


The

castle

Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

September 2005



Army of One receives
state-of-the-art facilities

News magazine of the Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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FRONT COVER

J. Tom Dickens, Savannah District area resident engineer for Fort Jackson, Fort Gordon, and Shaw Air Force base speaks with Lt. Col. Fred Johnson, 39th Infantry Regiment Battalion Commander, in front of the new Basic Combat Training Complex at Fort Jackson, SC.



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THE WEIGH THEY WERE

Frank Huff, a participant in the district's Weight Watchers program since Jan 2004, lost 53 pounds. As a result of shedding the extra pounds, Huff says that his energy level has greatly improved. Read about other district weight loss successes on page 14.

Letter from the Editor

It is with great pleasure that I write you as the new editor of the Castle. I have had such admiration for this publication since I began working for the Corps five years ago as a Cop student in the Visual Information office.

I would like to give special thanks to Verdelle Lambert, who served as editor for almost 17 years. Under her supervision the Castle became the award-winning, informative, well-respected publication throughout USACE that it is today. Verdelle was very passionate about the Castle. She also taught me a lot about editing, and layout and design.

As the new editor, I will work tremendously hard to ensure that we continue to maintain this high standard by publishing a high quality, well designed magazine which includes content that matters to our readers.

Having said that, I want to know how you, our readers, think we can improve. I encourage you to provide feedback and complete the Readership Survey that you will find

in the next issue.

I am tremendously excited to have this opportunity to represent the voice of the command and I look forward to hearing your responses, comments and suggestions for improvements to the Castle. Please write me at the address provided to the left or via email at Rashida.u.ahmed@sas02.usace.army.mil

Rashida U. Banks

Rashida Banks Editor



COL. Mark S. Held
District Commander

On June 30, the South Atlantic Division established the Regional Contracting Centers to help us better support the mission and needs of our customers. This is a significant milestone in SAD's regionalization efforts and for our District.

The Regional Governing Board, comprised of district Commanders and Deputy District Engineers for Project Management, determined that the most efficient and effective organization could be achieved by placing contracting under a regional concept. The concept of developing the most efficient and effective organization is not new to us. We constantly review our processes in order to enhance and streamline the way we do business.

HOW IT WILL BE ORGANIZED

Within SAD, this means that Charleston and Wilmington Districts Contracting Offices merged with the Savannah District to form a newly established Savannah Regional Contracting Center. John Moore will serve as Chief of the Savannah Regional Contracting Center and will be responsible for all contracting in the three district areas. I oversee this process and provide executive oversight to the contracting council of the Regional Governing Board.

Jacksonville and Mobile will be the two other regional centers within SAD. These changes, provisional since June 30, become permanent in October.

THE CONCEPT *of the* REGIONAL CONTRACTING CENTER

HOW THIS IS HELPFUL

In making this change, we gain access to the full range of contracting capabilities within our region and can share resources and technical expertise. This allows us to incorporate wide perspectives and different levels of expertise. We also develop better solutions to complex problems in a more effective and efficient manner. This type of collaboration encourages us to share lessons-learned from similar projects in order to better respond to our customer's needs.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS

There are a couple of initiatives in place to standardize our processes and procedures so that we are all on the same page.

- We are currently in the process of reviewing standard operating procedures and policies in the district and standardizing them and reissuing them as SAD Regional Processes. This process should be completed by Dec. 1.
- We are creating standard job descriptions for all GS 9-13 contract specialists. Right now we have different descriptions for series 1102 employees and the work is the same, except for the level. This will benefit employees in the sense that if there is a vacancy in another location, an interested employee can simply move to that location because we'll know that they have the same job description and training.
- The Regional Contracting Board meets monthly. We come up with proposed actions, vote, and decide whether to approve them. We will post the minutes of the meetings on the Regional Contracting Center website.
- In July, we activated the SAD Regional Contracting website which serves as a one-stop-shop

for all SAD contract specialists. I welcome your ideas, comments, and suggestions for improving the page so that it will meet your needs.

WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT

We have always promoted the idea of working in teams throughout the Corps. Our Project Delivery Teams, which include our partners, stakeholders, and customers, exemplify this. Now those people will work as "virtual" teams in order to accomplish our contracting mission. This interdependence will reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction. We have already begun cross-training people from other districts, so that we all can become familiar with the processes and procedures.

