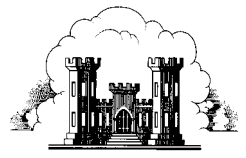


# *The Newscastle*



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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District

Summer 2003



*L.A. District FEST-ivities in Iraq*



# Build it and they will train

Real Estate Division staff participated in an origami contest during a team building exercise led by Victor Savage and John Evans. Teams received newspaper and masking tape and asked to build something that was both visually appealing and self-supporting.

Division Chief Terri Kaplan took the winning model to the Commander's staff meeting. There she demonstrated the architectural, engineering and artistic talents within real estate. "The best part of the entire experience was how much fun we had," said Terri.

She offered the winning art piece to the executive staff as a centerpiece for their conference table. However there were no takers. Perhaps the art piece could have been a little *too* trendy for the décor.



*Who wouldn't want this on their desk? From left to right, Pete Garcia, Larry Kelly, Dolores Henderson, LaShawn Jones, Terri Kaplan and Bob Colangelo.*



## From the mailbag...

Back in the mid-1970s, you took jurisdiction over a wetland that you did not even know existed prior to that. This wetland has since become the jewel of Gardena and we are glad you were an agency with such weight back in those early days who recognized its importance to the ecosystem. If you hadn't intervened, the wetland would have most likely been filled in.

The City of Gardena, in which this wetland is located, is applying for a grant to enable them to obtain funding to enhance this wetland unique in the area. Part of the monies will be spent to purchase and install debris traps where the surrounding streets end and the upland wetland area begins to prohibit trash and dangerous toxins from reaching the interior.

...I receive your newsletter and have read a recent article where you performed wetland recovery in one of my favorite marshes, the Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Apparently you are experiencing an "emerging role as a force for environmental restoration..."

Sherry Roberts

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On the front cover: L.A. District FEST Team members stand next to a beheaded statue of Saddam Hussein in downtown Baghdad. From left to right are Ed Andrews, Russ Jaramillo (Albuquerque), Dick Aldrich, MAJ Kim Colloton and Bob Conley.

See FEST story on page 6.

# Kaplan family receives volunteer award

By Mike Tharp

The family of Terri Kaplan, the District's Real Estate Division Chief, was honored by the world-famous City of Hope Medical Center at a special luncheon in Beverly Hills.

Traditionally, the Sportsmen's Club/Diamond Circle 55th Annual Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show recognizes individuals who demonstrate "extraordinary commitment" to the center's research and clinical care. This year, for the first time, an entire family received the club's award—a family "who has supported City of Hope for generations and have been key members of the Sportsmen's Club/Diamond Circle for more than 40 years—the Kaplan family."

At the luncheon, the co-chairs of the event explained, "The Kaplans, Rosalie, Steven and Barbara Kaplan, Michael and Terri Kaplan, Bonnie Kaplan Fein and Ronnie Fein, along with their children and grandchildren, represent the epitome of dedicated City of Hope volunteers. Each has made supporting the City of Hope not only a priority, but also a family tradition for decades. It is fitting that the entire family receive The Spirit of Life Award, City of Hope's most prestigious honor, since the figure itself symbolizes City of Hope's belief in the fundamental role of the family in fostering health and well-being."

Terri Kaplan, who has been in the District three years after working with the General Services Administration for 26 years, said, "There was wonderful energy in the room" at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. "It was very special to see our mom (her mother-in-law Rose Kaplan, 90) recognized in such a public way. There was a lot of love in the room."

Besides Terri's family connection, the Los Angeles District has an historical connection to City of Hope. The 112-acre medical campus and its 110 buildings are located at Duarte, next to the Santa Fe Dam. The Corps, of course, built that dam in 1949. "The flood control project was tremendously important to the medical center be-

cause it eliminated the danger of flooding," Terri explained.

In addition, the Department of Defense and U.S. Army consistently have provided grants to City of Hope. This year, for example, DoD gave \$3.5 million to the center for its biomedical imaging program. Last year, DoD gave \$4 million for the purchase of a highly advanced spectrometer, state-of-the-art microscopes, imaging systems and



other specialized equipment. The Army's breast cancer program has also provided research funding and other grants to City of Hope.

Arthur H. Kaplan and Rose (Crandall) Kaplan were both immigrants to America from Eastern Europe in the early 20th century. They met in 1937, married two weeks later they immediately began practicing what they'd been taught as young adults by their mothers—*Tzekekah*, giving to charity. Art's mother had been collecting funds for City of Hope and other charitable organizations as early as the mid-1930s. "My father-in-law used to say, 'There's no such thing as a bad charity,'" recalled Terri, who has been married to Michael Kaplan for 20 years.

Past honorees at the Sportsmen Club/Diamond Circle included Mr. Blackwell, the famous fashion critic whose "10 Worst Dressed Women" annual list always generates widespread publicity. He attended the most recent event and gave Terri's outfit a literal thumbs-up. "I asked, 'Does that mean I'm on your list or is it a compliment?'" she recalled. "He said it was a compliment." She wore a Ralph Lauren creation, an off-white linen jacket and ballerina-style skirt.

The Kaplan family received congratulatory letters from Governor Gray Davis, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, Rep. Henry Waxman and Mayors Jim Hahn of Los Angeles and Thomas Levyn of Beverly Hills.



## Leave it to cleaver

# Zeigler wins Value Engineering Award by chopping project costs for District

By Mike Tharp

Last fiscal year's federal budget deficit was \$158 billion. Projections for this fiscal year place the 2003 deficit at around \$400 billion (excluding cost of the war in Iraq).

Faced with a tsunami of red ink, a graduate from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and District employee has done something about it. For his efforts to save money and please customers, Bill Zeigler, an L.A. District civil engineer, has been awarded a Department of Defense Value Engineering (VE) Achievement Award.

