

The

# castle

Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

October/November 2007



Hi-Tech MOUT training at Fort Bragg



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**FRONT COVER**

Shoothouse at Fort Bragg  
Photo by Steven Smith

**FRONT COVER**

Savannah District Commander Col. Edward J. Kertis picks up trash at Fort Pulaski National Monument in observance of National Public Lands Day.  
Photo by Jonas Jordan



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**2007 South Atlantic Division Leadership Development Program Graduation** took place at the District Headquarters in Savannah, Georgia on October 11, 2007. Graduates pictured are: Back Row - Richard (Blair) Boyd, Wilmington District; Terry Brooks, Savannah District; Brandon Smith, Mobile District; Edwin Cuebas, Jacksonville District; Cassandra Day, Mobile District; Doug Piatkowski, Wilmington District; Leah Oberlin, Jacksonville District; Chris Baur, Savannah District; Les Parker, Charleston District; Alex Van Heuvel, South Atlantic Division; Stuart Mclean, Jacksonville District; Steve Trexler, Fish & Wildlife Svc; Terry Stratton, South Atlantic Division; Front Row - Nancy Adelis, Adelis Development; Anna Butler, Savannah District; Agnes Ramsey, SFLA Water Mgt District; Mike Johnson, Charleston District; Randy Rabb, Jacksonville District; Gary Whigham, Mobile District; Tina Paulson, South Atlantic Division; Tanya Mercer, Savannah District; Mary Moore, Mobile District; Michelle Thompson, Savannah District; Shea Jones, EPA - Not Pictured; Dennis Mekkers, SAM.

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**COL. Edward J. Kertis**  
Commander

## “From Where I Sit”

Welcome back to the print version of the Savannah District monthly magazine, The Castle. Many of you and even members of the public have asked me to resurrect this publication as a way to brag about our accomplishments to them and each other. Here it is! This is your magazine. Submit your photos and articles to Public Affairs for inclusion in every issue. PAO will work with you to get it right, but they won't do it for you.

One of the first changes I have implemented is to eliminate the “Colonel's Column.” Most of you have heard me say, “what you see depends on where you sit”. The column that will replace the “Colonel's Column” will be called “From Where I Sit”. I will still contribute my thoughts periodically, but I'm sure you don't want to hear from me every month. Instead, I've invited the executives, staff office chiefs, and even YOU, to submit columns for consideration. Articles must be positive in nature; whining is not permitted.

I have completed my tour of the district offices in our region. I am impressed not only with the diversity of our mission, but with the caliber of people we have out there executing it. Thanks for all you do for our nation. I believe in the Savannah District and the Corps of Engineers.

For those of you who have not heard my town halls, let me reiterate my priorities during my command tour:

- 1) Security/Safety; nothing we do at work or at home is worth the life, limb, or vision of an employee or visitor. NOTHING. Slow down and do it right.
- 2) Get the word out; the Corps has been beaten up in the media long enough. It is the mission of every one of us to make sure the public knows the great things we do for the country and our community.
- 3) Have fun; life is short. Enjoy your family and your profession. You should enjoy coming to work. Every day should be a Monday.

Many of you have contacted me regarding problems you've noticed or criticisms you have of the district. I appreciate the input, but would like to remind everyone that every time you bring forth a problem, you should also bring forth a solution. You are best at determining how to make your job better. Use your “Just Do It” card and do it!

Thanks for the great welcome. I am happy to be here.

## Letter to the Editor

### Even in a War Zone, there are opportunities for the homefront (Savannah District) to make a difference

Dear friends and colleagues,

I'm pleased to let you know that the transfer of your donations to Tigger House occurred without a hitch. To ensure the safety of Tigger House staff and animals, the director asked that we not visit their location – we travel in convoys of heavily armored SUVs, so our presence would have been noticed if there had been any bad guys around. Since we didn't want to risk drawing negative attention to Tigger House, their veterinarian, Dr. R., came to our “safe house” to pick up your donations. As you can see by the attached photos, the dog, the vet, and the staff were very appreciative of your contributions.

Pam Constable, the American woman who started Tigger House, wrote a kind note of thanks. Your American colleagues here in Kabul also send a heart-

felt thanks – particular thanks to your command leaders, to your public affairs staff, and of course, to Stan Kinmonth. This couldn't have taken place without your generosity.