Many of you eagerly support this initiative. I understand that this process will be challenging, but we will continue to meet this challenge just as we have met others in the past. As we implement our new Regional Centers, we will see changes in many areas. However, we must focus on the real issue which is how we use these resources to help us accomplish our work more effectively and with greater efficiency. These centers create and maintain a consistent regional approach across the board so that our customers can expect and depend upon the same level of service from each of the districts.

You can access the SAD Regional Contracting website at:
<http://sasswsimix35548:8080/sharepoint/default.aspx>



Contractor sets standard for safety at Fort Bragg

By Tiffany Holloway
Staff Writer

Unlike Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer known for adventures and risks, employees with Sauer Inc., building contractors at Fort Bragg, avoid risks and celebrate safety.

Sauer recently earned the Safety in the 21st Century Award (SIT-21) after achieving an outstanding record.

Safety has become a personal thing for Charles Haag, a Sauer project manager at the Fort Bragg office.

"You work with someone daily and you don't want to see them hurt. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure we provide the safest possible working environment for all employees," said Haag.

"The key to preventing accidents requires identifying all potential hazards and taking the necessary measures to eliminate or minimize those hazards, including but not limited to the use of personal protective equipment," said Haag.

Scott Wendt, safety specialist for the Savannah District and representatives from the area offices at Fort Bragg frequently visit the construction site. The Corps views safety as the number one priority on construction projects. Wendt usually kicks off a project by having site safety implementation as his first subject and the last subject of a forty-five minute talk. The safety office also provides

sessions for contractors, such as Safety Program Management Simplified which stresses safety and health issues.

"It's one thing to be safe on paper but it's another thing ensuring you don't have accidents and incidents to begin with," said Wendt.

Sauer sets high standards for the contractors at Fort Bragg to follow according to Wendt.

"They are one of the better contractors out there. One of the things that correlate along with safety is the quality of the project and the safety of the project which usually go hand in hand," said Wendt.

In naming Sauer as the safest contractor, Wendt considered Sauer's entire program. He looked at the ease of accident prevention plans and having them reviewed with few corrections, number of accidents and incidents, participation in active safety promotion, and recommendations from area field offices and engineers about the different contractors.

Jorge Tomas, Sauer division safety manager, said that the bottom line for safety is to send workers home the same way they came to the project.

Sauer employs workers that are highly trained, skilled, and have an awareness of potential hazards according to Tomas. To help employees meet these needs, Sauer supplies

weekly safety "tool box talks," orientations, training, safety posters, and incentives.

"We try to put forth the effort. Judy Campbell, Sauer vice-president and Greg Zechman, Sauer vice-president of the south-east region take an active role which filters down to the working guy with the tools," said Tomas.

Tomas said that it has been an honor for Sauer to be named Savannah district's safest contractor.

Sauer's current projects at Fort Bragg include the Soldier Support Center phase 2, a renovated nine-story building, and the Information Operation Facility Addition which will provide an additional 28,000 square feet of space.

The Information Operation Facility Addition had some additional risk inherent with new construction. The project is a narrowly built structure between two wings of an existing building.

"This will require the walls to be temporarily shored and supported until the steel structure is complete and tied to the rest of the building," said Haag.

"Sauer, again is a top-notch group," said Wendt.

Tom Sawyer loved taking risks, Sauer loves eliminating them.



Munoz stands in front of Fort Bragg Area Resident Office with a co-worker.

By Tiffany Holloway
Staff Writer

From once being forced to stand in the corner because he could not speak English in elementary school, Martin Muñoz stood proudly as he received his bachelor degree from Methodist college this year. Muñoz' early years were filled with hardships such as poverty, discrimination, and cultural barriers to completing his degree in Political Science. He is the first member of his family to receive a college degree.

Muñoz is a quality assurance representa-

NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH:

Munoz stands tall while serving America

tive with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fort Bragg Resident Office.

Because of his Army career, it took 11 years for him to complete the requirements for his degree. As a new graduate, he knows that doors open if you graduate from college rather than just having a high school diploma.

"In Mexico, you're thought of as a success graduating high school," said Muñoz.

He was determined to graduate to be an example to his children.