Mike Wynne, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics) presented the awards at a ceremony in the Pentagon Auditorium June 18.

Zeigler is one of only five Value Engineering award winners from the U.S. Army. (One indicator of the quality of entries and level of competition: the winner of the award in the Contractor category was Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.) "Please relay my sincere congratulations to Mr. William Zeigler," wrote Donald L. Basham, chief of the Engineering and Construction Division in the Directorate of Civil Works.

Value engineering is used to identify improvements in defense systems that can reduce cost and increase performance. DoD has documented more than \$25 billion in savings over the last two decades. The VE awards are presented annually to recognize "substantial and innovative value engineering contributions," according to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense.

Now in his 23<sup>rd</sup> year at the District, Zeigler estimates that the VE program he's responsible for saving \$13 million in the most recent fiscal year. However, Zeigler's award represents merely the latest in a career-long series of cost-savings endeavors for the Corps and District. In 1993, for instance, a study he oversaw on the Los Angeles

River netted an estimated \$70 million in savings. In 1999, his total of \$22 million in savings represented about one-fifth of the entire Corps total. Over the past six years, Zeigler and the District's VE program he has supervised have accounted for more than 50 percent of all of South Pacific Division's civil works savings.

"In Los Angeles we concentrate heavily on customer involvement," Zeigler explains. "We invite them to be part of all value engineering studies, and we try to find those things to work on the problems they may have with a project. A lot of our local sponsors are interested in and satisfied with our value-engineering studies."

Zeigler cites three projects in particular as examples of VE effort to satisfy customers – Rio Salado and Tres Rios in Arizona and Tropicana/Flamingo Wash in Nevada. "We don't set out just to save money, but saving money comes along anyway," he says. At Rio Salado, a high-profile environmental restoration project in downtown Phoenix, Zeigler and his VE team members recommended that only one-third of trees to be newly planted in the flood channel landscaping be big ones. Their reasoning: the roots of big trees take longer to establish themselves in the ground, more vulnerable to being washed away in a runoff. So two-thirds of Rio Salado trees will be smaller ones – and some \$800,000 was saved.

Paradoxically, Zeigler – the budgeteer with a cleaver – recommended the local sponsor to spend *more* than planned on the recreational/educational component of the project. The Corps is limited by law on the amount it could spend on recreational activity – \$500,000 at Rio Salado. "We thought it was a cutting-edge project, and it had attracted the attention of Sen. John Kyl [a proponent of value engineering already aware of the L.A. District's contributions to value engineering projects]. We concluded that more needed to be spent on recreational features."

Zeigler and his team recommended that another \$4 million should be spent to advertise, educate and attract attention to the project. Zeigler recalls, "They were surprised we suggested ideas that could improve the design of the project, save the project money and that we actually suggested to them where to spend more money." Zeigler



By Kim Matthews

# What does it take to save a life? *Just ten minutes and two tablespoons of blood*

By Pam Wills

It's a 10-minute test that can save a life. Jerry Gillespie, representative of the C.W. Bill Young/DoD Marrow Donor Program, was recently at the 911 Wilshire building to register people in a national index. Up on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor of the building, employees were encouraged to go up for a simple blood test and a health screening for future donation. Bone marrow transplants are used for patients with leukemia, lymphoma, and other kinds of cancer.

The testing procedure began by filling out a health screening application, followed by a small blood sample. The DoD would pick up the cost of the test and registration.

Some Corps employees went on their own, while some had to be coaxed. Jennie Salas, PAO, walked around IMO gathering people for the elevator ride up to the 21<sup>st</sup>



*Some of the District members who volunteered for the bone marrow registration.*

floor. When Francine Nevarez (LMO), winner of that week's 50/50 raffle, came down to pick up her prize in the Public Affairs Office, she was whisked upstairs with members of the picnic committee in a second round up.

Most of those who donated said that it didn't hurt that much. Included in the list of donors were LTC John Guenther and new IMO chief, LTC Curtis Hellenbrand. In all, about 34 Corps employees registered as bone marrow donors in this life-saving program.

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## **ZEIGLER—Continued from page 4**

estimates that the VE study helped save \$10 million to \$12 million in other areas of Rio Salado.

Not bad for someone who attended Cal Poly University at San Luis Obispo, graduating in 1980.

Beyond the engineering courses, he learned a lot from issues that were presented on the central California campus while he was a student there, voters in San Luis Obispo consistently backed environmentally sensitive plans and rejected those for unfettered growth. In 1972, 70 percent thumbed down a controversial annexation project; in 1983, 73 percent said the city should protect sensitive hillsides and open space; and two years later 71 percent voted to amend the city charter to ensure that annexation could occur only according to the city's strict General Plan.

"As voters, the people of San Luis Obispo have spoken clearly and consistently on environmental protection and quality of life issues the past 25 years," said a recent city report. Zeigler, who also serves as the District's VE officer and coordinates Engineering Division permit reviews, clearly took to heart the conservation messages from his time at San Luis Obispo. He likes using architect/

engineering contractors for many of his studies because "they can come in with a different set of eyes. We put together teams with a lot of guys paying attention to what they do. We bring in this brain trust of people who think differently as solutions to the problem."

Summers at Cal Poly, Zeigler worked for Caltrans and thought about joining the state agency full-time after graduation. Fortunately for the Corps and District, Caltrans wasn't hiring much at the time. So he came to the District. His efforts at gathering and consolidating information on dam safety were quickly recognized, and soon after he was named Value Engineering officer. "They selected me because I seemed to be able to both work well with others and independently," he says. "I seem to have a knack for being able to work on unusual things."

Nowadays he describes himself as "an administrative engineer, rather than a real technical guy." He reflects that if he hadn't become an engineer, "I'd have been a meteorologist or volcanologist."

Had he specialized in either of those fields, his track record as a District civil engineer/value engineer shows a lot of money would have been saved in studying the weather or volcanoes.