As for us, the experience of caring for something outside of our project work has been a morale boost. This country is so impoverished and the infrastructure, education, health, and human rights needs are so immense that it is sometimes difficult to discern the difference we are making. Rest assured that we knew we made a difference to Tigger House – we saw it in the eyes of Dr. R. and heard it in his voice.

We learn a lot by working and fighting here (note: there's a young soldier sitting next to me with an M16 rifle at his feet) – we get to know ourselves better and to know what we're capable of. We get better clarity on the extreme poverty that is

in much of the world and about the need to share our skills and knowledge. We get the chance to reconnect with what it means to be American and to appreciate with a more open heart the freedoms that many have fought for and will continue to defend.

As for the everyday life of stray dogs, cats, donkeys, horses, and most farm animals in Afghanistan, it remains harsh, but the USAID agriculture program and the USDA volunteers are working to make a difference by providing veterinary care and advice. Tigger House is a beacon which signifies a change of heart and mind for all living beings that, through the efforts of people like you, will be replicated throughout Afghanistan's cities and villages.

My sincere thanks, your colleague,  
Jane Mergler



# A New Way to Walk

Stan Simpson, Water Control Manager for the Savannah River Projects and his wife Tricia adopted Echo, a sightless Australian shepherd, from a rescue shelter in Jacksonville, Fla. The Simpsons also own three other rescue shelter dogs: Gatsby, Marty, and Jelly Bean.

What disabled dogs lack physically, they make up for in their capacity to love—and to be loved, by dedicated owners who wouldn't have it any other way.

By Jolee Edmondson  
Special to *The Castle*  
Photos by Tricia Simpson

The last thing Tricia and Stan Simpson needed in September 2005 was a blind dog. They already had three poodles and one cat, and eight months earlier they had traveled to the Far East to adopt a second daughter in China. Their two-story home with a white picket fence in Savannah, Ga., was full, brimming with life, love and attendant responsibilities. But when Tricia saw a photo of Echo, a sightless Australian shepherd, in a local pet-adoption journal, she started thinking about an addition to the family . . . again.

"I fell in love with his speckled face," she recalls. "My mother was with me, and she said, 'No, not another dog.' But I was a goner." Echo's blindness, however, precluded instant adoption. The Simpsons, who had no experience with disabled pets, were apprehensive. How did Echo get around? Would they have to make extraordinary adjustments to accommodate him?

Blind since birth, the 1½-year-old pooch had been sheltered in veterinary clinics, fos-

tered, adopted and then returned. Fortunately, the Australian Shepherd Rescue in Jacksonville, Fla., agreed to let the Simpsons have him on a trial basis.

When the couple brought Echo home, they tentatively watched as he sniffed out his new turf. "Our biggest concern," Tricia says, "was the stairs in our house—they go straight up, with no landing to buffer a fall. Before we could walk him upstairs on a leash to get him used to it, he raced up by himself. On the way back down, he felt along the edges of the first three steps with his paw and then raced down. Echo was in our house for 10 minutes and it was a done deal. He fit in seamlessly."

Being less than perfect needn't make dogs less valuable as companions, nor does it necessarily diminish their enjoyment of life.

Traditionally, dogs assist humans with disabilities. Now people are becoming more aware of dogs with disabilities. To say that Echo was lucky would be a monumental understatement: Handicapped canines are next to impossible to place in homes. But their lot could improve significantly if current

trends gain momentum.

Not only are there burgeoning numbers of books, Web sites and support groups for prospective adopters and owners of handicapped dogs, but the last decade has seen the emergence of at least eight new companies that specialize in innovative aids for disabled canines. Doggon' Wheels, Eddie's Wheels for Pets, Dewey's Wheelchairs for Dogs and other firms offer a wide range of increasingly streamlined and lightweight wheelchairs, or carts, that are custom-fitted to paraplegic dogs. There are also vibrating collars for deaf



Echo, who has fit seamlessly into the Simpson household, jumps through an obstacle course ring.

dogs, hoop harnesses to provide a “bumper” for blind dogs, and support harnesses for arthritic dogs.

There’s even a prosthetic-limb implant, using advanced engineering methods, in the works for canine amputees. Pioneered by Denis Marcellin-Little, associate professor of orthopedic surgery at the College of Veterinary Medicine at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, the revolutionary device will be composed of high-tech soft metals, with flexible feet made of rubber-coated spring steel. Marcellin-Little anticipates starting a clinical trial in 12 to 18 months.