"It was a personal thing. I wanted to break the mentality of stopping after high school," said Muñoz.

He has been with the Corps for three years. Before he began his career with the Corps, he was a Special Forces engineer sergeant in the Army where he destroyed buildings. Now he builds them.

"The Army spent a lot of money teaching me about structural components of buildings and bridges so that I could calculate the amount of explosives and determine where to

place the charges," said Muñoz.

One word that describes Muñoz best is reliable, according to Alan Hand, his boss, a Resident Engineer at Fort Bragg.

"Muñoz has a good attitude toward learning and bettering himself," said Hand.

When Muñoz first came to Fort Bragg, he would carry video tapes and manuals home. Sometimes he read the manuals during his lunch break.

"He takes safety seriously," Hand said. Hand described Muñoz as energetic and helpful, and always with an eye on safety.

Muñoz is awaiting approval after volunteering for duty in the Middle East where he would supervise on-going projects and assist with reconstruction.

Muñoz said he is fortunate to work with good people. "There is never a dull day," said Muñoz. He added that he enjoyed working with the Corps of Engineers at the Combat Aviation Brigade and currently enjoys working with the 16th Military Police Brigade.

Shepard joins district team

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan



**Shepard
Deputy Commander**

Lt. Col. George "Thatch" Shepard, Savannah District's new deputy commander's fondest memories as a child are associated with the Corps.

"The Corps of Engineers has a lot to do with why I am an engineer," said Shepard, as he reflects on the summers that he spent with his grandparents as a child. "My fondest memories as a child are visiting my grandparents in Florida and waterskiing along the Intracoastal Waterway. I would always see the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sign and the Corps castle," he said.

Shepard says that he felt that it was a subliminal message to him that he needed to be an engineer.

An "Army brat," Shepard was born in Munich, Germany, but has lived all over the world.

"I had some interesting experiences growing up in a foreign country, and I am glad that my kids had the chance to experience that as we came here from Belgium," said Shepard.

A firm believer in empowerment at the lowest level, Shepard says that with him everyone starts off with a clean slate.

"I like to start out by assuming that everyone has my full trust and confidence. I also like to be informed. I trust people to tell me the truth, and will ask for and listen to advice before I go off and make decisions that will change the direction that everybody is going," he said.

Before coming to the Savannah District,

Shepard served as the Director of Public Works for the 80th Area Support Group in Belgium, supporting locations in the Netherlands, Luxemburg, the United Kingdom, Northern Germany, and France.

"I was responsible for the housing challenges, the general officers' housing, and all of the maintenance and O&M of facilities in those countries," said Shepard. "I was the guy that got the phone call when the general's toilet was stopped up, and I was also the guy they called when the power was out at the commissary."

Shepard also worked for two Corps of Engineers districts - New Orleans District where he served as Deputy Chief of Regulatory Branch; most recently he served as the Deputy District Engineer for Wilmington District, where he worked with Col. James Deloney, commander.

"It was a great experience; Col. Deloney was a great boss," Shepard said. "He taught me a lot and was very concerned about his officers and their careers. I will take advantage of the years of experience that I got from him and my years as Director of Public Works to help out here."

Coming from Belgium, Shepard says that his family could not be happier to be living in the southeast close to beaches and warm weather.

"The cold weather in Belgium has taken a toll on my wife, so the heat and humidity here doesn't bother us as much as it does some people," said Shepard.

Shepard, a self-described family man, has three children, one of whom is a concert violinist.

"I like to get involved with school and after-school activities. I'll coach soccer if the kids want to play soccer or I'll serve on whatever boards they need help with," he said.

His hobbies include swimming, coaching, and home improvement.

"One of my hobbies is going to be my house, which is a fixer-upper," he said, referring to a home that he recently purchased on the Landings or as he refers to it 'that subdivision on Skidaway Island.' "It's going to be a lot of work."

Shepard says that his biggest desire as deputy commander is to be the interface with the district's customers. Having served as the Director of Public Works in Belgium, Shepard has had the opportunity to work on both sides of the fence.

"I would like to be the voice of reason with the customer. It's one of the areas that I hope they can use me in," said Sheppard.

