

castle

Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

April 2008



New CPT rig
enhances District
capability; helps
New Orleans

Authorization: The Castle is an authorized unofficial news magazine of the Savannah District. It is published eight times a year in accordance with provisions of Army Regulation 360-1, under supervision of the Public Affairs Office. It is prepared on a desktop publisher and printed by offset.

Circulation: 1,700 copies/issue.

Submissions: News, features, photographs and art are solicited; publication depends on general interest as judged by the editor. Direct queries to the editor: e-mail: Rashida.u.banks@usace.army.mil Phone (912) 652-5756; FAX (912) 652-5944. Mail submissions to the Public Affairs Office, Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 889, Savannah, Ga. 31402-0889. Contents, Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of Army or this command. News copy is prepared in accordance with AP (Associated Press) Style Guide. All photos, unless otherwise credited, are official U.S. Army photos. For more information about the Savannah District, visit our home page at www.sas.usace.army.mil/castle/index.html

FRONT COVER

New CPT rig

Photo by Rashida Banks

BACK COVER

Kathleen Campbell-Miles, industrial hygienist, interviews Troy Rahn, an eighth grader at Effingham County High School about his science project entitled, "Is mistletoe an indicator of wetlands?" during the Savannah Ogeechee Regional Science and Engineering Fair held at the Armstrong Center in Savannah, Ga. Campbell-Miles, along Jim Hoke, hydraulic engineer, and retired Savannah District employee, Dr. Elliot Edwards served as judges for the event.

Photo by Rashida Banks



As a result of drought conditions, many recreation and launching areas at Thurmond were closed because of insufficient water. Used Christmas trees from Thurmond's Christmas tree recycling program await pickup at the edge of the boat docks. Corps rangers use the trees to improve fishing habitat in the Lake.

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FEST is a rewarding experience



Kele Owens

When I told people that I was considering deploying to Iraq, the first thing that everyone asked was, “Why are you going? Aren’t you afraid?” Of course, there is a certain element of danger where ever you are, but I wasn’t afraid because I was aware of the many safety measures in place.

As a single mother of two, the decision was a difficult one for me. It would be a sacrifice to travel across the world to participate on a reconstruction mission, but the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives for years to come was one that I couldn’t pass up. Therefore, I accepted the position, knowing that my experiences in Iraq would change my life.

Traveling to Iraq was an opportunity to explore the unknown, and experience a different culture that I’d never even dreamed of seeing. There are those who allow fear of the unknown to prevent them from the experience of a lifetime – don’t be one of those people!

I was assigned with Gulf Region North (GRN) in Iraq, and served from November 2006 - May 2007. I was stationed at small base called Contingency Operating Base (COB) Speicher located in Tikrit, Iraq, home of Sadaam Hussein.

While in Iraq, I assisted with USACE missions including management and quality control of billion dollar reconstruction and new construction throughout Iraq. The projects ranged from critical infrastructure of essential utility services, such as reliable electricity and clean water, to smaller but vital projects to provide quality healthcare, transportation, and

education facilities. This opportunity allowed me to see first-hand the difference the Corps is making in Iraq. The schools, the hospitals, roads, bridges and all the other logistical and engineering work the Corps oversees in Iraq really increases my pride in what USACE means to me. The tour gave me the chance to assist in improving the quality of life for others, which I am grateful for.

I was fortunate that I was able to leave the compound and travel with GRN Commander Federick Wolf to the various provinces throughout the Northern District, and travel to GRD HQ (Baghdad). The way of life was different in each area I visited.

Staying busy was never a problem. The work was so abundant, that I was busy each day to the point where the days

ran into the nights – but I enjoyed every minute of it.

My experiences at COB Speicher are some of the most unforgettable and rewarding of my life. After seeing the locals living without modern commodities, such as power, clean water, and heat, I realized that there are many things in life that I take for granted.

It wasn’t easy being away from my family, friends and my home. But in the end, the sacrifice was worth it. My experience in Iraq and the memories I built will last a lifetime.

Accepting this assignment was one of the best decisions of my life, and I will never forget the people I met and the entire experience of being a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers overseas. ESSAYONS!

Daughter of Thurmond park ranger qualifies for National Debate Tournament



Minor

Abigail Minor, the daughter of John Minor and Annette Carter, a parker ranger at Thurmond Lake, was one of four students from Lincoln County High School,

Lincolnton, Ga., who qualified for the National Debate Tournament. The school earned four bids, including Abigail and her partner, Nik Spens, who will compete in the policy debate category.

The qualification rounds for the nationals took place February 15 and 16 at the NFL Georgia Southern Peach District Tournament held in Fayette County High School in Fayetteville, Ga.

