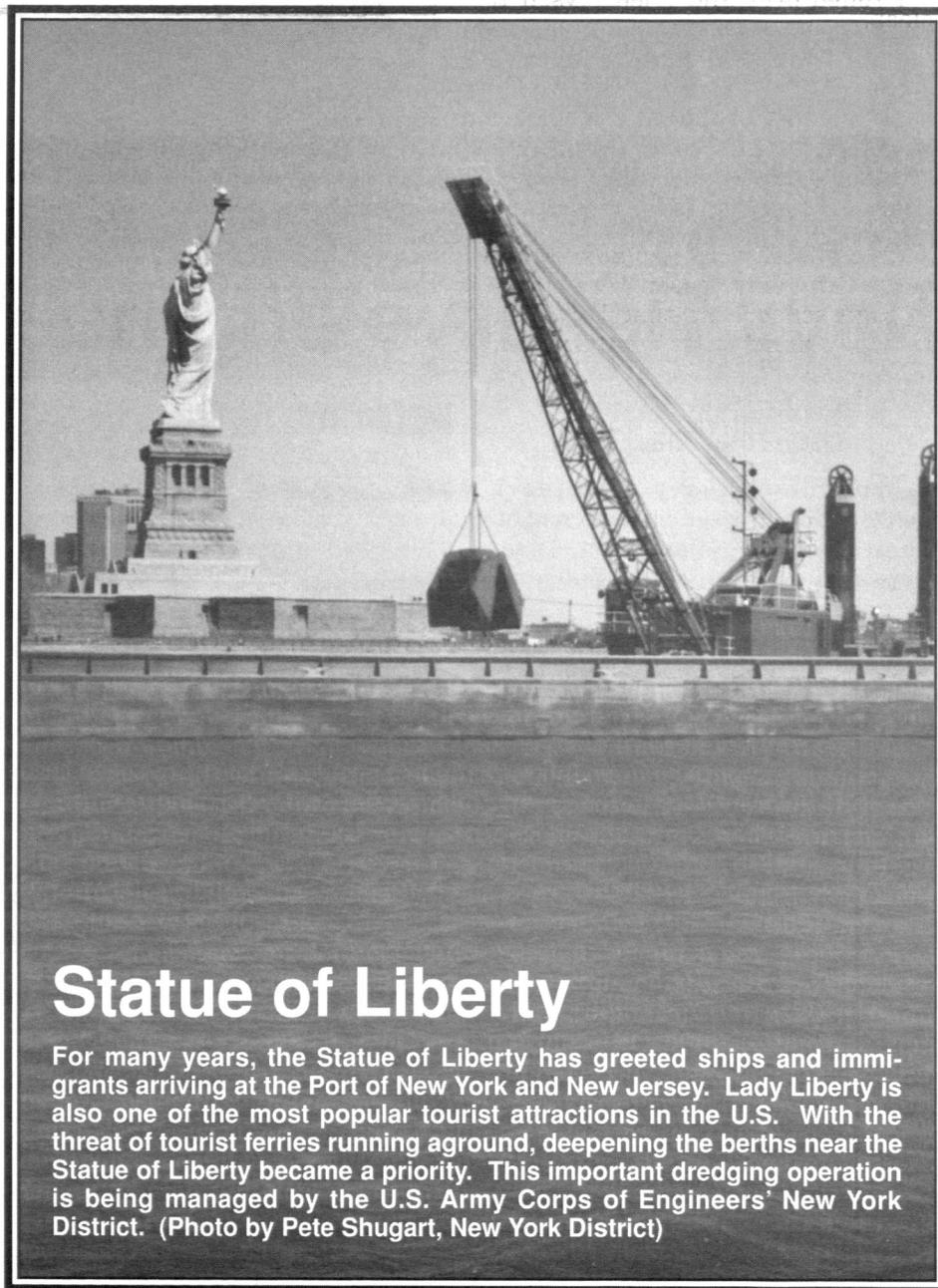
when a tourist says, "Thank you for being there to answer my questions," Barton said. "I also happen to love the White House and anything I can do to make an individual's visit a great one, I will."