Morgan receives appointment to West Point



Morgan

Thomas Morgan, son of Nancy and Porter Morgan (Engineering Division) received an appointment to the United States Military Academy, West Point, from Congressman John Barrow (Dist12-GA). Thomas reported to West Point for Cadet Basic Training

on June 27. He completed CBT and was accepted into the Corps of Cadets as a plebe on August 13.

Thomas, a 2005 honor graduate of Effingham County High School, was listed in Who's Who Among American High School Students. He was a member of the National Honor Society, the Beta Club, and the varsity cross-country and track teams.

Thomas was a participant on the Model United Nations team for four years and served as president during his senior year. A member of the ensemble, symphonic, jazz, marching, and district honor bands for four years, Thomas was recipient of the national Tri-M award in music. He also served as a mentor at Springfield Central Elementary School during his senior year. Thomas achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America on April 5, while serving with Troop 165 in Rincon, Ga.


ON THE MOVE

Departures

Anglin, Patricia A.	CPAC
Bennett, Jimmy M.	Construction
Cunningham, James F.	Public Affairs
Dunk, JR, William M.	Operations
Monroe, Gregory L.	Emergency Mgmt.
Otto, Carolyn S.	Construction
Taylor, Patricia O.	Logistics
Thompson, Mary L.	Project Mgmt.
Wash, Kathy M.	Real Estate
Willis, Blaisdell B.	Engineering

Arrivals

Condoyiannis, George P.	Construction
Hamilton, Nancy V.	CPAC
Hohne, Alex W.	Construction
Klein, Christopher	Emergency Mgmt.
Malik, Shafqat H.	Resource Mgmt.
Strange, Joel P.	Operations



District evaluates need to nourish Tybee Beach

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

Winds, waves, and storms batter the shoreline of Tybee Island every year. The impact of these natural forces can dramatically change a beach, causing erosion, destruction of plant and animal habitat, and property damage.

Every year, the Savannah District plays a major part in the revitalization and protection of Tybee's shoreline through studies and scheduled renourishment cycles. The District and the City of Tybee are currently in the process of developing a Limited Reevaluation Report (LRR), which will identify and justify the costs that are needed for the next renourishment cycle scheduled for 2007.

Although authorized, each renourishment cycle and the studies and engineering work required by it, must be funded by Congress.

"The LRR is critical because it helps to justify and backup our funding request to OMB [Office of Management and Budget] for that cycle," said Doug Plachy, senior project manager, Tybee Island Shoreline Protection Project. Without this justification, Plachy said that OMB would not include the project in the president's budget or authorize the funding.

This is not the first and will not be the last attempt at revitalizing the beach. Renourishment only temporarily halts this inevitable process of the shores of Tybee, as with any barrier island.

The \$6-\$10 million per cycle project builds the beach out and moves the ocean back, said Plachy. "It's [the beach] been restored, but it does disappear over time," he said.

The 2007 renourishment will be the fourth one authorized by Congress under the Water Resources Development Act of 1974. This agreement authorizes periodic sand renourishments through 2023. The Corps administers and engineers this program with coordination of the city, state, county, and the state Departments of Natural Resources.

Each renourishment cycle involves removing sand from the ocean and depositing it along the shoreline. Since 1975, more than 6.9 million cubic yards of sand have been placed along Tybee's shoreline.

Tybee, one of the busiest seaside resorts in the southeast, has seen

a rapid growth in property development and tourist population in the last couple of years.

"With the property value increases and changes in Chatham County, there is even a greater need to protect the property that's out there," said Plachy.

Plachy said that the Corps is also in the process of developing a feasibility report to determine what impact the shipping channel has on Tybee's shores and ways to overcome those impacts. This study is expected to be completed in two to three years.

"The planning process isn't a process where someone can just hand you something and it's done... You have to spend time up front, in order to know what it is that the study needs to address, so when you get into the project, you are focused and things are geared towards addressing the study objectives," he said.

Although it's unknown what will come out of the feasibility study, Plachy said that it could result in changes to the existing project.

Love it or hate it - Consideration of Others Program generates opinions and thoughts

By Tiffany Holloway
Staff Writer

Have you ever wanted to punch out a team member because they made a racist or sexist comment? Do you ever want to just ball up your fist because a team member has prairie-dogged over your cubicle to talk to the person across the room? Have you ever turned red in the face and wanted to scream because your supervisor doesn't understand your needs?