Also during the qualification rounds, Minor placed in the top two in the “original oratory” category. However, students are not allowed to enter nationals in two categories, which meant that she was designated as the first alternate.

Minor, who has qualified for nationals for four consecutive years, will be recognized for her accomplishments and will receive a \$100 scholarship at the National Forensic League Tournament, June 16-20 in Las Vegas.

A senior at LCHS, Minor was also named STAR Student for the class of 2008.

The Lincoln County Debate Team Boosters Club is currently accepting donations to support the team’s trip to Las Vegas.

**Facts obtained from The Lincoln Journal.*

Public Affairs captures journalism award

The Savannah District Public Affairs Office captured second place in the “Special Achievement in Print Category” for the 2007 Change of Command Ceremony Packet in this year’s Herbert A. Kassner Print Journalism Competition.

The Kassner Awards is an annual Corps-wide competition that recognizes excellence in print and broadcast journalism.



Col. Frank Penha, 15th Signal Brigade commander, Col. John Holwick, Fort Gordon garrison commander; Maj. Jesse Curry, Savannah District project manager, Project Management Division; Lt. Col. Steve Middleton, deputy brigade commander, 15th Signal Brigade; Michael Frnka, Army Southeast Region Installation Management Command; Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon command sergeant major; and Pfc. Edgardo Camacho, 551st Signal Battalion, break through the wall of barracks building 29715 at the Fort Gordon Trainee Barracks Upgrade Project groundbreaking Jan. 23. The 35-building project will upgrade 18 barracks, one brigade headquarters building, four battalion headquarters buildings, four dining facilities and eight company administration buildings.

Gordon Trainee Barracks get facelift

By Jennifer Small
Staff Writer

The Army's home of technology is getting a facelift, with the Savannah District kicking off the Fort Gordon Trainee Barracks Upgrade Project Jan. 23 with a demolition ceremony for the first of a 35-building upgrade.

The project will renovate 40-year-old barracks and supporting buildings and extend their life by 25 years to provide standard quarters for Advanced Individual Training Soldiers. Plans call for completing the upgrades by 2015.

"This is a long overdue project," said Fort Gordon Garrison Commander, Col. John Holwick said. "The vast majority of my installation is trainees. Over 4,000 roll through here each year. These [buildings] were state-of-the-art [when they were built], but they've started to fail. We decided that we had to extend

the life of these, to bring them up to 2008 standards. They say this will extend the life 25 years, but I think it will be closer to 40 – these are sound structures."

The entirety of the Savannah District-run project includes the upgrade of 18 barracks, one brigade headquarters building, four battalion headquarters buildings, four dining facilities and eight company administration buildings. The buildings will be gutted to the shell to try to keep as much of the structural integrity of the buildings as possible, which is a less expensive alternative to a complete rebuild.

The current phase, to be completed in February 2009, includes the renovation of one barracks building, one dining facility, one battalion headquarters and the 15th Signal brigade headquarters, with a total cost of \$17,084,000 for the four buildings.

Savannah District officials awarded the four-building contract Tetra-Tech, out of Atlanta, in September. It contains the

"potential for awarding future projects," according to Gary Wilder, Fort Gordon project engineer.

The first step in the current project is demolishing, to steel and concrete, the first barracks building, and rebuilding a 40,645 square foot, three-story barracks.

"We are doing this to provide adequate living spaces that meet new Army standards," said Fort Gordon resident engineer Phill Payne. "We are making sure that entry level Soldiers get a good introduction into the Army."

In the old buildings, Soldiers most often complained of the lack of showers and the lack of modern amenities. The new barracks will consist of two-person suites with a bathroom in each, a new and modern air conditioning system, plumbing and electrical upgrades, and a computer lab. It will also include the addition of an exterior walkway to the second and third floors, with all rooms having exterior access.

SPOT LIGHT

Savannah District Safety Office

The Savannah District Safety and Occupational Health Office is committed to ensuring that each team member is provided a safe and healthy work environment through the implementation of safety and occupational health programs and risk management. The office also provides safety engineering services to field elements to assist with the execution of military and civil programs.

In October, the office will be overseeing a branch of the Regional Occupational Health Clinic in Mobile, Ala. The clinic will provide immediate support and assistance with deployments, medical surveillance physicals, wellness programs and health surveys to all Savannah District offices.

Located on the third floor of the District headquarters building in the Savannah, the office is headed by Flo Meyers. The district also has an office at Fort Bragg, and is in the process of staffing an office at Fort Benning.

In Savannah District, the SAS stands for "Serious About Safety."

For more information about the Dis-



Savannah District Safety Office Team: (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT): Gary Wiedeman, industrial hygienist, Liller Kirksey, safety assistant, and Flo Meyers, chief, Safety Office. Photo (RIGHT): Vanessa Cuthbert, safety specialist, North Carolina Office at Fort Bragg

trict Safety Office, call 912.652.5842 or visit the web at <http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/SO/index.htm>.