The volunteers say that special

days are the most fun for them. One is the Easter Egg roll where children play games, hunt eggs, and enjoy entertainment. Another is the White House garden tour which is held twice a year. These tours go past the Oval Office, and photos are placed along the walkway that tell about previous White House families. Last year Barton took pictures in the gardens for the President's Park scrapbook.

The volunteers work when foreign dignitaries visit, and during the Christmas holidays. During the three evenings following Christmas, the White House is open for public viewing of the decorations, which include 35 Christmas trees. Visitors have to wait several hours in a line that winds around the White House. There's a lot of joking and singing in line, and this is also a favorite time for volunteers.

For many Americans and foreign tourists, the White House is their first (maybe only) interaction with the federal government, so it is important to make it a friendly, personal experience.



Statue of Liberty

For many years, the Statue of Liberty has greeted ships and immigrants arriving at the Port of New York and New Jersey. Lady Liberty is also one of the most popular tourist attractions in the U.S. With the threat of tourist ferries running aground, deepening the berths near the Statue of Liberty became a priority. This important dredging operation is being managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' New York District. (Photo by Pete Shugart, New York District)

Chief of Engineers visits Ft. Campbell

By Ken Crawford
Louisville District

As the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter circled the construction site, the Chief of Engineers studied the terrain. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project manager explained the new rail marshaling yard and its importance to deployment, and Lt. Gen. Joe N. Ballard was pleased.

There was one glitch, though, and that was getting final Pentagon approval on an environmental impact statement for the off-post railroad connector. Ballard turned to one of his colonels. "Bob, we need to track that down."

Ballard, who says he is "a full-service Chief," toured the construction sites at Fort Campbell last month. During the day, he talked, listened, offered help and directed action. He emphasized his desire to hear the good, the bad, and the ugly.

As the chopper landed at Fort Campbell's airfield, Col. Harry L. Spear, commander of Louisville District, was explaining a minor construction problem at one of the sites. Ballard unbuckled his harness and looked at Spear. "So what are we going to do about it?"

Spear explained how the district was solving the problem and Ballard nodded.

During his visit to Fort Campbell, Ballard saw construction of the rail yard, rail connector, elementary school, education center, airfield runway, maintenance shops, and barracks.

Barracks complex

As Ballard toured the Aviation Brigade barracks construction site, he talked about bettering soldiers' lives. "We have to improve the soldier's quality of life," Ballard said. "We have to improve their living space, but at the same time be mindful of cost."

The new barracks do that. Part of the Aviation Brigade Complex, the barracks will house the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 9th battalions. Each room

will have separate living and sleeping areas with private baths and walk-in closets. Some troops have already begun to occupy their billets.

Lt. Col. John McGonigle, Fort Campbell's Director of Public Works (DPW), accompanied Ballard throughout the tour. In a special meeting with McGonigle and the DPW staff, Ballard emphasized the importance of DPW and praised their work. "DPW works overtime on this post taking care of soldiers and their families," Ballard said.

Though they do their best to make things work, DPW employees have to deal with an old post that was constructed quickly for World War II. When talking to the DPW staff, Ballard said, "On Fort Campbell you have an old infrastructure. You need to improve it to better serve the soldier. But you need to be careful about privatization. You need an innovative approach."

Ballard explained that the post could get its power through a long-term contract with a utility provider, who could also upgrade power lines, sub-stations and other equipment for the same price. This would save Army construction funds, he said.

Ballard, who also is the colonel of the Engineer Regiment, is working hard to ensure that the Corps of Engineers, combat engineers and installation Directors of Public Works work together as a team. "What I'm trying to do is bring the DPW into the fold where they belong," Ballard said. "Not as a client/customer relationship, but as partners. There should not be any daylight between our organizations." He turned to McGonigle. "Help us to determine the best product available, that meets your needs and is the best value for your dollar."