# An investment in our own turf— San Gabriel River cleanup

By Jennie Salas

School children huddled at displays and exhibits, hoping to grab interesting giveaways. Grandmas and grandpas braced for the heat wearing visors and shades. Even mothers with babies in tow came out for the third annual San Gabriel River Clean-Up and Day of the Bird at the Whittier Narrows Nature Center. The three-hour event offered the community volunteers an opportunity to clean part of the San Gabriel River, visit local wildlife exhibits and enjoy crafts. This year's theme included recycling, improving our communities and preserving our natural environment.

U.S. Rep. Hilda Solis and members of her staff were there in full support. More than 200 volunteers listened as she talked about her passion for the environment and these types of community efforts. "I think this is a wonderful tribute to the San Gabriel Valley. Today is not only about cleaning the river, today is about building unity," she said.

Solis recently introduced a bill to fund a three-year study aimed at designating the lower Los Angeles and San Gabriel rivers as national parks.



**LTC John Guenther inspects a bamboo drum at an artist exhibit.**

Public Affairs Office and Operations branch staffed a display so that community members of all ages could learn more about the Corps of Engineers. Efforts were also made to entice potential recruits. This year students from Rio Hondo College stopped by to learn about

Phil Serpa, an outdoor recreation planner in the District's Operations Branch, has been the Corps liaison for the cleanup. Solis presented Serpa with congressional recognition for his contribution. (See story on next page.) The District lent its support by providing the dump trucks that hauled some of the trash collected at the site. District staff and family members also participated in the clean up. Members of



**Phil Serpa hands out give-aways to students from local schools.**

employment opportunities and also participated in the event.

The cleanup took place within the Whittier Narrows Nature Center, located in South El Monte, CA. along the Whittier Narrows Basin. The center is operated and maintained by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation. Regional Park Superintendent, David Jallo has organized the event over the past years. Other sponsors include L. A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina, L. A. Fire Department, L.A. County Department of Public Works, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, Metropolitan Water District, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, Sanitation Districts of L.A. County, City of South



By Jennie A. Salas





*Mom and tyke enjoy an outing along the river..*

El Monte, L.A. Conservation Corps, Sierra Club, Federation Fly Fishers, South El Monte High School and the Whittier Narrows Nature Center Association.

The Whittier Narrows reservoir was originally constructed as a single-purpose flood control project. Congressional authorization would later allow the Corps to modify the project to include water conservation. As the population grew, so did the need for more recreational opportunities. In 1965, as a result of the Federal Water Project Recreation Act, the Army Corps of Engineers worked with local and state authorities to help address the demands by the public for water-related outdoor recreation.

The Army Corps leases land to local and state government agencies for recreational development at reservoirs throughout the state. Recreational opportunities at Whittier Narrows include fishing lakes, picnic areas and baseball and soccer fields.

Editor's note:  
The bill introduced by U. S. Rep. Hilda Solis passed on July 9. It authorizes a \$500,000, three-year study of the feasibility of conferring national park status on a section of river between the San Gabriel mountains and Santa Fe Springs.

***Belinda Faustino of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy talks to community members at Whittier Narrows Nature Center.***

## Serpa gets Congressional Award for Whittier Basin work

By Mike Tharp

For all the compliments coming Phil Serpa's way, one might think he walks on water.

He doesn't, but he does organize twice-a-year cleanups along the banks of the San Gabriel River. He's the District's liaison with the many stakeholders who enjoy the Whittier Narrows Basin.

For his efforts, Serpa recently received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from U.S. Rep. Hilda Solis. The certificate praised Serpa for his "outstanding and invaluable service to the community."

"Phil is our liaison, and the environment is the main backbone of the Congresswoman's platform," said Benita Duran, from Solis's office. "Phil is really a go-getter, a great community organizer, a grassroots person, very knowledgeable, very dedicated. Because of his professional relationship, he's been so instrumental in the river cleanup."

David Jallo, regional park superintendent for the L.A. County Dept. of Parks and Recreation also praised Serpa, "Phil has been helping with organizing the San Gabriel River cleanup the last three years-getting dump trucks, getting personnel to help remove the trash. He's very helpful in coordinating environmental issues between the county and the federal government."

In August Serpa will finish his fourth year as liaison, helping coordinate the District's responses to those leasing and using some 2,000 acres of the Whittier Narrows Basin. Around 1,900 acres are leased by L.A. County, another 120 by the city of Pico Rivera, an oil company, strawberry farms and a nursery also lease acreage.

"Anytime there's an issue or concern, the county calls me or the community calls me," says Serpa, "...if the community complains about trash being dumped in certain locations, I'll contact our maintenance folks and they'll go out and help clean it up."

Serpa understands the importance of the area to surrounding communities. "An area that size is very valuable to the community," he says. "I don't think you can really quantify the value. It's a place to go daily and walk or run, to take the family on weekends for parties and get-togethers. You just appreciate that it's there and take full advantage of it."

Serpa should know. He and his family live less than three miles away, and they often take advantage of its attractions.

In his case, bringing your work home is all good.



***U.S. Rep. Hilda Solis presents Phil Serpa with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition.***





# Earth Day at the L...A..

COL Richard G. Thompson, far left; Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, center in dark suit; Public Works Director Jim Noyes, representatives from L.A. Theatre Works, Canoga Park High School students all dig in at the groundbreaking event for a landscaping project that will include an interpretive water quality sculpture. The ceremony was held during the L.A. River Master Plan Earth Day 2003 event in Canoga Park, Malibu, California (at the headwaters of the L.A. River). Trees were planted to enhance the environment and the appearance of the watershed. District members Tieu Lac, Randy Tabije, Lisa Synder and Ron Lockman participated in the Earth Day event.