No need to "smell what The Rock is cooking" when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Equal Employment Opportunity office has Consideration of Others (CO2) sessions to help each office resolve issues within the workplace.

CO2, piloted by retired Maj. Gen. Robert M. Foley, emphasizes respect for and among Soldiers and civilians of all races, creeds, gender and religious preferences.

Gwen Crawford, chief EEO officer, makes sure that each office in the Savannah District meets quarterly. Although the program has received mixed feedback from district team members, Crawford said that CO2 is important because it enhances team members awareness and sensitivity for this important program.

"I think the CO2 program is a good tool that employees can use to talk about their issues," Crawford said. Feedback is one aspect of the program that she would like to re-emphasize so that supervisors can see what the concerns are.

Crawford said the sessions provide a good forum for team members to interact with their co-workers, work out issues, and send and receive feedback from their supervisors.

Graylan Quarterman, realty specialist, facilitates the real estate office's sessions. Quarterman said that he has discussed issues such as cubicle etiquette, conflict management, and diversity. The last session he facilitated discussed the purpose and importance of having CO2 sessions. Quarterman said that this topic received a lot of feedback along with cubicle etiquette.

"Unfortunately, most team members do not have a real positive attitude about CO2," said Quarterman. Although Quarterman said that team members think that the sessions are a place to gripe, he tried to make it clear to team members that the CO2 session is a way that they can communicate about the atmosphere of the work environment. He has received complaints that the CO2 program goes into their work time. Some said that they didn't think management took the program seriously. Others think that no results come out of the sessions causing job dissatisfaction.

"Most team members would like to see management involved in the CO2 sessions," said Quarterman. "I try to make it clear to them that management is involved in it because management actually gets feedback from the CO2 sessions."

He also said in order for a change to occur a team member must let the supervisor know.

"When team members have issues that are brought before management by the facilitator, they must stand behind their issues," said Quarterman.

In his sessions, he likes to use the phrase: Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events and small minds discuss people.

"I think the CO2 program has been a great tool for the organization in focusing on common problems that beset team members," said Quarterman.

Kele Owens, human resource assistant and former facilitator, worked with offices with a different point of view about the CO2 sessions.

"They looked forward to coming," said Owens. "Once we [the facilitators] received the proper training, we realized that we were doing it [facilitating] the wrong way. We began to let team members drive the session instead of us."

"We were more energetic," said Owens.

Owens found out that role-playing was a good way to express the topics, by allowing more involvement by the shy team members. Conflict resolution received a lot of feedback because everyone had their opinion on how to deal with conflict. "We

never came to a resolution," said Owens.

Owens and two other facilitators conducted sessions with project management, public affairs, executive office, emergency management, and internal review.

"In those sessions we scheduled three days, and each day two sessions were held," said Owens. The sessions were held quarterly and lasted anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half.

Cubicle etiquette and conflict resolution received the most feedback from team members.

"No one really realized that there were actual ways that one should approach a person in a cubicle or that there was a problem with eating popcorn or talking on the telephone where everyone could hear you. We are so accustomed to what we do everyday, day in and day out until we become comfortable with it," said Owens.

Owens said that the most challenging part of the program was handling controversial topics, such as sexual harassment and diversity.

"We received many different reactions. Those topics were very hard for us to deal with," said Owens.

Because all topics have to be approved before a session, Owens worked closely with the EEO office particularly on sensitive topics.

"CO2 is a proactive part of the EEO program. It keeps a lot of problems from surfacing to the level of the EEO office," said Crawford. She also said that the majority of issues could be handled by supervisors and employees sitting down and communicating.

"I think the CO2 program has been a great tool for the organization in focusing on common problems that beset team members."

**- Graylan Quarterman, Realty Specialist
and CO2 Facilitator, Real Estate Division**

Clemson University Head coach Tommy Bowden teamed up with the Corps to establish a 110 percent commitment to water safety.

Lakes promote water safety with Campaign Blitz

By Tiffany Holloway
Staff Writer
Photos by Jonas Jordan

Park rangers from the “Big Three Lakes”: Hartwell, Russell, and Thurmond have stepped up their game with a water safety campaign blitz.