The message in all this? Being less than perfect needn’t make dogs less valuable as companions, nor does it necessarily diminish their enjoyment of life. “Dog owners are discovering that there’s hope after a handicap,” says Jason Christofferson, general manager of the steadily growing, Montana-based Doggon’ Wheels. “They want to know what their options are, and those options are many compared to a few years ago.”

Of course, quality of life for a disabled dog hinges on the type and severity of the handicap. Dogs like Echo who have been blind since birth have a relatively easy time of it. “They make fine companions and adapt quickly,” says Caroline D. Levin, author of *Living With Blind Dogs: A Resource Book and Training Guide for the Owners of Blind and Low-Vision Dogs*. “They usually run headlong into life. Dogs are not going to miss out on a full, happy life just because they’re blind. As with all dogs, their primary sense is smell—they can almost see with their nose.”

Indeed, Echo, now 3 years old, has settled into a jolly routine in the Simpson household, making a beeline for the cookie jar every morning, romping with the other dogs and



Stan and Tricia Simpsons daughters Piper 4, and Hunter 6 play with Echo before bedtime.

reveling in the attention lavished on him by two little girls who engage him in giggly games of hide-and-seek. His only serious obstacle is a pecan tree, which has been surrounded by tall grass and plastic flamingos to prevent further collisions. “The flamingos are tacky,” Tricia grants, “but they work!”

“Caring for disabled dogs is an on-going trend,” said Natasha Olby, associate professor of neurology/neurosurgery, North Carolina State Veterinary Teaching Hospital. “People today are more committed emotionally and financially to do all that they can for them. After all, dogs are no longer only work animals—they’ve become beloved family members.”

Just look at Echo, family dog extraordi-

naire. Every night when the lights are turned off in the Simpson house, he goes into the children’s room and rests his chin on each girl’s bed, then returns to his own bed and falls asleep.

“He’s very protective of the children,” Tricia says. As for his blindness, it’s less significant to him than a flea. “No one told Echo he was blind,” she says smiling. “He doesn’t know it.”

*Animal lover and freelance writer Jolee Edmondson would adopt every stray dog on the planet, but her townhouse in Savannah, Ga., is fit for only one very spoiled Fido.*

## ON THE MOVE

### Retirements

Grevemberg, Karleen M.	CPAC
Moore, Joan D.	Operations
Sainz, Mariela R.	Engineering
Dobson, Carol A.	Engineering
Harris, Benjamin J.	Project Mgmt.

### Departures

Sainz, Mariela R.	Engineering
Williams, Diane M.	Operations
Schlenker, Brooke E.	Contracting
Stegall, James	Real Estate
Tew, Donald	Contracting

### Departures Cont.

Anthony, Robert A.	Construction
Banks, Shapala	Resource Mgmt.
Cunningham, Lisa	Real Estate
Coleman, Marcia	Engineering
Dobson, Carol A.	Engineering
Grevemberg, Karleen M.	CPAC
Harris, Benjamin J.	Project Mgmt.
Hemphill, SR, Joseph J.	Construction
Holmes, Patricia	Real Estate
King, James	Operations
Moore, Joan D.	Operations
Plotkin, Barry J.	Operations
Quilter, Ward	Safety Office

### Promotions

Foxx, Tangelia A.	Small Business
Hollensworth, Amy L.	Info. Mgmt.
Nettles, Lendora W.	Project Mgmt.
Judge, Sylvia E.	Internal Review
Bradley, Daniel D.	Construction
Templeton, Matthew L.	Operations
Van Landingham, Nathaniel	Real Estate

### Arrivals

Allen, Jessie L.	Construction
Daniel, Constance E.	Operations
Hollensworth, Amy L.	Info. Mgmt.
Prescott, Cinda A.	Contracting
Safweh, Samer A.	Construction
Scott, LaNeesha V.	Operations
Wolff, James R.	Construction



# District launches 2007 Combined Federal Campaign

By Rashida Banks  
 Editor/Staff Writer  
 Photo by Jonas Jordan

Savannah District Commander Col. Edward J. Kertis and Coast Guard Commander Cdr. David W. Murch along with local and district CFC Representatives gathered on Sept. 24 to kick off the district's 2007 Combined Federal Campaign.