*It's all about planning for the future. Alyssa, Jennie Salas's (PAO) daughter, has her hands in the mix as she plants a tree on Earth Day.*



*Some of the workers planting alongside the Los Angeles River.*



Iraq mission—

# Stepping up for duty

By Mike Tharp

One volunteered because she wants to give back. Another wants to apply 10 years of military active duty and her recent Corps experience. A Vietnam vet wants to be part of something different from what happened to him in that war. One stepped up because he's single and doesn't have any kids.

Whatever the motive, the L.A. District team members who have chosen to go to Iraq believe in the mission and themselves. "We add a lot of value to the reconstruction," said MAJ Kimberly Colloton, a District area commander and this project's manager. "We'll kind of be in the spotlight to show what the Corps can do. It'll be an adventure."

MAJ Colloton, emergency operations branch chief Ed Andrews, Dick Aldrich, contract specialist from Arizona

and Robert Conley, chief of the District's cost and structural engineering section, form the vanguard of the California team heading to the Middle East. They are part of a FEST unit, a Forward Engineering Support Team, composed entirely of volunteers.

Others are Bill Miller, a planner, geographic information systems specialist and biologist; Russ Jamarillo, Albuquerque District, a mechanical engineer; Susan Tianen, the L.A. District safety officer; Dan Hanas, a contract specialist; Susan Shampine, chief of Sacramento's operations division and a biologist; Donna Russell, a Sacramento civil engineer; and Kimberli Gray, a contract specialist.

They and dozens of others from around the Corps are answering a call from LTG Bob Flowers, chief engineer, to help U.S. Central Command, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraq Freedom in Iraq. "We are positioned to have a tremendous impact on the nation and the Armed Forces," he said. "Today, we are in 91 countries around the world."

In one sense, the FEST folks are simply carrying on the Corps' centuries-long mission of working behind the scenes to ac-

*L.A. District FEST Team members stand next to a beheaded statue of Saddam Hussein in downtown Baghdad. From left to right are Ed Andrews, Russ Jaramillo (SPA), Dick Aldrich, MAJ Kim Colloton and Bob Conley.*



USACE photo





***If the shoe fits.....Dan Hanas, deputy for Small Business picks out a pair of combat boots and socks for his sojourn.***

comply with tasks that are the very backbone of U.S. policy. From directing the fortifications at the Battle of Bunker Hill through five other wars in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Corps has buttressed U.S. military operations with its design, construction and engineering expertise.

Since the Corps has more than 35,000 civilian employees, it is easy to forget the agency's military aspect. Moreover, in recent months, some have questioned the relevance of the Corps, particularly the role of its civil works in the overall mission of fighting and winning wars. "It is during times like these that we demonstrate how we can tap into the technical expertise of our organization to deliver engineer support to the battlefield," said COL Richard G. Thompson, L.A. District chief engineer. "We are indebted to these folks for volunteering for this mission, and we'll be looking for more volunteers in the future."

For two intense weeks in March and April, team members gathered in Los Angeles and Sacramento for training. Those sessions provide an instructive insight on how a 228-year-old organization adapts itself to 21<sup>st</sup> century mission needs.

Two days were spent hunched over laptops in a stuffy conference room learning the intricacies of the Theatre Construction Management System (TCMS). It's a high-speed, low-drag software that lets engineers, contractors and other specialists game-plan some of the real-world problems they'll encounter on the ground. One morning, for example, they designed, costed and ordered materials for a 1,000-soldier

encampment. They did the same for a refugee camp, logistical base, interdiction camp and aircraft runway. "TCMS shows the impact on your organization's resources well in advance of actually striking construction," said instructor Fred Steinman.

Next day the group deployed to the Joint Forces Training Base's military clothing store at Los Alamitos. They tried on fatigues, boots, caps and other gear where, under the watchful eye of MAJ Colloton, many of them struggled into unfamiliar clothing. They weren't unfamiliar to Aldrich, the Arizona-based contract specialist, who had served as a tank gunner in Vietnam. "It's a little different from the way we did it the first time," he recalled. "I just want to be a part of something different."

A somber note was struck that afternoon when they visited the 78th Legal Support Organization, commanded by COL Tom Umberg. CPT Sandi Roth met individually with each team member to help square away their legal concerns before deploying, including writing or revising wills, powers of attorney and other legal documents for the families they'd leave behind.

The following morning found the FEST-ers in the District Emergency Operations Center. Through the magic of videoconferencing, they watched and listened to their colleagues in Afghanistan who'd embarked on a similar mission last year. After a briefing from a time zone 10 hours ahead of them, the California team asked their questions:

"Are you using TCSM software? ("Roger.")

How are your living conditions? ("Better than I thought-my laundry is done for me, I don't have to cook or clean.")



***CPT Sandi Roth helps Susan Tianen take care of her legal paperwork.***

By Fred-Otto Egeles



How important are your CAD (computer-aided design) skills? (“It’s important to prevent anybody from walking into the minefields.”)

How’s your duty day? (“It’s important that everybody understands what the work climate will be like, what the day will be like-it won’t be like back at the office.”)

Do contractors do the work or your engineering units? (“We’re doing both.”)

How’s the nightlife? (“You’re kinda hamstrung on using the Internet.”)

Are you guys having any fun? (“I buy rugs and swords and we play tag football on Saturdays. There’s a bazaar, movie nights, a raffle-we keep ourselves entertained.”)

While the dialogue and pixels traveled across 7,700 miles, a big-screen TV in the Ops Room was also tuned to CNN. The headline: “Coalition Forces Near Baghdad from Southeast, Southwest.”

That afternoon the team traveled to the Federal Building in Westwood for passport and other document formalities. MAJ Colloton capitalized on the huge parking lot by having MAJ Jeff Hoover conduct a class in how to set up and use a Tele-Engineering Operations Center. He unloaded three suitcases holding global positioning equipment and other gear onto the parking lot and had team members erect antennas to connect to geosynchronous satellites 22,000 miles above.