One area Ballard sees as a benefit of teamwork is barracks upgrade. When the Corps takes an old barracks and upgrades it to modern standards, the cost is about \$13,000 per room. "A new barracks costs \$25,000 a room," Ballard said. "That's about a two-for-one benefit for upgrade

over new. Let's use Corps of Engineers' experience and innovation to bring the cost down."

"Sapper Eagle"

Ballard met with the 101st Division Commanding General, Maj. Gen. William F. "Buck" Kernan, then visited the 326th Engineer Battalion, "Sapper Eagle." Ballard had served with the 326th as a young officer. When he saw the rows of battle-dress uniforms, Ballard smiled. "Troops — this is where it really happens."

Warrant Officer Dennis Barnes showed the general a project that has improved Sapper Eagle's efficiency and saved the Army a lot of money. The unit is rebuilding its fleet of Caterpillar 613C scrapers. The Cat 613C scraper is a self-propelled tractor with an elevating scraper blade. Barnes explained that rebuilding the Cat 613C scraper fleet is about 85 percent complete. It involves refurbishing and refitting each scraper to bring it up to original standards. This makes the unit better-deployable, adds five or six years to the equipment's life, and saves about \$150,000 over buying new equipment.

Unit mechanics and operators refit the equipment, working closely with the Installation Maintenance Division, their civilian counterpart.

After inspecting the equipment, Ballard met with the troops. "I appreciate all you do," he told the soldiers. "The Army is working hard to get you better equipment like the deuce and new mine detector. We're working to improve the soldier's quality of life."

Ballard saluted the work at Fort Campbell. "The Chief of Staff of the Army has put his money where his mouth is," Ballard said. "You can see here at Fort Campbell that we're turning dirt and constructing buildings. We have made a commitment to both your commanding general and the garrison commander."

Navy Reserve engineers restore Corps stream

By Jennifer Patrick
Little Rock District

A rumble of heavy machinery breaks through a quiet dawn on the White River. Fly fishermen, knee-deep in the chilly water, pause in their rhythmic castings.

The low-lying fog parts as two front-end loaders rumble down the stream bed and move into position, followed by men in camouflage and waders. The fishermen stop just long enough to watch the men and machinery take their positions, then return to their real love.

Right now, this is an everyday occurrence on the White River below Beaver Dam in Arkansas. Every morning, men and machines lumber into the streambed and work until the turbines start generating and the water starts rising.

An eight-man reserve SeaBee (short for construction battalion) unit from Shreveport, La., began working on a stream restoration project on the tailwaters below Beaver Dam in May. They are bunking down in the old resident engineer's office and spending eight-to-



SeaBees install a layer of cribbing to protect an eroding riverbank. (Photo courtesy of Little Rock District)

12 hours a day working in the White River.

The reservists are working on 28-day tours, and there will be two tours working on the restoration project. SeaBee units are gradually becoming more involved in community service projects like this one.

These projects help the community and keep the SeaBees' skills sharp.

"We're the SeaBees," said Petty Officer 1st Class Danny Armstrong. "We're used to building airfields and parking lots. This project is a little different for us."

Actually, the tailwater project is a

little different for everybody. According to project officials, this is the first major restoration project to be attempted on a hydroelectric stream.

The work is a cooperative effort among the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Fayetteville and Tulsa Chapters of Trout Unlimited, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Southwestern Power Administration.

The project will return the stream to its natural condition before the flood of May 1990, when record releases were made from Beaver Dam because of the large amount of spring rainfall. These large-volume releases washed away some of the trout habitat and caused bank erosion along the White River.

"The Beaver Tailwater Project has been going on for about four years, but we were working with strictly volunteer labor," said Steve Eager, project manager for Trout Unlimited. "We could only work when the volunteers were available. These SeaBees are a blessing."

Continued on page 11

Around the Corps

Agreement signed

The Waterways Experiment Station (WES) is spreading its wings with help from the Air Force. WES recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Air Force Academy to launch a cooperative research initiative.

The agreement was signed by WES Director Dr. Robert Whalin and Brig. Gen. Ruben Cubero, dean of faculty at the academy, and it facilitates the exchange of information and people while continuing the cadet mentoring program.