The theme for this year's campaign is "Help Our World Forward."

The campaign gives federal employees the opportunity to donate to their choice of more than 2000 local, national, and international charitable organizations. CFC is the only authorized solicitation of Federal employees in the workplace on behalf of approved charitable organizations.

Donations to CFC are voluntary. Employees can give to CFC through payroll deductions, cash, or check contributions.

The district's campaign runs from Sept. 24 thru Nov. 23. The district's goal for this year is \$42,000. In 2006, the CFC



2007 Combined Federal Campaign Representatives: Mike Hoffman, Doris Deustch, COL Kertis, CDR Murk, LTJG Sanders, Cynthia Savoy, Ed Wexler, Faye Jordan, Sahron James, Tatjana Tessneer, Olivia Williams, Gwendolyn Meyers, Renee Atkins, Ruthie Page, Rashida Banks, Deborah Bradley, Darian Buchannon, Sylvia Judge, Lori Monroe. NOT PICTURED: Deborah Brown, Kelly Jolly, Deborah Lanier, Inge Miller, Jennifer Penn, Linda Schrum, Sandra Ward.

for Coastal Georgia raised \$799,389, and received a prestigious national award for "Highest Percentage of Increase Award" for campaigns from \$250,000 to \$1 million. Savannah District employees

contributed \$42,000 to that amount.

For more information about CFC visit the CFC Coastal Empire website at <http://www.or> or contact your division representative.

## A Message from Renee Atkins - District CFC Key Person



Atkins

I am honored that I was chosen as this year's Keyperson for the Savannah District - Combined Federal Campaign. I have always con-

tributed to CFC ever since I joined the United States Army in 1981. The Army highly encourages participation in the Combined Federal Campaign, although it is strictly voluntary. At that time, I gave \$2 per pay period for a total of \$48. Over the years, I have increased this amount tremendously. As civilians, we are also encouraged to participate. You never know when a tragedy or disaster may strike against you, your family, someone close to you or even a co-worker. Sev-

eral organizations are available and ready to assist in your time of need. You might not need them right now, but others do.

The Theme this year for CFC is "Help Our World Forward". Many of us give monetary donations to our local church and other local organizations throughout the year. Your contribution thru the Combined Federal Campaign of at least \$1 per payperiod or one time cash donation generously helps numerous local, National & International organizations through your gift of giving. Many organizations only receive funding through CFC.

This Year's goal is \$42,000 and an employee participation rate of 50%. Last Year, Savannah District's employee participation rate was 30%. We are striving to exceed last year's employee participation rate, which will also increase the overall goal of contributions. Savannah District will host a CFC Rally on November 5th, 2007, in the Rotunda Area of the Gordon Low Federal Building.

Will you "Help Our World Forward" by giving?

### Division CFC Representatives are:

Sharon James	Project Mgmt.
Equilla Page	Logistics Mgmt.
Deborah Lanier	Operations
Tatjana Tessneer	Emergency Mgmt.
Gwendolyn Myers	Office of Counsel
Linda Schrum	Resource Mgmt.
Deborah Bradley	Construction
Michael Hoffman	EEO
Jennifer Penn	Real Estate
Inge Lawson	Contracting
Sylvia Judge	Internal Review
Rashida Banks	Public Affairs
Sandra Ward	Security and Law
Lori Monroe	Regulatory
Darian Buchannon	Regularory
Cynthia Savoy	Planning
Debra Brown	Information Mgmt.
Sterling Warner	Engineering

In the future, look for On-line Pledging or E-Giving.

# Team members “Make a difference” in Afghanistan



The Tigger House has received 10 boxes of pet items, including beds, towels, collars, leashes, toys, biscuits, rawhide, food bowls, brushes, flea medicine, surgical gloves, and plastic syringes – all donated and shipped by Savannah District employees.

By Rashida Banks

Editor/Staff Writer

Photos provided by Jane Mergler

Small acts of kindness go a long way. That statement certainly holds true for a group of Corps employees on temporary duty in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Don Garrison, Rixby Hardy, and Jane Mergler’s simple act of kindness towards a family of abandoned stray puppies resulted in a donation of more than 300 pounds of goods from Savannah District employees to a local animal shelter in Kabul.