While they practiced, curious officers from the FBI, Federal Protective Service and private security guards visited the team. MAJ Colloton assured them that everybody was on the same side.

Several days of sessions in Sacramento included small-pox and other vaccinations, getting two sets of desert-camo uniforms, running an exercise in their team roles, learning how to react to an ambush, taking a short Arabic language course and ending the week with a classified briefing. “We’re getting an opportunity to show the world the capability we have in the Corps of Engineers,” said MAJ Colloton after the training.

During a break in the training, Susan Tianen, talked about why she volunteered. Years ago, just after her first son was born, he got sick from an immune deficiency; his medical costs approached \$10,000 a month. Tianen had to go on welfare and food stamps, she said, until the Department of Defense offered her an internship and then job. “My kids are now happy and independent,” she explained, “and now I’ve giving it back. Plus I’m in heaven-I’m getting all the attention I want from my husband.”

Kimberli Gray, the contract specialist, was formerly married to a military man and spent 12 years in Germany

***Ed Andrews discusses events with LTG Bob Flowers in Baghdad.***



***Ed Andrews, Dick Aldrich and Dan Hanas pick out their gear.***



By Fred-Otto

USACE photo



***MAJ Jeff Hoover shows how to set up a Tele-Engineering Operations Cen-***

before joining the Corps in June 2002. “They put me through a lot of training,” she said. “And I love it. I don’t believe America is the policeman of the world, but I just feel this is the right thing to do. I live in an area of L.A. where there are a lot of crimes on the street. Over there, there’ll be 300,000 troops-I think I’ll be safer over there.”

Conley, the structural engineer, was almost nonchalant talking about the assignment of a lifetime. “Why am I going? I don’t have any kids and I’m single. I’m just going to do a job. Didn’t seem that big a risk.”

Details of the deployment remained classified for security reasons, but such missions typically last six months. Corps teams in Afghanistan have designed master plans for military bases, refugee camps and other facilities and helped set up such infrastructure as roads, water distribution and sewage systems.

LTG Flowers knows Iraq. When he was commanding officer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade in the first Persian Gulf War, the unit built roads, airfields, heliports, ammunition/fuel/water storage points, life-support areas and landing strips in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. It trained 5,000 coalition engineers, destroyed 6,000 enemy bunkers and one million tons of munitions.

During the first Gulf War, on the tent of one of then-COL Flowers’ battalions hung “The Paratrooper’s Prayer.” Its lines can also apply to the L.A. District and other team members heading to Iraq:

“I will study  
And prepare myself,  
And then someday  
My chance will come.”

***Ed Andrews on an anti-aircraft gun in Iraq. “It’s nothing like Disneyland.”***



By Fred-Otto Egeles



USAQE photo



# Ever wonder where the castle originated?

The origin of the turreted castle as a symbol of the Corps of Engineers is shrouded in mystery. Unfortunately, the official records of the Corps housed at the Military Academy at West Point disappeared in 1838 as a result of a fire that destroyed the building containing the records.

As a consequence, many speculative stories about the origins of the engineers have been advanced. One theory traces a French connection for the origins. During the American Revolution the Continental Army filled its necessity for trained military engineers by either borrowing them from France or having French engineers volunteer for service in the Continental Army. Due to the French connection, the stories about castle origins credit these French engineers, in particular, GEN Louis Du Portail, Chief Engineer, Continental Army, July 22, 1777 – October 10, 1783, with a design based on a castle-style fortification in Verdun, France. These French engineers disappeared from the scene before the castle design appeared in the American Army.

While there is some truth in the French connection, the origins are better attributed to COL Jonathan Williams and a member of his staff, Alexander Macomb. Williams, grand-nephew of Benjamin Franklin, assisted Franklin during his tenure as envoy to France during the American Revolution. After the war he adopted engineering as a profession. In 1801, Franklin was a major, Corps Artillery engineer, and Inspector of Fortifications. In 1802 President Thomas Jefferson appointed him commander of the newly created Corps of Engineers and the United States Military Academy at West Point. Thus, he was the first Chief Engineer and First Superintendent of West Point of the reestablished Corps.

Through his work as Chief Engineer there is a clue as to who designed the Corps insignia. During the period 1807-1812, he designed and constructed Castle Williams to defend New York Harbor. The gateway to that castle-style fortification bore an eagle over the center. Other examples included Castle Pinckney in Charleston, South Carolina, and Castle Clinton, which also defended New York Harbor. An assistant on his staff was COL Alexander Macomb, who became the Chief Engi-



neer, June 1, 1821 through May 24, 1828. In 1828 he was elevated to Commanding General of the U.S. Army.



In 1807 he made the earliest known drawing of the Engineer Button which featured a castle motif, worn on the uniforms of the West Point cadets during the War of 1812. Another engineer officer, COL Richard Delafield, superintendent of the military academy, added the turreted castle to the new uniform for the West Point cadets in 1838.

In 1838 Macomb, Commanding General of the Army, had an active part in the design of the new uniform.

The castle was also a major element in the architectural design of the buildings at West Point, as typified by the old library built in 1841 which survived until 1961, when it was torn down. Delafield supervised the design and construction of the buildings destroyed by the fire, including the old library.

From the evidence one would conclude that Williams and Macomb, both familiar with French military tradition and heraldry, designed not only the Corps castle emblem but also the Essayons button. Although Macomb's design appeared in 1807, the authoritative description of the button appeared in February 1840, in General Orders 7, AGO: "An eagle holding in his beak a scroll with the word 'Essayons,' a bastion with embrasures in the distance, surrounded by water, and the rising sun, the figures to be of dead gold upon a bright field."