According to Chip Dixon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer park manager, the drowning fell from ten last year to three this year. One drowning involved mixing alcohol and swimming while the other two boating accidents while fishing. The average age for the three victims was forty-one. The victims were not wearing their life jackets, said Dixon. “Life jackets are a precaution that the Corps recommends. The life jackets could have saved their lives,” he said.

Col. Mark Held, Savannah District Engineer, said that none of the victims entered from a Corps operated recreation area lake which means park rangers did not, have direct contact with them like normal.

Rangers incorporated a 3 minute face-to-face talk and displayed billboards on highly traveled roads as well as movie theater advertisements.

“We directly influenced 75,000 visitors and indirectly influenced millions,” said Dixon.

All three Lakes handed out Chick-Fil-A flotation citations, a coupon for a Chick-Fil-A sandwich, and placed drowning awareness buoys on the lakes as a reminder to follow the rules.

“People are floored by the positive environment and information,” said Tanya Grant, Hartwell Lake park ranger and water safety coordinator.

The Russell Lake slogan, “Everybody wants to be safe, nobody wants to see someone hurt,” helps visitors keep in mind the hazards associated with recreating on the lakes said Amy Cobb, Russell park ranger and water safety coordinator.

Many people think they are good swimmers, but in an emergency they may not have enough time or the right resources. “We give visitors information they can use not just hear,” said Cobb.

Russell Lake, this summer, promoted water safety to a nationwide audience by serving up placemats at restaurants, incorporating a water safety message on an interactive computer, handing out hacky sacks, fishing lures, small footballs, and sport bottles, said Cobb.

Hosting the ESPN/CITGO Bass Masters professional fishing tournament at Lake Thurmond helped promote water safety to a nationwide audience. The Thurmond park rangers saw 14,000 visitors at their booth in just four days.

“Col. Held provided funding for our water safety initiatives and was very supportive,” said Aaron Wahus, chief park ranger at Thurmond Lake.

Wahus said that having additional funds helped purchase new displays and innovative products to attract visitors’ attention. Thurmond was the first Corps lake to have an interactive buoy display that offers information, a hands-on experience and a game for visitors. The brainchild of David Quebedeaux, park ranger at Thurmond Lake, was a display called Aids to Navigation (ATONS).

Park rangers at Hartwell, Russell, and Thurmond Lakes promoted water safety this summer by handing out Chick-Fil-A flotation citations, fishing lures, small footballs, and sports bottles with a water safety message on them.





Photo: (Left) Aaron Wahus, chief park ranger at Thurmond Lake gives a demonstration of ATONS, and interactive buoy display. Photo: (Above) Amy Cobb, park ranger at Russell Lake instructs young lake visitors on the correct way to wear a life jacket at the 17th annual Kids Fishing Derby and Water Safety Program at Russell Lake.

Each miniature ATONS has a small red light that comes on when the corresponding button “buoy description” is depressed. The ATON tank was used to hold the largest fish caught each day during the Bass Masters tournament which caused spectators to see the interactive display.

The rangers also purchased a penny press machine, another of the many ideas of Quebedeaux.

“If we are going to be effective, we have to keep the attention of the people we have and get the attention of the people who we don’t have,” said Quebedeaux.

The compressed penny has a water safety message on one side and a picture of Thurmond Dam, the Corps castle, or wildlife at Thurmond Lake on the other side.

“This tends to be a collectors item,” said Wahus.

The Hartwell park rangers have promoted water safety by painting various water safety slogans on the sidewalks leading to courtesy docks as well as underneath the bridges to get the messages out, such as wearing a life jacket. Grant said that after reading and hearing the water safety messages, they want visitors to wear their life jackets automatically like wearing a seat belt in a car.

David Quebedeaux, park ranger at Thurmond Lake, watches as a little boy uses the penny press machine during the ESPN/ CITGO Bassmasters Tournament. The machine produces a compressed penny with a water safety message on one side and a picture of Thurmond Dam, the Corps castle, or wildlife at Thurmond Lake on the other side.

“The campaign has been well received,” said Grant. She said that visitors have commented on how friendly and helpful the rangers have been.

“I think it is working well,” said Grant.

In one instance, she told a woman that a child could drown in 20 seconds, and her facial expression changed. There hasn’t been any drowning this calendar year at the Hartwell Lake.