TRAINEE BARRACKS, continued from page 4

"Sometimes you have to wait a half hour for the shower," said Private 1st Class Edgardo Camacho, of the 15th Signal Battalion. "These new barracks will be more comfortable, that's the most important thing. I think it will just help [troop] morale."

"The Army is a world-class organization, therefore our Soldiers should be living in world-class facilities," said Lt. Col. Steve Middleton, Deputy Brigade Commander, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade. "When you recruit new Soldiers into the Army, you want them to have the newest equipment, training, and facilities. This will help to achieve that."

All design specifications for the renovations must meet the silver level of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), an Army-wide man-

date. Structures must be built to reduce waste sent to landfills, conserve energy and water, reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions, be healthier and safer for occupants, and incorporate sustainable design features.

"Fiscal year 2008 mandates that we now design and build to meet those standards," Payne said. "There is a cost to it; it impacts the upfront cost, but it is supposed to be more cost-effective in the long run [by reducing energy waste]."

The price tag for the eight-year project is \$365,000,000.

"It's going to change the whole look of Fort Gordon," Holwick said. "We're the home of technology for the Army, for the whole military, so we have to give the look of a world-class post, and this should do it."

District to host Second annual "Serious About Safety" Conference

The District will host its second annual "Serious About Safety" Conference April 14-15 in Charleston, S.C.

The two-day conference will include safety training sessions, health screenings, guest speakers, vendors, and an awards banquet.

The conference will be held at the Charleston Marriot, and the fee to attend is \$125.

For more information about the conference, contact George Condoyannis at (704)545-0319 or Flo Meyers at (912)652-5842.



**ENGINEERS
WEEK® 2008**
February 17-23

Georgia Tech students prepare design for Cockspur Island Lighthouse Study

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer

Five students from Georgia Institute of Technology began an analysis of the conditions surrounding the Cockspur Island Lighthouse to determine the best possible solution for erosion protection of the historic monument.

The students, DJ Gustashaw, Jerry Ashmore, Katie Hughes, Matthew Merrick, and Billy Morrison, all seniors at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, Ga., met with district staff on Feb. 22 to discuss the project and scope of work, and then proceeded to the lighthouse site to meet with the National Park Service and perform field investigations. The students will work on the project as a part of their senior design seminar in which they are paired up with an industry or government agency to work on a real-world problem.

Owned by the National Park Service as a part of Fort Pulaski National Park, the Cockspur Island lighthouse is listed on the National Historic Register. The lighthouse is located on tiny Cockspur Island, which sits just off Fort Pulaski's grounds. It sits on a low-lying island that becomes flooded during high tide, making it endangered.

The team of students are tasked with coming up with a design solution to protect the lighthouse from erosion, while also maintaining its natural and historic



Georgia Tech students (LEFT TO RIGHT): Matthew Merrick, Katie Hughes, Jerry Ashmore, Billy Morrison, and DJ Gustashaw met with district staff to discuss the Cockspur Island Lighthouse project.

look.

“Cockspur Lighthouse is one of five lighthouses remaining on the Georgia coastline,” said Bob Sirard, Project Manager, Cockspur Island Lighthouse Study. Built in 1837, it has withstood the test of time. It is an intrigal part of our American heritage that has earned its place in history and is diserving of our best efforts to maintain it’s integerty for posterity.”

The students were given 18 projects to choose from, but decided upon the Cock-

spur project because it was “challenging and completely different from anything they have done.”

Joe Hudak, Geotechnical Engineer, began preliminary studies on the project at the request of the National Park Service; however, funding was not available to begin the project.

The students will return to the district in late April to present their findings to district staff as well as the National Park Service.

Regional Science Fair Winners Announced

Four local middle and high school students were honored with awards from the Savannah District and the local chapter of the Society of American Military Engineers at this year's Savannah Ogeechee Regional Science and Engineering Fair held at the Armstrong Center in Savannah Feb. 21-22.

Hosted annually by Armstrong Atlantic State University in partnership with Collegiate Aspirations, LLC, the confer-

ence presents an opportunity for middle and high school students to demonstrate an understanding of research and experimentation in their area of choice.

Kathleen Campbell-Miles, Industrial Hygienist, engineering Division, Joe Hoke, Hydraulic Engineer, Engineering

Division, and Elliot Edwards, a retired Savannah District employee served as judges for the event.

Col. Edward J. Kertis, commander, Savannah District, presented the students with their awards on behalf of the District and SAME.