On their way to and from work in Kabul, Garrison, Hardy, and Mergler noticed a family of stray dogs living in a sewer pipe and began taking leftover food and clean water to the dogs everyday. Despite their efforts, one of the dogs died. Not too long after that, another puppy was killed by a car. Realizing that something more had to be done about the animal situation, Mergler began to search for an animal shelter in Kabul and discovered the Tigger House.

“We realized that just feeding the puppies wasn’t ensuring their long term health and safety,” said Mergler.

Quite possibly the only animal shelters in Afghanistan, The Tigger House, is operated and supported by a private non-profit organization called the Afghan

Stray Animal League. The shelter provides a safe haven for homeless, abandoned, sick or injured small animals in Afghanistan. It is located in a refurbished house in Kabul, a city which has a large population of neglected street dogs and cats as well as thousands of backyard animals such as goats and donkeys whose owners cannot afford treatment for them.

Mergler arranged for the shelter to rescue the surviving puppies from the sewer pipe. In email, she mentioned the rescue to one of her colleagues, Stan Kinmonth, Senior Project Manager, Civil Programs and Project Management Division. Both Mergler and Kinmonth have rescue shelter dogs. Kinmonth was touched by the animal situation in Kabul and by the efforts of the Tigger House staff and decided to make a donation to the shelter in response to Mergler’s suggestion.

In addition to making a donation, Kinmonth also coordinated with the district’s Public Affairs Office to post an announcement about the Tigger House on the district’s internal news and information page. Kinmonth said that the response to the post was overwhelming. “I was surprised at how much stuff we got, and we are still getting donations now,” said Kinmonth.

“Jane mentioned the Tigger House and how they are on a shoestring budget,” said Kinmonth. “We all love ani-

mals and don’t want to see them hurt, so it was the least that we could do. I think the district’s efforts show to some extent what Americans are made of. If this helps our relationship with the Afghan people, so much the better.”

To date, The Tigger House has received 10 boxes of pet items, including beds, towels, collars, leashes, toys, biscuits, rawhide, food bowls, brushes, flea medicine, surgical gloves, and plastic syringes – all donated and shipped by Savannah District employees.

As a result of Savannah District’s generosity, Mergler said that other districts have been inspired to help the Tigger House, and that perhaps enough support could be garnered to establish a second shelter either in another area of Kabul or in Jalalabad, a neighboring city in eastern Afghanistan.

“One of our co-worker’s here, Jeff Hepler, has asked his home district in Portland, Ore. to send donations, and Don Garrison, who was among the first to notice the puppies, has inspired his daughter who works at the University of North Alabama in Florence to solicit donations. Savannah’s efforts have inspired others and are being carried on,” said Mergler.

Mergler arranged an official meeting with the Tigger House staff to transfer the goods to them on Oct 6. In her letter of appreciation to the district, Mergler commented on how “appreciative” the Tigger House staff was of the district’s contributions.

“With help from people like those at the Savannah District, Afghanistan may someday be a secure, prosperous, and sustainable society where all of God’s creations, including animals, are treated humanely and with respect,” said Mergler.

For more information about the Tigger House, visit their website at <http://www.afghanstrayanimals.org>.

*EDITOR’S NOTE: Read Mergler’s letter of appreciation in its entirety in the Letters to the Editor section of the Castle.*



# Hi-tech MOUT Training at Fort Bragg

The new Shoothouse at Fort Bragg is equipped with 360 degree firing, variable lighting conditions with dimming capabilities, after action review capabilities, and overhead cameras.



Old wooden Shoothouse at Fort Bragg.

*“These facilities provide soldiers with more thorough training than traditional shoot houses because of the technology that has been incorporated, as well as their ability to simulate many different exercises from the 360 degree effect.”*

*-Steven Smith, civil engineer/quality assurance rep, Fort Bragg.*



**By Rashida Banks**  
Editor/Staff Writer  
Photos by Steven Smith

With the ongoing war in Iraq, there is an increasing need for Soldiers to become trained for urban warfare. For Soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., this type of training comes in the form of two high-tech 360 degree shoot houses built by the Savannah District.

The \$3.3 million dollar project which included the completion of two live fire shoot houses and an after action review building was completed in April 2006.

The purpose of the Shoothouse is to train small units in a MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) environment to clear a room or multiple rooms in a hostage situation. The facilities give Soldiers a realistic environment by simulating "threat" or "no threat" situations where they have to make rational decisions about target discrimination.