**While the designs of the emblem and the button have changed, the castle remains a distinctive emblem of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and it remains that the persons who designed the emblem and button were American engineering officers.**



# From wetlands to waste and sediment...

By Mike Tharp

As a great blue heron stabbed a fish in a sunny marsh and jets lumbered skyward from LAX, the decade-long \$1.25 million Ballona Wetlands tide-gate project was dedicated with ceremonial saltwater April 22.

Some 50 residents, stakeholders, docents and project participants gathered on a windy morning atop a dike housing the new gates. District Engineer COL Richard Thompson, project manager Ed Louie and other team members listened as speaker after speaker praised the Corps for its key role in restoring a precious urban ecosystem.



**Councilmember Ruth Galanter talks with COL Richard G. Thompson at the flapgate opening ceremony.**

“This is the new Corps!” intoned Congresswoman Jane Harman. “You are very much a part of the solution to this problem. This is one of a number of environmental enhancement projects the Corps is working on. I want to thank the Corps for getting green and staying green—it’s

very, very meaningful to our community.”

In his remarks, COL Thompson recalled that two years ago, he had been at his new assignment exactly two days when Congresswoman Harman called him to a Sunday morning meeting “and explained to me what their priorities were here.” Referring to Mark Gold, executive director of Heal the Bay, a southern California environmental organization, Col. Thompson called him “the conscience of this project.”

For his part, Gold said after the ceremonies that the project couldn’t have been completed without the Corps. “It had to go through more regulatory hurdles than a \$50 million to \$100 million project because of the (flood) liability issue,” he said. “The Corps said this (delays) had gone on long enough. That showed me the Corps really wanted this to happen.”



**A marbled godwit searches for worms and other invertebrates.**

The aluminum gates, made by Exeter, Calif.-based Waterman Industries and installed by Mar-Con Contractors, basically act as a giant restorative bidet. Attached to a culvert leading from one of the inland reaches of Ballona Creek, the gates allow a two-way flow of water in and out

of the adjacent wetlands. The gates are self-regulating, meaning they let water from a rising tide into the wetlands up to a certain level, then clang shut to limit the amount of saltwater in those bogs and marshes. When shut, the gates also prevent urban runoff and polluted storm water from sluicing into the wetlands. “When the tide here gets higher, the maximum tide level of water is maintained in the wetlands,” explained David Van Dorpe, a District structural engineer. “As the water recedes, it will drain out of the wetlands.”

Ecologists consider this “flushing” phenomenon crucial to preserving the wetlands and their plants and wildlife, as well as for introducing new ones. For decades, only freshwater species have lived in the spongy flatlands, but reintroduction of saltwater through the gates will allow



**A flapgate—the simple thing that made the wetlands a reality.**





***An egret on the hunt for small fish in the early morning hours.***

many more varieties of plants and wildlife to flourish. Initially, some 5.6 acres will soak up the salinity, but if the tidal flow were raised by another eight inches, 24 acres would be inundated.

The wetland is located west of Lincoln Boulevard and south

of Jefferson Boulevard, within sniffing distance of the Pacific Ocean. Nestled in one of the most densely populated and heavily urbanized places in America, 192 acres of undeveloped habitat will now have a chance to renew their vibrancy.

“Specifically,” said COL Thompson, “this project will ensure that rate and valuable estuaries, lagoons, salt marshes, freshwater marshes and dunes will continue to provide critical habitat for many species of plants and animals that call this community home.”

Until the 1930s, the wetlands got tidal flows from the lower reach of Ballona Creek and supported nearly 2,120 acres of habitat. L.A.’s rapid urbanization accelerated, Ballona fell victim to progress. The once-clear waters of the creek became polluted with waste and sediment runoff, and non-native invasive plants further degraded the ecosystem. While the creek has served for 60 years as an important flood control channel, its lower watershed also supported vital biodiversity.

In 1993 the Corps and Los Angeles County decided to install new tidegates to preserve and expand that biodiversity. (That same year, an *El Nino* year, one of the existing barnacle-caked floodgates simply washed out to sea.) “The Corps of Engineers developed this wonderful program to get the tidegates,” said Ruth Lansford of Friends of Ballona Wetlands, a grassroots community group, “and they are working masterfully.”

Congresswoman Harman called the gates “Galanter gates,” after 16-year city council member Ruth Galanter, who had been instrumental in negotiating the project’s progress through the city’s budgetary and electoral cycles. “They say the devil is in the details,” Galanter said, “and this one was a big devil with

a lot of details.”

Playa Vista, a private developer that owns much of the land on and around the wetlands, provided the easement necessary for the restoration project. “Not only is the marsh beautiful to look at, but it’s serving a really important function by cleaning storm water before it enters Santa Monica Bay,” said Playa Vista president Steve Soboroff. “Today is proof that Playa Vista delivered on its promise to restore wetlands in an area that was degraded.”

MarCon, based in Escondido, Calif., began actual work on the project in January after a two-year design phase. “It took a lot of manpower and equipment,” said MarCon CEO Maryory Contreras, a Colombian-born civil engineer. “I put my best people here.” “It seems everybody did,” said COL Thompson: “This project is a good example of how the people, their representatives and government agencies can work together



***A great blue heron checks for danger.***

successfully. To preserve a wetland in one of the world’s major urban areas ensures a priceless resource for this and future generations and demonstrates all of our commitment to protect our nation’s environment.” Some four hours after COL Thompson and other dignitaries symbolically poured saltwater from red bottles into the creek, the tide began to rise. The



***Two California horn snails find the mudflats to be good breeding grounds.***

# ...and back again



# Running for more than mere gold

By Pam Wills

Two teams representing the LA District placed in the Military Co-ed division in the Jimmy Stewart Relay Marathon held in April.