USACE Senior Award

U05 Environmental Science Division
 Student: Marcel Williams
 Grade: 10th
 School: Savannah Arts Academy
 Project Title: Motorboat Wakes and Riverbank Erosion

William's project was chosen for its extensive thought process and innovative testing apparatus. His logbook was exceptional in that it included detailed design drawings, cost details, photos, and field observations. His design drawings, photos, and tables were clear concise and professional, making his project a standout entry.



Marcel Williams



Troy Rahn

USACE Junior Award

H04 Environmental Science Division
 Student: Troy Rahn
 Grade: 8th
 School: Effingham Middle School
 Project Title: "Is Mistletoe an Indicator of Wetlands?"

Troy Rahn's project was chosen for the USACE Junior Division award based upon his exceptional field work which was thoroughly documented in his logbook. He used scientific methods and tools such as wetland/dryland soils color charts, wetland indicator plants as well as GPS coordinates for each tree in his survey. He correctly identified the variables that impacted the results and proof of his hypothesis.

SAME Senior Award

T02 Energy & Transportation Division
 Student: Lauren Cobb (Photo not available)
 Grade: 10th
 School: Family Education for Christ (Home-School Association)

Project Title: Thrust Vectoring 101

To test her hypothesis, Ms. Cobb constructed a simple 3D track of string supported by a wooden frame work (kite). Through testing trial and error she determined the best shape of the track and frame to reduce interference. Once the optimal configuration was found, she proceeded to test pure airflow vectors. A video recorder was used to determine time lapse. The video was shown in time lapse (slow motion) in order to visibly grasp the vector effect on the balls strung on the string tracks.

SAME Junior Award

G01 Energy & Transportation Division
 Student: Caitlyn Cobb
 Grade: 8th
 School: Southwest Middle School
 Project Title: Cargo Capacity. It is About the Temperature.
 Cobb conceived of her project by watching cargo ships traveling up and down the Savannah River. She hypothesized that various temperatures of salt water would impact the amount of cargo a ship could carry. She tested her hypothesis by using metal washers as simulated cargo, and placed them in a tin can which she floated on various temperatures of salt water. Her project was applicable to port access, channel depths, heavy equipment shipping, and bridge clearance issues.



Joe Hoke, hydraulic engineer, Savannah District judges Caitlyn Cobb's entry.

Mike Bailey, geologist and South Atlantic Division subject matter expert in Site Characterization, analyzes data received on the electronic data processing unit in the District's new CPT rig.



New CPT rig assists with levee construction in New Orleans

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photos by Rashida Banks

Savannah District's newest piece of equipment, a 20-ton, static-weight, state-of-the-art cone penetrometer testing (CPT) rig, will investigate levee foundations in New Orleans, according to Matt Delano, chief, Geology/Hydrogeology and Hazardous Toxic Radioactive Waste Design Section, Savannah District.

"This rig will be performing CPT soundings in Plaquemines Parish. Our CPT efforts in New Orleans involve production work and Quality Assurance oversight of contractors performing similar work," said Delano.

The tests will assist with the design of levee improvements in New Orleans, according to Mike Bailey, geologist, Savannah District, and South Atlantic Division subject matter expert in Site Characterization. At press time, the rig was scheduled to be transported down to New Orleans in support of the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers and the Hurricane Protection Office (HPO).

"The rig pushes a cone penetrometer probe into the ground to record a variety of information, including penetration resistance, pore pressure and seismic data for engineering design," said Bailey.

Purchased at a cost of \$272,000, it is the only CPT rig configured like it in the Corps.

The internal features of the rig consist of a cone assembly, a series of hollow rods, a hydraulic ram to push the cone and rods into the soil, and an electronic data processing unit.

"The hydraulic ram pushes the probe into the ground at a constant rate of two centimeters per second using up to 40,000 pounds of ram force," said Bailey.

As the probe advances through the soil, it measures pressure resistance against the tip of the probe. It also measures sidewall friction, soil pore water pressure, and shear wave velocity (the speed at which seismic waves move through the ground).

Bailey said that the data collected helps determine how foundation soils will respond when structures such as levees or buildings are constructed.

"We have a long history of using CPT in the Savannah District, and the new rig is helping to enhance that capability," he said.

At 20 tons, the rig is track-mounted with low ground pressure, making it easier to maneuver over softer terrains without sinking into the ground, said Delano.

"Soft, wet soils that make maneuvering very difficult are often encountered in New Orleans. The rig's tracks make it easier to maneuver through soft soils and allows the rig to be used whenever there is a need," he said.

The new rig's more efficient drilling methods save time and

What's inside the rig?

The internal features of the CPT rig consist of a cone assembly, a series of hollow rods, a hydraulic ram to push the cone and rods into the soil, and an electronic data processing unit.