Soldiers enter the shoothouses during the day or at night wearing night vision devices and protective armor. They usually practice clearing a room in groups of three or four.

Before entering the shoot house, soldiers practice engaging targets together as a team from different ranges. The first time is a dry run. The second time they use blanks, and when they reach a level that is sufficient to the instructor they use live ammunition.

"These facilities provide soldiers with more thorough training than traditional shoot houses because of the technology that has been incorporated, as well as their ability to simulate many different exercises from the 360 degree effect" said Steven Smith, civil engineer/quality assurance rep, Fort Bragg.

The 360 degree shoot houses are not a first for Fort Bragg, but they are the most technologically advanced and safest yet, according to Smith. "The new shoot

houses are safer and have more configurations than the previous one," said Smith.

The previous shoot houses were made of wood, therefore requiring constant repairs. As a result, Smith said, the older shoot houses had a shorter lifecycle.

"The new shoot houses are constructed of steel and ballistic rubber, so they are more durable with a longer lifecycle," said Smith. "If repairs are needed, the ballistic rubber blocks can be easily removed and replaced."

Ballistic rubber is also a safety feature, because it traps bullets in the wall. This helps to eliminate ricochet hazards that were present in the older wooden shoot houses, making the new facility safer for training.

Another very important feature of the shoot house is the after action review targets, which can be used and wired to fiber optics for data feedback. When Soldiers enter the shoot house and fire on a target, the information is sent to the after action review building, where soldiers can go to be critiqued on their performance.

Other high-tech features include: 360 degree firing, variable lighting conditions with dimming capabilities, and overhead cameras. Life-size dummies containing programmable movement and sensors add realism to the training.

Ivan Ivanov, Live Fire Branch Supervisor at Fort Bragg said that the training has really helped to boost the self-esteem of Soldiers and their ability to handle themselves in combat situations.

"They know what to expect when they go into real-world

situations," said Ivanov. "They also have more confidence in working with weapons systems in a team environment."

Ivanov said that all Soldiers start at a basic level and work their way up. "Every Soldier, regardless of their unit, begins the training with a basic understanding of what to do, and their training plan is based on their mission. Priority training is given to Soldiers performing these type missions," said Ivanov.

As the requirements for a MOUT environment change, Ivanov said that Soldiers need to adapt and train for new situations so they are not blindfolded when they go into a real combat. "This type of training really helps to accomplish that mission," said Ivanov.



**The top of the Shoothouse equipped with a catwalk to allow for observation while Soldiers are training.**

# Primitive Weapon Hunts help manage deer population at Thurmond

By Jennifer Vincent  
Special to *The Castle*

Photo provided by Jennifer Vincent



Brad Newton, of Dahlonega, Georgia harvested an 8 point Buck with a 17¼ inch spread which weighed 175 pounds. Brad, who has attended hunts at Bussey Point since he was a child says that he still enjoys the event.

“High deer density results in competition for food, a decrease in fawn survival, a decrease in antler growth in bucks and a reduction of the overall health of the herd,” said Boyd. “Hunting is both a practical and humane way of managing a herd.”

With the effective range of a bow and arrow or muzzleloader being significantly shorter than modern firearms, more hunters can safely hunt in a smaller area. At Bussey Point, bow hunters are permitted to participate in all hunts. Muzzleloader hunts are limited to 100 hunters per day with very limited dates. The bag limit is two does and one quality (also known as “Trophy”) buck each day of each hunt. A quality buck is defined as a buck with at least 4 points on one side of their rack, or having a rack with a 15 inch or greater outside spread.

All hunters must be licensed according to Georgia Game and Fish Regulations. For the primitive weapon hunts, participants are also required to have a primitive weapon license, which is \$8 in Georgia. A Wildlife Management Area (WMA) stamp is not required to hunt on Bussey Point.

“While the ultimate goal for many of the participants is to bag a trophy buck, many of them attend for an opportunity to share a weekend of camping at a premier spot and good conversations with folks they’ve come to know over the years with a similar interest in the outdoor experience,” said Boyd.

For additional information about the primitive weapon hunts, contact Ken Boyd at the Thurmond Project Office at 1-800-533-3478, ext. 1159.