"The agreement was signed to develop, advocate and execute joint research projects to help the Army and the Air Force, and to match Air Force requirements with WES capabilities," said Lt. Col. Randall Brown, current Air Force technical coordinator for WES. "It is a joint support partnership. WES people can augment their staff through the agreement. Researchers at the Air Force Academy can support us with information and we can do the same for them."

EPA conference

St. Louis District hosted a meeting of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regional administrators and senior officials on June 11. The meeting took place onboard the motor vessel *Pathfinder* during a 23-mile trip down the Mississippi River from the Melvin Price Locks and Dam to St. Louis, Mo. Officials attending included nine of the EPA's 10 regional administrators, and the EPA Assistant Director for Water.

The day began with a tour of the lock and dam control room. On the *Pathfinder*, the EPA officials met Corps program directors and technical experts from St. Louis District, Mississippi Valley Division, Topographic Engineering Center, and Huntsville Engineering and Support Center.

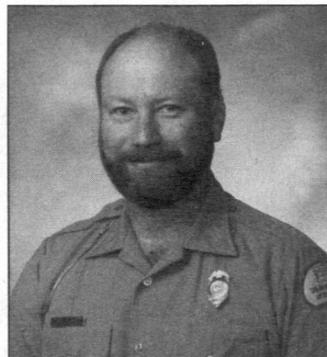
During the trip they were treated to environmentally related displays and presentations. This included environmental river engineering and environmental pool management, photogrammetric mapping of environmentally sensitive areas and hazardous waste sites, and ordnance and explosives site identification and remediation.

"This was a terrific opportunity to learn about the technical assistance tools the Corps makes available," said John DeVillars, EPA Region I Administrator. "As a result we're already following

up on aerial mapping needs we have to protect drinking water supplies on Cape Cod."

Recreation award

Al Lookofsky, park ranger at Lake Shelbyville, Ill., in St. Louis District, was honored recently by



Al Lookofsky, a ranger at Lake Shelbyville, Ill., received the Legend Award from the American Recreation Coalition. (Photo courtesy of St. Louis District)

the American Recreation Coalition in Washington, D.C. He received the coalition's Legend Award for outstanding efforts to enhance outdoor recreation experiences on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' lands and waters.

Employees from each of six federal land management agencies received similar honors. The awards were presented during the coalition's Great Outdoors Award Celebration.

During his 22-year career with the Corps, Lookofsky has worked to improve the quality of recreation at three Corps lakes, while protecting the water resources. He has consistently searched for ways to improve the design and accessibility of visitor facilities and initiated more conscientious inspections of service contracts. He has worked with volunteers to build and maintain trails and improve the quality of recreation areas.

Lookofsky also has volunteered in the community, working with civic organizations on community events, including the Boy Scouts, the public school system, the Lions Club, the Illinois Association for the Advancement of Archeology, the Kaskaskia Archeological Society and the National Wildlife Federation.

He has also trained other recreation professionals as an instructor for the Operations and Maintenance Contracting course and the North American Park and Recreation Workshop.

Correction

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Marine Design Center in Philadelphia, referred to on page

four of the July *Engineer Update*, is a field operating activity of the Corps, and has no direct organizational ties to Philadelphia District.

American Rivers Award

St. Louis District has received the first annual Mississippi River Restoration Award by American Rivers, a national river conservation group in Washington, D.C. The award was presented at luncheon ceremonies on June 6 in Washington. Claude Strauser, chief of the district's River Engineering Section, and David Busse, Senior Water Control Manager, accepted the award.

The district won the award for its Environmental Pool Management program which has created more than 3,000 acres of aquatic grasses in Mississippi River Pools 24, 25 and 26. By changing how navigation pool levels are maintained, the district allowed significantly more marsh plants to grow in the river ecosystem. These plants are a favorite food of migratory waterfowl and other aquatic life the Mississippi.