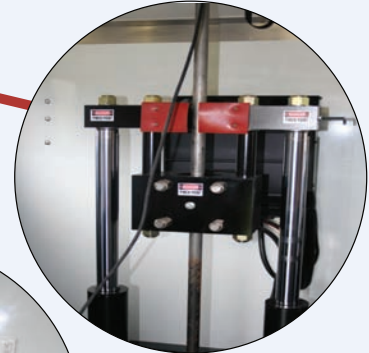
Cone Assembly



Electronic Data Processing Unit



Hollow Rods



Hydraulic Ram



“There is a need not only for Corps led geotechnical investigations but also for quality assurance of contractor data,” said Mike Bailey, geologist and South Atlantic Division Subject Matter Expert in Site Characterization.

money over traditional means, according to Bailey.

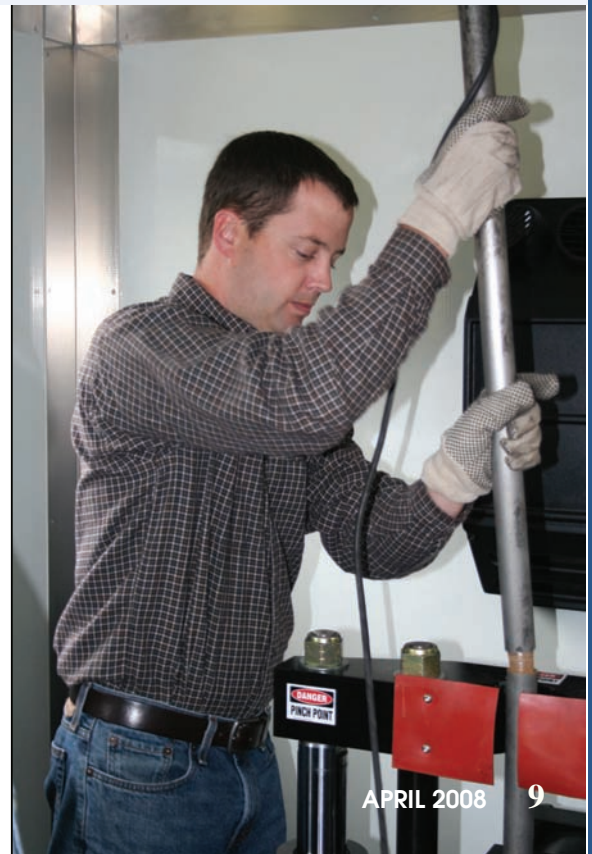
“The new equipment does not eliminate the need to collect samples with traditional drilling methods,” said Bailey. “It does make it possible to do far less traditional drilling, which is approximately five times slower than CPT.”

Bailey said that as the penetrometer advances through the soil, a probe interface instantly feeds data to a laptop computer on board.

The District’s older Site Characterization and Analysis Penetrometer System (SCAPS) currently performs CPT sounding in New Orleans. However, its tire mounting has difficulty maneuvering over soft soils and negotiating slopes, Bailey said.

“There is a need not only for Corps led geotechnical investigations but also for quality assurance of contractor data,” said Bailey. “The new rig is helping to meet that need.”

William McIntosh, geologist, engineering division, adds rods into the ground with a hydraulic ram. “The hydraulic ram pushes the probe into the ground at a constant rate of two centimeters per second using up to 40,000 pounds of ram force,” said Bailey.



Savannah District begins BRAC construction at Fort Benning

By Jennifer Small
Staff Writer
Photos by Jennifer Small

The Savannah District made one large step to help the "Build the Army" campaign Feb. 12, with the groundbreaking ceremony for the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning.

The Army's home of the Infantry will soon be home to the Armored Division, as groundbreaking began to move the U.S. Army Armor School and Center to Fort Benning from Fort Knox by 2011, as part of the Base Realignment and Closure Report.

The Savannah District will manage the more than \$2 billion BRAC construction at Benning, starting with the Harmony Church and Sand Hill trainee barracks complexes and brigade complex buildings.

"It's about time we train our Armor and Infantry Soldiers together, and that's what we're readying to do here," said Maj. Gen. Walter Wojdakowski, Fort Benning commanding general. "We've been fighting together for years. We're complimentary combat forces, and it's about time we started training together... there isn't an Infantry or Armor Soldier who doesn't think this is a good idea."

The \$244 million trainee barracks project broke ground at the 81-acre Sand Hill site in January, and the 100-acre Harmony Church facility followed suit soon after. In total, two battalions-worth of trainee barracks will grow on the two sites.

Each site will consist of five company buildings, five training barracks, a dining facility, and each battalion will have its own headquarters constructed at each site. Each barracks will have its own physical training area, and each battalion will have a running track. In addition, the Harmony Church site will also house the brigade headquarters and a parade field.