Corp Team 1's members, placing second, were MAJ Doug Schuetz, Contracting, Socrates Gusto, Engineering, Soi Phu, IMO, Joseph Lamb, Planning, and Nellie Galando, a friend of Gusto. Corp Team 2's members were: Jason Shea, Planning, his wife, Lisa Shea, Kelly Polynard, a friend of Lisa Shea's, Cedric Pelt, Safety, and his wife, Annie and their team placed third.

Held annually since 1982, the race is a unique, full 26-mile marathon. Teams of five runners run in relay form, each running 5.2 miles, then passing a baton to the next team member.

The Corps teams competed against teams from the Navy, Air Force and other military teams. Proceeds went to Saint John's Health Center's Child and Family Development Center, which specializes in the treatment of children with developmental disorders and learning disabilities as well as families in crisis and victims of child abuse.

Lamb said, "It was a fun event. It wasn't that competitive and I saw a lot of celebrities and a lot of different groups from L.A." He said that he saw Anna Nicole Smith, who was not in the race, walking around the park in high heels. Shea said that he hated every minute of it and was happy when it was over.

Gusto has been running since 1994 but only started competing in races this year. He ran the L.A. Marathon this year for the first time and it was his first year in the Jimmy Stewart Marathon. Like many who ran this year, Phu belongs to Fit to Win and does some of her training on the Fitness Center treadmill at lunch or after work.

MAJ Schuetz runs and participates in other charity races, but this was his first year in the Jimmy Stewart Marathon. "Last year, MAJ Klinge ran it and told me so much about it that I wanted to keep the tradition alive. It's very family-oriented and a good cause, raising money for the hospital. It's a way to support the local community and to build team spirit and morale in the District."

***Team 2, left to right: Cedric Pelt, Annie Pelt, Kelly Polynard and Lisa and Jason Shea.***



***Team 1, left to right: Joseph Lamb, MAJ Doug Schuetz, Soi Phu, Nellie Galando and Socrates Gusto.***



By Pam Wills



# Here a fish, there a fish, everywhere a little fish

By Pam Wills

If you have spent any time walking around 911 Wishire lately, you'll see that many people are keeping fish at their desks. The fish of choice is the Betta Splendens, or Siamese Fighting Fish. Originally found in Southeast Asia, wild bettas live in shallow, overgrown waters, irrigation channels and flooded rice fields. Their ability to live in small spaces and the fact that they don't need filters or heaters makes them popular office fish. The betta is a member of the Labyrinth fish family, which means that they breathe through a labyrinth, a lung-like organ instead of gills.

Monique DeZiaueto, IMO, was one of the first to get a betta. She has one in a small betta tank on her desk.

Almost all the bettas you see at a pet store are male. The female is smaller and lacks the long colorful fins. Bettas, male or female, should not be kept in the same tank because they will fight. Male bettas' posturing and flaring can be entertaining and healthy for the fish. It provides exercise and keeps them fit. They can be kept with other breeds of fish, but care must be taken to make sure the other fish don't nip at their long fins.

Sheryl Cuevas, Safety Office, takes care of two bettas that actually belong to Susan Tianen. Because Susan is deployed quite often, the fish are in Sheryl's cubicle. One betta is red and the other blue, each kept in a color-coordinated bowl. Sheryl has fish at home and she and her husband have been keeping Siamese Fighting Fish for the last three years. "They are easier to keep than tropical fish. They're relaxing, friendly, and beautiful." She says "You can actually get connected with them." Every two weeks, she changes the water, rinses the rocks and cleans the glass of their bowls. She bought the bowls at Walmart and Macy's. Sometimes, Sheryl's red betta blows bubbles at the top of his bowl. This is called a bubble nest.



*Wyatt Day and Denise Vargas with their bettas.*



The male betta makes one and after breeding, takes care of the eggs and young. Sheryl also keeps aquatic frogs and a baby turtle at home.

Wyatt Day, HelpDesk, bought an empty one gallon aquarium from Monique DeZiaueto and started his office fish keeping with two bubble eye goldfish. They didn't make it but he bought a betta in a vase and it lived for some time. Now he has three goldfish and a betta. He said that he likes the goldfish because they were only 60 cents each and can live forever. "You just have to change the water once a week." He chose the betta because it can live in small places.

Irma Nevarez, EEO, has a white betta in a vase. "My office doesn't have windows so the fish is good for my well-being." Her friend bought the betta for her at the Pico Rivera Swap Meet when they were shopping. "A white betta was so unusual. It hasn't been difficult keeping him. I change his water every two weeks."

If you are interested in keeping a Siamese Fighting Fish as a pet, there are a few must-haves:

- 1) A goldfish bowl, 1-2 gallon tank or a clear vase; (Tanks usually come in a kit with the pump and filter. Bettas don't need them, but the tank will stay cleaner longer if the water circulates.)
- 2) Gravel or stones for the bottom of the container;
- 3) Dechlorinator for the water (tap water can be used for a betta if it is dechlorinated;)
- 4) Fish food for bettas (Betta bytes or Hikari Gold for betas;)
- 5) A fish net; and
- 6) Floating plants and ornaments are not necessary, but are nice to look at and provide the betta with more to do.

If you are concerned about your betta being alone in a dark office on the weekends, you needn't worry. Bettas are solitary creatures and seem to enjoy a quiet atmosphere.

For more information on bettas and betta products, you can visit the following web sites or talk to someone at your nearest pet store.

- <http://cbs.bettas.org/>
- <http://ibcbettas.org/>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bettasplendens/>
- [www.petco.com](http://www.petco.com)
- [www.petsmart.com](http://www.petsmart.com)



## Hollywood District:

# More for your lore in Corps' roar of greasepaint, smell of crowd

By Mike Tharp

**Fade in:** In his 1983 book, "Adventures of the Screen Trade," William Goldman wrote of Hollywood: "Nobody knows anything." But if the veteran screenwriter/author of "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "All the President's Men" were to update either that book or its 2000 sequel, he might now write:

"Nobody—except the Corps—knows anything."