Historical award

New England District has received the 1997 Preservation Award from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The honor, presented at a ceremony at the State House in Boston, was awarded for restoring the commander's quarters at Watertown Arsenal in Watertown, Mass. The 130-year-old structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The commanding officer's quarters at Watertown Arsenal was built in 1865 and is a two-story Italianate brick residence. Repairs were done under the terms of a \$268,770 contract. Wooden trim, including doors, frames and window work, were stripped, repaired, and repainted. New wooden balustrades (rails and supports), 20-ounce copper roofing and copper gutters were installed. Eleven fluted, cast-iron columns, capitals, and lattice work were stripped and repainted, and missing parts were recast to match existing ones.

All work was supervised by a Corps inspector, and repairs were closely coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office, the city of Watertown, and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

SeaBees

Continued from page 10

When project officials realized they didn't have enough manpower for the work, they began requesting help through other channels. That's when the SeaBees became involved.

The Trout Unlimited volunteers, local scout groups, and the SeaBees are stabilizing the river banks and restoring habitat for the trout and other organisms in the river. Log revetments and riprap are being placed along the stream bank and fastened into position to help prevent further bank erosion.

The Corps became involved in the project when Larry Rider, the project manager for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, contacted Upper White River Resident Engineer Richard Groves.

"Larry told me about the project and the problem he was having get-

ting his idea to the right people," Groves said. "I just helped him through the process."

Under a Corps-issued Section 404 permit, root wads and boulder clusters are being placed in the river from the dam to the Arkansas State Highway 62 bridge.

"When the SeaBees came on board, I really wanted to step up my support of the project, especially since I'm ex-Navy," Groves said. "They gave the project enough manpower to get the work done, and this was our chance."

Through the Logistics Office and excess equipment lists, Groves has been able to meet some of the basic needs of the SeaBees to keep the job rolling smoothly.

"SeaBees don't just run around with beds on their back," Groves said. "We've gotten them cots and basic amenities through excess prop-

erty lists. Stan Jones at the Beaver Powerhouse has worked with them to use machine shop for any repairs that need to be done. They come with the expertise, but we wanted to give them a place to stay and the necessary support."

It took Armstrong's crew a little time to learn exactly what they needed to do on the project, but now the group is making good progress.

"If I can keep most of this group of guys for both tours, and if the generation schedule holds, I think we can complete about four miles of stream work," Armstrong said.

"This project is benefitting the entire stream, from the microorganisms to the fishermen," Eager said. "We're already seeing improvement in the stream's habitat. Skinks and other food for the trout are returning. That's just the beginning. More food means bigger fish."

The project will benefit more than the fishermen. The work will stabilize the banks along the river, which will help increase channel capacity and improve water quality in the White River.

Just like the fishermen who enjoy the White River, the SeaBee's work schedule is still at the mercy of the hydroelectric power generation schedule.

"On a normal schedule, they stop generating around 2 a.m., and we begin work around 6 a.m.," Armstrong said. "We work until about 1 p.m., then we begin pulling out for the generation to start again at 2 p.m. It's an unusual schedule, and it can change any day."

District hydrologists have worked with Southwestern Power Administration to schedule the generation times so that the SeaBees and volunteers have some time to work.

Jeep recovered from frozen lake

Article and Photos by
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Cold Region Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) personnel recently recovered a wrecked vehicle from a deep frozen lake.

Last winter, a CRREL contract employee was driving a government-owned Jeep Cherokee along the Glenallen Highway in central Alaska when he lost control and plunged 80 feet over a cliff. The vehicle rolled several times, landed in the lake and sank in the frigid water.

The driver's seatbelt saved him from serious harm. He managed to unfasten his seatbelt, swim to the surface, and back to the bank. He climbed up the snow-covered cliff, walked down the highway, and was picked up by a passing motorist. He suffered a small cut on his cheek, ruptured eardrums from water pressure, and hypothermia.

Months later, the Jeep was recovered from 40 feet of water under four feet of ice. CRREL employees and the Arctic/Subarctic Aquatic Pararescue (ASAP) Group managed the recovery.

Challenge

The Jeep was removed from the lake for environmental reasons. The General Services Administration, who owned the Jeep, planned to contract the recovery to a private contractor, but CRREL felt they could recover it at lesser cost and wanted the challenge. Plans were made and ASAP agreed to lead the extraction team.