With just 620 days to finish the project, "it's a pretty aggressive contract," according to trainee barracks

project resident engineer Stacy Turner of the Savannah District.

At nearly 1.4 million square feet, the trainee barracks complex will consist of 31 buildings, including four storage buildings.

The design for the trainee barracks takes a creative approach, with the contractors, Clark-Caddell, having tight economic and time restraints.

"It was an issue building all of these buildings for the money awarded," Turner said. "It's a very innovative approach the contractor had in order to complete the project with the budget."

The new design departs from the standard three-floor, "L"-shaped barracks with forming area underneath. The Clark-Caddell designed barracks will be only two stories, with a covered forming area in between two barracks buildings.

"What we were given was a design criterion, in which we were told this is how it's been done, and we need you to do it 30 percent faster and 15 percent less costly," said Sid Jordan, CEO, Clark Construction Northern/Southern Divi-

sion. "We tried to make the square footage of the barracks building as efficient as possible, which allowed us to build a smaller building without giving up program space. When you raise a building off the ground, there's a cost associated with that - two story buildings connected with a covered area in between is less expensive. When we went to two stories, we were able to subtract the cost of a building that didn't affect the training of the Soldier."

"With MILCON transformation, it's definitely a new look of construction for the Army," said Amy Vaughn, Savannah District project engineer.

The contractor also intends to save time to meet the Building Occupancy Date of Jan. 15, 2009, by fabricating a lot of material off site, mainly the exterior of the buildings.

"It will look fairly traditional, but we won't be doing any masonry on-site, which will help with quality control and timeliness," Turner said. "It will be done off-site, and will be manufactured in a more controlled environment."



The Maneuver Center of Excellence at Harmony Church at Fort Benning will consist of ten barracks housing 2,400 Soldiers, a brigade headquarters, two battalion headquarters, a dining facility. It is the first phase of over \$2.1 billion worth of BRAC construction at Fort Benning that will move the Army's Armor School from Fort Knox.



Col. Keith R. Lovejoy, Fort Benning garrison commander; Brig. Gen. Donald Campbell, Fort Knox commanding general; Maj. Gen. Walter Wajdakowski, Fort Benning commanding general; Frank Lucas, Chairman, Fellow American Institute of Architects; Sid Jordan, CEO, Clark Construction Northern/Southern Division; Brig. Gen. Joseph Schroedel, commanding general, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Atlantic Division; ceremonially break ground at the Harmony Church site of the U.S. Army Maneuver School of Excellence at Fort Benning Feb. 12. Brig. The U.S. Army Armor Center and School are moving to Fort Benning from Fort Knox as part of the Army's Base Realignment and Closure.

The brigade complex will also be constructed simultaneously on the Sand Hill and Harmony Church sites, with the brigade headquarters, three barracks, five company operations facilities, a dining facility, an arms vault and a readiness module.

The price tag for the brigade complex comes in at \$75 million, with an 840-day contract.

"We have some modifications coming up, but we'll meet the need date for the facility," said project resident engineer Rich English of the construction division.

Armor and Infantry Soldiers have been fighting together since World War II, and now, thanks to the Savannah District, they will also be able to train together.

"This is a big deal for Fort Benning, for Columbus and for the Army as a whole," Turner said. "And it's just a tip of the work that's beginning."



Savannah District Commander Col. Edward Kertis shakes hands with John Omran, executive vice president and officer in charge of the Harmony Church Project for Clark Construction, at the groundbreaking ceremony at the Harmony Church site at Fort Benning on Feb. 12.

Powers receives Connolly Award



Ric Powers, area engineer, Robins Air Force Base area office, receives the Connolly Award from the Society of American Military Engineers for “notable contributions to engineering by a civilian or uniformed engineer bringing recognition to Savannah” from Air Force Col. Ed Pierkarczyk, base civil engineer, Robins Air Force Base, at the National Engineer Week Technical Training Day at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum Feb. 21.

Ric Powers, area engineer, US Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District’s Robins Air Force Base Area Office, was awarded the 2007 Society of American Military Engineers’ James Connolly Award on Feb. 21 during National Engineer Week’s “Lessons on Sustainability” Technical Training Day at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum.

The award is given out each year in honor of Connolly, an 1896 Olympic gold medalist in track and field, Spanish-American War Veteran, distinguished author and Savannah District employee, for notable contributions to engineering by a civilian or uniformed engineer bringing recognition to Savannah.

Powers has received recognition in numerous areas including Best Area/Resident Office Safety Award for Savannah District nine out of 11 years, the Charles F. Trainor Award four times since its inception in 1997, the Commanders Award for Civilian Service (1999), USAF Air Combat Construction Agent of the Year (2002), and the 2007 Engineer of the Year in Government by the Georgia Society of Professional Engineers.