**“High deer density results in competition for food, a decrease in fawn survival, a decrease in antler growth in bucks and a reduction of the overall health of the herd. Hunting is both a practical and humane way of managing a herd.”**

**-Ken Boyd, Biologist, Thurmond Project Office**





**Murphy**

## My View:

# Helping reshape a District and a nation

By Milton Murphy  
Photo provided by Norris Jones

My whole purpose in answering the call to come and serve in Iraq was to help

reshape the Gulf Region Central District by re-examining Engineering and Construction, and Business Processes. I truly believed that if we, as a district, did not evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers in this kinetic environment, then the services we were providing would lead to projects that did not reflect the quality and character that is associated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In evaluating existing policies and practices, and placing them side-by-side with mission requirements, we were able to see exactly where the problem areas were. By using the tried and true Project Delivery Team (PDT) concepts, we brought together the most experienced and knowledgeable personnel in the District to evaluate every aspect of pre-award and post-award activities.

From this effort, standard operat-

ing procedures across the district were developed for the Area and Resident Offices. This included roles and responsibilities, the contract modification process, construction quality management, engineering submittal and design reviews, project development, updating RMS with accurate information, and Safety.

This transformation has led to a more solid foundation from which this organization could elevate to the next level. With a solid foundation, more detailed scopes of work can be developed, and more accurate Independent Government Estimates written. Better accuracy in determining contract duration, less contract modifications, and in the long run, better customer satisfaction resulted.

The team here at GRC is truly dedicated in their resolve to help make this a better place to live and work for the Iraqi people. I am truly blessed to have been a part of the reconstruction efforts here. As I depart, I will always keep the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Civilians in my prayers until they all return home safely. A personal goal I have



**Work continues at the \$22.7 million Al Mamoon Exchange and Telecommunications facility in Baghdad.**

set for myself while back in the United States is to constantly recruit others to come and serve.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Milton Murphy is an electrical engineer with the Fort Bragg Area Office. He returned from temporary duty in Afghanistan on Oct. 11.*

## Corps Partnership provides funds for wildlife mangement

Quail Unlimited (QU) presented the Savannah District with a check for \$18,650 for quail habitat management and longleaf pine restoration on Sept. 13.

Jeff Brooks, District Wildlife Biologist, Richard B. Russell Project, said that the funds will be leveraged through a challenge cost share partnership agreement between the Corps and the Augusta Chapter of QU.

"The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) provided \$13,650 and the Augusta Chapter of QU provided an additional \$5,000," said Brooks. "The NFWF received funding for this particular project from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Southern Company."

The NFWF is a non-profit organization chartered by Congress in 1984 for

fish and wildlife conservation

"We will use the funds for herbicide and prescribed burning at Thurmond Project on Shriver Creek and the Quail Habitat Demonstration Area below Thurmond dam," said Brooks. "We have begun to reestablish longleaf pine at Shriver Creek. This particular pine is resistant to Southern pine beetles (a significant problem in many of our pine stands) and is fire resistant at an early age, which is important since prescribed burning is necessary for quail management."

Historically, Brooks said that longleaf pine has dominated much of the southeastern coastal

plain and is still found in some remnant stands particularly on the southern one-third of the Thurmond project.

Brooks said that herbicides are necessary to control undesirable trees, thus reducing competition with the planted pines. "The elimination of undesirable trees along with prescribed burning will also increase growth of grasses and herbs that are important for quail and a variety of other wildlife species."



**US Army Corps of Engineers**  
Savannah District



# People with disabilities are a 'valuable asset' to the workplace

By Rashida Banks  
Editor/Staff Writer



Rahn

Most disabled people want to live normal, productive lives, and Marty Rahn, a program analyst with project management division is no different.

Rahn, who developed cerebral palsy at birth, doesn't think of himself as being disabled, and doesn't want others to think of him that way either.

"I just want to be the best employee I can be, and that's what most disabled people want - a chance to prove that they can do a great job," said Rahn.

Because cerebral palsy is a neurological disorder that prevents or inhibits walking and causes a lack of muscle coordination, Rahn permanently resides in a wheelchair.

But anyone who knows or works with Rahn almost forgets that he is wheelchair-bound.

"The Corps family has been very accepting of me and my disability," said Rahn. "They [Corps family] understand that disabled people can be a great asset in the workplace.