Underwater topographic maps showed the lake was up to 90 feet deep with a steep underwater slope. The slope of the shoreline was too steep to use a vehicle on the slope or on the road 80 feet higher.

By springtime the lake was frozen solid. The initial plan called for cutting a small hole through the ice so divers could go down to locate the vehicle. Chainsaws would cut away large sections of ice next to the shore, allowing cables to be attached to the Jeep. Divers using lift bags would raise it off the bottom. As people on the shore hauled the cables, divers would maneuver the vehicle toward the opening.

Change of plans

But reconnaissance showed that the lake ice was thick enough to support heavy vehicles, so CRREL changed plans to extract the vehicle through the ice. ASAP provided diving equipment, rigging, medical equipment, and expertise. Paramedics were on the scene and they developed a detailed dive plan and adhered to it. The volunteers assembled at Lake Long from around Alaska.

When we arrived, we found the ice thickness had been underestimated. Instead of 18 inches, it was 48 inches thick. This was due to high winds which sweep the ice clean of snow, allowing it to freeze thicker than surrounding snow-covered lakes.

Cutting the first section was a tedious process. We cut the first section for the dive with two chainsaws, one with a three-foot bar, the other with a four-foot bar. The first section took four hours of cutting, prying, and smashing ice. As the ice was cut, divers in insulated suits wedged the pieces under the ice sheet.

The ice-cutting went much slower than expected due to the ice thickness. Chainsaws froze up minutes after getting wet. We set up a heater and the chainsaws were alternated in front of it to thaw every time one froze.

The first diver finally went through the dive hole to locate the wreck. A second diver stood by as an emergency back-up. The depth directly under the



After all winter on the bottom of a frozen lake, the Jeep finally breaks surface.

opening was 60 feet, sloping to 90 feet. Due to the altitude (2,000 feet above sea level), the divers' bottom time was reduced to 15 minutes.

Within minutes after starting his search, the diver located the Jeep in 40 feet of water. It was lying on its side, hung up on a large boulder. If the vehicle was not handled properly, it could slip off the boulder and slide down the incline, crushing any diver under it.

Once the first diver was topside, a second diver went in to mark the site so a hole could be cut directly over the vehicle. The ice was so clear that it was easy to watch the diver as he moved underwater. He attached a float to the vehicle; those standing on the ice marked the float's location, and began cutting the recovery hole.

Hard work

The divers reported back that attempting to float the vehicle under the ice to the shore was impossible. It would be extremely difficult to route the vehicle through the large boulders on the bottom.

But with the ice thickness at four feet, it would be possible to bring a wrecker onto the lake and pull the Jeep up through a hole in the ice. Eight hours later, a recovery hole measuring 8x7 feet was finished. Seven tons of ice had been cut and moved in two days.

The water was so clear that everyone could see the Jeep on the bottom of the lake once the ice was removed. Two divers suited up using air supplied from the surface, and a two-way intercom. They carried an underwater video camera to record the event.

Both divers descended through the dive hole to the Jeep. They attached a safety line to the vehicle which was secured to trees along shore to keep the vehicle from sliding down the slope and injuring anyone.

Recovery

There was a wrecker at the site and the divers attached its cable to the Jeep's axle. Once the divers were back topside, it was all up to the wrecker. To improve the wrecker's traction on the



A diver enters the lake. The ice is 48 inches thick.

ice and keep it from sliding into the hole, we put sand and gravel on the ice. We chained a second vehicle to the wrecker to provide additional traction.

Then the wrecker lifted the Jeep off the bottom of the lake. As it neared the surface, large poles were used to pry it away from the underside of the ice and into the center of the recovery hole.

Once the Jeep broke surface, we allowed the water to drain from it to reduce the weight the wrecker had to lift. Within minutes the Jeep was safely on the ice.

Absorbent pads were placed on the water to soak up oil or fuel that might have been released during the recovery. Warning signs were placed around the hole so that snowmobilers would stay clear. Much of the ice that was removed was replaced back in the hole to aid refreezing.