Gordon Simmons recognized as ‘District Hero’

Gordon Simmons, chief, design branch, Engineering Division, was recognized as a Savannah ‘District Hero’ during the 2008 USACE South Atlantic Division (SAD) Annual Meeting held in Atlanta Jan. 22-24.

Simmons was nominated based on his leadership in implementing the USACE Centers of Standardization (COS) and his efforts in securing the work at the Savannah River site. The Savannah District COS was given significant responsibility to program and plan the conversion of war-fighting facilities into an integral component of the extended battlefield.

Simmons was recognized along with four other Corps employees, one from each district within SAD: Michelle Wolfe, deputy district counsel, Jacksonville District; Craig Litteken, Chief, Regulatory Division, Mobile District; Peggy Garten, program analyst, Project Management Division, Charleston District; Terry Ramsey, Operations Project Manager at W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilmington District, during the three-day conference.

During the conference, Simmons was featured in a segment entitled, “Profiles in Leadership,” where he was interviewed by Savannah District Commander Col. Edward J. Kertis.



Gordon Simmons, chief, design branch, Engineering Division is presented award from Brig. Gen. Joseph Schroedel, Commanding General, South Atlantic Division, during the 2008 USACE South Atlantic Division Annual Meeting Jan 22-24. (LEFT): Col. Edward J. Kertis, commander, Savannah District.



Col. Edward Kertis, commander, Savannah District pins wings on his son 2nd Lt. Ryan Kertis, who is a student at Fort Bragg, following their parachute jump.



Hartwell Park Ranger to receive National award



Grant

Tanya Grant, park ranger, Hartwell Lake will be recognized with the National Water Safety Congress Award of Merit for significant contributions and outstanding efforts to enhance or promote water safety at the local and state level.

Grant will receive the award at the 2008 International Boating and Water Safety Summit held in San Diego April 16-19.

2008 Recreation Facility Opening Dates Scheduled for Thurmond Lake

With the rapidly-approaching 2008 recreation season, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced its opening schedules for the picnic areas and campgrounds at the J. Strom Thurmond Lake.

Picnic areas opening April 1 in Georgia include Gill Point, Cherokee, Amity Park, Big Hart, Lake Springs, and West Dam Recreation Area. Parksville, located in McCormick County, SC, will also open on April 1. Elijan Beach, in Clarks Hill Park will be closed temporarily for repairs to bulkhead wall, however the rest of the park will remain open.

Broad River, Winfield and Petersburg (all sites) campgrounds opened on March 1. The remaining campgrounds including mount Carmel, Modoc, Hawe Creek, Hester's Ferry, Clay Hill, Big Hart, and Ridge Road open April 1. Due to the ongoing maintenance work, the Raysville campground will open on April 1, one month later than usual.

For more information, contact the J. Strom Thurmond Project office at 1-800-553-3478 or (864)333-1100.

History in the making:

Savannah District has first NCO in 30 years; first civilian active Army unit



Griffith

By Jennifer Small
Staff Writer
Photo by Jennifer Small

With the official authorization of the 542nd Engineering Detachment in the Savannah District in October, the Army will assign civilians to active units for the first time in its history.

To lead the 542nd Engineering Detachment, a Corps of Engineers Forward Engineering Support Team, the Army assigned a non-commissioned officer to the Savannah District for the first time in over 30 years.

Sgt. 1st Class William Griffith, an 18-year veteran Soldier who enlisted in the Army in 1990, will serve as NCO in charge of the team. Griffith has worked in engineering his entire career, from squad leader to platoon sergeant to first sergeant, and has deployed numerous times. Griffith joins the Savannah District and the 542nd Engineering Detachment from the 94th Engineering Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

The 542nd Engineering Detachment is a Corps of Engineers Forward Engineering Support Team - Advance (FESTA), which will be made up of civilians, Griffith and an officer-in-charge. It is

the first time in the Army's history that civilians are assigned to an active unit, according to Judy Patterson, natural disaster manager, emergency management, something that Griffith is excited about.

"Their primary job of these civilian Soldiers will be to deploy with the FEST team as a member of USACE, and their secondary job will be to work for the Savannah District when not with FEST team," said Griffith of the civilians of the unit.

"What's so exciting for me, as an Army leader, is civilians have never been assigned to a unit, and now the

Army will look at these civilians as part of a unit."

While the team is currently only made up of one full-time member - Griffith - eventually he will be joined by an officer and six civilians - an electrical engineer, a mechanical engineer, an environmental engineer, a topographical engineer, a civil engineer, and a Contracting Management officer.

"Other USACE districts have FEST teams, but we have the first of the FESTA military units, and Griffith is the first active-duty Soldier assigned to one of these units," said Patterson.