However Rahn and Kevin Ionno, a vocational rehabilitation specialist, Georgia Department of Labor both agree that the stigma for private industry is different.

Ionno, who works with the district to employ people with disabilities, said that between 50 to 75 percent of people with disabilities are unemployed largely because employers fear the upfront costs associated with accommodating individuals with disabilities.

Although Ionno said that most workforce accommodations are estimated to cost less than \$100, many employers are not aware of this, and this creates a "large barrier" between employers and people with disabilities. "Sometimes making accommodations may be as simple as changing the height of a desk," said Ionno.

As far as working for the Corps, Rahn said that they are very accommodating of

his disability.

"I don't know of any place that I can't go around the building, except into some small cubicles. I am allowed to park in the basement, so I don't have to travel long distances to and from work in my wheelchair. Other than making accommodations for my disability, I don't receive any other special treatment."

## Obstacles

Like most disabled people, Rahn faces many obstacles on a daily basis. The simple things that people without disabilities take for granted like stepping off a curb, walking through a doorway, or traveling up and down a flight of stairs have to be accommodated for ahead of time by Rahn.

In addition to the physical obstacles Rahn has to overcome, he also has to deal with misconceptions that people have about individuals with disabilities.

"When people first meet you, they are not aware of what you can and can't do, and they want to help you too much," said Rahn. "You don't want to say no, because you may need their help eventually. Most of them are afraid to ask me about my disability, but I don't mind talking about it."

## Life before the Americans with Disabilities Act

Before coming to the Corps in 1981, Rahn attended college at Savannah Vocational Technical School where he majored in accounting.

"Back then, Savannah Tech was located in a three story building with no elevators. Two male students had to carry me up and down the stairs to class. I didn't like asking for help, but I realized that I had to swallow my pride and

ask," said Rahn.

Even before that, Rahn attended Grooves High School in Savannah in the early 70s.

"I grew up during a time when the Americans with Disabilities Act was not in effect, so disabled people did not have all the rights that we have now," said Rahn.

Rahn said that during that time, when disabled children reached the age of 16, they were no longer allowed to attend school. "That was as far as we could go," said Rahn.

All that changed when a Georgia State committee for education came to Savannah and Rahn and a couple of his classmates sat in front of the panel and voiced their opinions about the treatment of disabled students.

"I stood in front of the panel and told them how I felt about the way I was being treated," said Rahn. "I should have the same opportunity to receive an education as other students. I attended regular classes with students who were not disabled, and I could do the same work they could, except I am just in a wheelchair."

Because he also attended classes with students who were not disabled, Rahn said that some of those students spoke in front of the committee on his behalf. "They [my classmates] were well aware of my abilities."

It must have worked, because I was allowed to continue my education, and graduate from high school," said Rahn.

Since coming to the Corps, Rahn has obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems from Saint Leo University and he continues to lead a normal, productive life despite his disability.



BEFORE



AFTER

"I have to do things differently than the normal person does," said Rahn, who recently remodeled his kitchen to make it more accessible to him. "I had my kitchen cabinets lowered and doors widened. I also have a sunken counter stove and a side-by-side refrigerator, so that I can access the freezer."



NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY:

# Lending a Helping Hand

## District aids with improvements at Fort Pulaski

Volunteers from the Savannah District and other community organizations participate in a variety of projects at Fort Pulaski National Monument in observance of National Public Lands Day. Celebrated annually, Public Lands Day is the largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance public lands across America. It gives Americans an opportunity to lend a hand to the public lands they use to hike, bike, climb, swim, explore, picnic, or honor and cherish.



Charles E. Fenwick, Superintendent, Fort Pulaski National Monument talks to volunteers from Richmond Hill Boy Scout Troop #400.



Regulatory Specialists Darien Buchanan and Megan Bennett paint curve at Fort Pulaski. Other activities included picking up trash, clearing trails, and painted bridges.

LeAnn Lee, Workforce Management Support Specialist, Operations Division, helps volunteers register for National Public Lands Day.



Stan Knight, Project Manager, Regulatory Division and a young volunteer sweep up trash at Fort Pulaski.



Patricia Gibbs, Procurement Technician, Contracting Division, paints cannon at Fort Pulaski.





Savannah District Commander Col. Edward J. Kertis picks up trash at Fort Pulaski National Monument in observance of National Public Lands Day.