**Jump cut:** That's because the L.A. headquarters of the federal agency has become "Hollywood District" of the Corps of Engineers. While its major operating units continue to crank out dams and restore wetlands, erect breakwaters and manage rec areas, one active District subsidiary auditions film companies that want to use Corps assets for their movie locations and commercials.

Formally, these assets were designed for flood management and recreational, navigational and environmental purposes. Informally, they make for some terrific cinematic backdrops.

Dams available for filming include Sepulveda, Hansen, Santa Fe, Brea, Fullerton, Carbon Canyon, San Antonio, Whittier Narrows, Lopez, Painted Rock and Mojave River. No filming is allowed at Prado Whitlow Ranch, Pine Canyon, Mathews Canyon or any of the wildlife areas.

Breakwaters have tougher restrictions because of higher risks, ongoing construction and other factors. The District breakwaters available for filming include Morro Bay, Port San Luis, Ventura Harbor, Channel Islands Harbor, Port Hueneme, Marine del Rey, Redondo Beach King Harbor, Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor, Newport Bay Harbor, Dana

Point Harbor, San Diego River-Mission Bay and San Diego Harbor. Phyllis Trabold serves as the District's film coordinator, and it is with her that the film companies walk through their applications. Several requests a week pour into her office, and since filming is a com-

mercial activity under Corps regs, she must review all proposals. Subject to fees and approvals, the applications may sometimes require an environmental review.

### **Backlight:**

Trabold says that most filming projects are green-lighted. If filming involves pyrotechnics or explosions, Safety Officer Susan Tianen and Dam Supervisor Ed Kohnman provide technical assistance. After approval, Realty Specialists Sandy Casteel and LaShawn Richardson in the District's

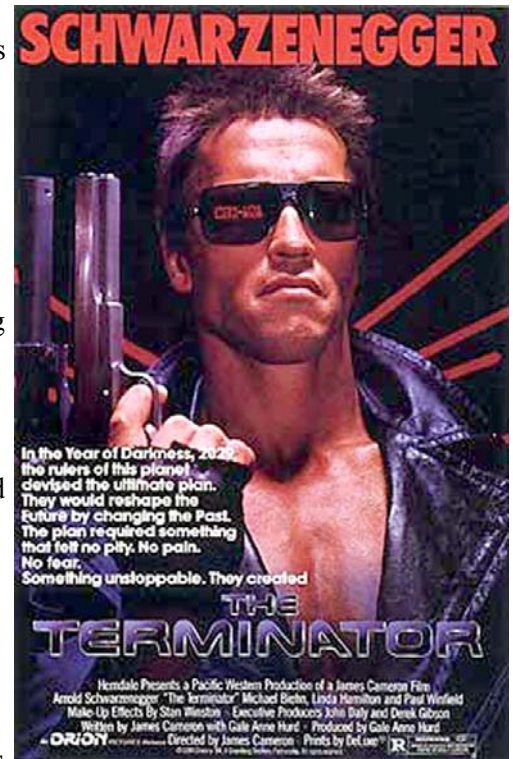
Real Estate Branch, process the license and provide other technical assistance to dot the i's and cross the t's, such as the film company's agreement to repair any damage to Corps facilities or vegetation.

The Real Estate team members coordinate with the dam-tending crew, who serve as film monitors to ensure safety and that the film crew abides by the rules of the licensing agreement. The dam tenders also make sure government property isn't damaged. (There's a \$500 penalty per day until any damages are repaired or resolved.)

The District recoups an administrative fee from each film permit and forwards it to the U.S. Treasury.

**Rough-cut:** Most of the District's dam structures and spillways are available for filming, but some areas are off-limits for environmental, safety or security reasons. "We never allow filming to interfere with flood management," says Trabold. Film makers who license Corps property know that their filming may be delayed or rescheduled because of the Corps' flood management priority. Bad weather that may pose a safety hazard to a production crew can also delay filming.

**Cross-cut:** In addition to licensing fees, the Corps sometimes requires environmental restoration because of









# Easier, better and here— Supplies to keep the District running smoothly

By Pam Wills

As many of you know by now, the Supply Room is now on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor. Romano Caturegli, property book officer, explained why the reason behind the move. “Due to some of the items we were receiving and Homeland Security rules and concerns, we were required to move to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor.” Homeland Security and the anthrax scare prompted supply to order latex gloves and face masks that could be used by personnel who have to open mail and boxes.

Romano also said, “We have streamlined the supply stock and got rid of items that aren’t useful. We get requests for recurring items and they are ordered regularly. If an item is requested that isn’t a recurring supply, it can be special ordered.” Special orders can be made by e-mailing Joe Velaro, listing the item, item number, which catalog and the catalog page.

When asked why customers should go to the supply room instead of outside sources such as Staples or Office Depot, Romano said, “We are one of the few self-service supply centers that are still open that are stocked toward Armed Forces and GSA supplies. You don’t need a credit card. You only need a work item number. It is the mandatory source of supplies required by Army regulations and Engineering regulations through the Government Purchase Card Program.

“We actually save money using the supply room because LMO buys through vendors wholesale at 40 percent lower. Many of the chiefs like the supply room because we have the time and resources to look for vendors and



***Romano Caturegli and Joe Veloro are working to ensure the L.A. District has the supplies it needs to conduct business.***

best prices and it frees up their staff members to do their jobs.”

The supply room is open Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.. It is closed on Fridays, but will honor emergency situations.

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## District trivia contest entries

A big cheer to the four District members who turned in entries for last issue’s contest. Unfortunately, out of the 16 questions, the best total was 14 correct, by Nedenia

Kennedy. The other contestants were Jim McTiernan with 12 correct, Ed Louie with six and Eugene Huffer with five right.

Essays!

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