The FEST concept originated from USACE support of theatre contingencies. Currently, volunteers from throughout the District make up the FEST team.

"The civilians in the 542nd Engineering Detachment are [currently] strictly volunteers, said Patterson. "They are employees of Savannah who volunteer to be on the team. Eventually, they will be filled positions."

Patterson said that the positions won't be fulltime until 2010.

The primary responsibility of the 542nd Engineering Detachment will be to provide additional planning capability to combatant command and Army Service Component Command engineer staff, or to deploy in support of a Joint Task Force, with a limited execution capability.

Those in the unit will combine civilian engineering principles with the military decision making process, and the

capability provide an initial infrastructure assessment, technical engineer assistance,

contracting support, and real estate acquisition support.

"We've never gone to third world countries with this level of technical expertise combined with the readiness of civilians," Griffith said. "Now that the Army recognizes that we are a unit, we're being tasked as a unit."

The 542nd Engineering Detachment was first activated in 1943 in Ogden, Utah, and in October 2007 the Army activated the unit in Savannah. The team will be used mostly in severe environments, including natural disasters and initial military operations, until resident offices are established.

"In 20 years, we'll look back at this, and this will be the norm," Griffith said of the unit. "I'm urging the USACE community to volunteer to be FEST members. Whether it's designing a clinic or a school, or helping to improve communities around the world with their economic growth... let's use our knowledge to help the world."

"What's so exciting for me, as an Army leader, is civilians have never been assigned to a unit, and now the Army will look at these civilians as part of a unit."

- Sgt. 1st Class William Griffith

WELCOME TO THE SAVANNAH DISTRICT



Roper

Ronald Roper is an A-E Team Lead in Contracting Division. He came to the Savannah District in January after serving as the Air Force Junior ROTC Instructor at Effingham County High School. Roper retired from the U.S. Air Force in 2006 after 24 years of service. A native of Savannah, Roper is married and has three children.



Casey

Patti Casey returned to the Savannah District in January as a Realty Assistant. She previously worked for the district 12 years ago as a Public Affairs Specialist.



Cox

Chris Cox is Human Resources Specialist for the Savannah District Civilian Personnel Advisory Center. Before coming to the District, Cox served nine years as a Human Resources Specialist at the Southwest Civilian Personnel Operations Center, Fort Riley, KS.



Kirstein

Robert Kirstein works as a Quality Assurance Representative, Construction Division at Fort Bragg, NC. He retired from the US Navy in 2001 after 20 years of service.



Bufford

Douglas (Jim) Bufford joined the Savannah District in Feb as the Facility Manager. Before coming to the District, Bufford worked as a Supervisory Logistics Manager/Program Manager for FEMA in Baton Rouge, LA.

ON THE MOVE

Promotions

Bathgate, Bradley E.	Real Estate
Howsare, Chong S.	Construction
Miller, Jeremy D.	Operations
Tesch, David S.	Engineering
Williams, Charles J.	Real Estate
Miller, Gwendolyn L.	Contracting
Murphy, Jennifer L.	Contracting
Sanders, Michael T.	Resource Mgmt.

Retirements

Callahan, Robert A.	Engineering
Harper, Ira W.	Info. Mgmt.
Jack Cox	Info. Mgmt.

Departures

Alexander, Tiffany M.	Operations
Barrett, Jeremy D.	Resource Mgmt.
Dickerson, Barbara A.	EEO
Donald, Karen J.	Contracting
Hood, Joe N.	Operations
Jamison, Jay L.	Operations
Kinmonth, Stanley A.	Proj. Mgmt.
Schmidt, David V.	Planning
Truell Jr, Ronald R.	CPAC



Williamson

Williamson selected new Logistics Chief

Anthony Williamson Sr. was selected as the new chief of Logistics Management Division. Williamson brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with him to LM.

Formerly of Fayetteville, N.C., Williamson retired from the US Army in December 2006 as a Chief Warrant Officer Two after 32 years in Logistics Management.

A graduate of Rochville University in Maryland, he holds a Bachelors degree in

Logistics Management and a Masters Degree in Business Management.

Williamson and his wife Anita have four children and one grandchild. Both Williamson and his wife are ordained ministers.

His family has an award-winning gospel singing ministry called, The Williamson Family Covenant Singers. Williamson said that he looks forward to his new assignment with the Corps.

Kathleen Campbell-Miles, industrial hygienist, interviews Troy Rahn, an eighth grader at Effingham County High School, about his science project entitled, "Is mistletoe an indicator of wetlands?" during the Savannah Ogeechee Regional Science and Engineering Fair held at the Armstrong Center in Savannah, Ga. Campbell- Miles, along Joe Hoke, hydraulic engineer, and retired Savannah District employee, Dr. Elliot Edwards served as judges for the event.