Since the increase in the Hispanic population around the lake, park rangers have recently ordered items that have a bi-lingual water safety message. Grant said to make the park rangers seem more approachable they have water bottles or activity books in hand to give to visitors.

Although most drowning involves Caucasian males in the 16 to mid-40’s age group, Hartwell rangers made an effort to focus on all visitors. Radio promotions were held throughout July that targeted African Americans, Hispanics, males, females, and an older generation on radio stations, including WJMZ 107.3, The Planet 93.3, Hot 98.1, WROQ 101.1, and the Oldies 106.3.

Cobb said Russell Lake targets the 16 to mid-40 age group and elementary schools

as well as scout troops. After the summer season, they focus on hunters and fishers because they visit the lake during the fall and winter months.

Wahus said that Thurmond Lake focuses much of its program towards elementary and middle school children by working with the Augusta YMCA’s summer camp, libraries, area restaurants such as Chick-Fil-A, and parks to promote water safety.

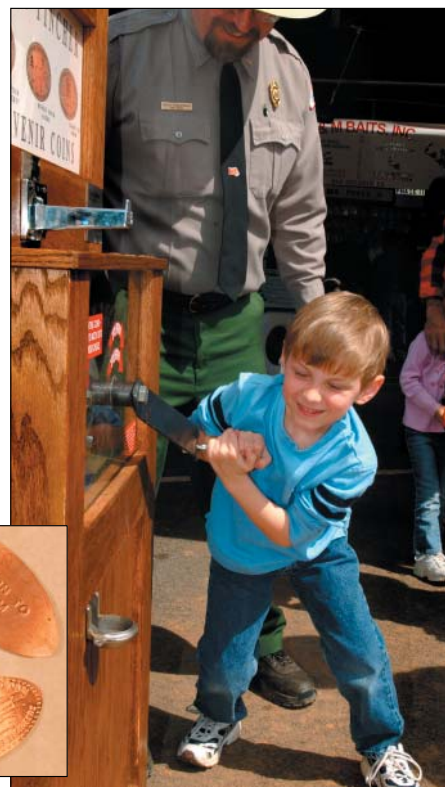
Thurmond participates in adopt-a-school which gives children an overview of water safety and natural resources such as wildlife, forestry, and fisheries. Just like Hartwell and Russell Lakes, Thurmond Lake branches out so that everyone gets exposed to the water safety message by airing public service announcements on seven radio stations that reach over 100 million listeners each summer.

“By creating a mind set at an early age to wear life jackets, hopefully,

when they grow up, it will come naturally,” said Wahus.

The weekend blitz that all three Lakes held during the summer months with as many one-on-one contacts with visitors as possible has helped tremendously. This allowed rangers to stress the importance of wearing life jackets, learning to swim, swimming with a buddy, and not drinking alcohol while near the water.

The safety messages carried by Savannah District rangers echoes across the lakes, keeping people safe to visit there again.





Army of One receives state-of-the- art facilities

By Tiffany Holloway

Staff Writer

Photos by Jonas Jordan

If first impressions are lasting ones, then new Soldiers attending Basic Combat Training should long remember the modern barracks of Fort Jackson – courtesy of the Savannah District.

Only the second of its kind in the nation, the BCT facility took two years to build at a cost of \$60 million. It incorporates the newest criteria set out by the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) for Soldiers joining the Army-of-One, according to J. Tom Dickens, Savannah District area engineer for Fort Jackson, Fort Gordon and Shaw Air Force Base. It incorporated the first design by Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

"The barracks were planned around the trainee," Dickens said. The classrooms, sleeping bays, bathrooms, physical training pits and dining facility give the building more "humanity" than past barracks. Today's barracks have air conditioning throughout and contain larger toilet and shower stalls. Unlike former barracks, each barracks building has laundry facilities, modern classrooms and a running track.

The soldiers can see the older barracks and observe the difference said Lt. Col. Fred Johnson, 39th Infantry Regiment Battalion Commander. The outside appearance of the older barracks seem small and worn out, whereas the new barracks have more space and good upkeep. He has received good reviews from the Soldiers.

"The barracks were better than I expected," said Pvt. Somg-Hee Jackson, 18, of Gary, Ind. "My dad had a different experience."

Pvt. Joseph Graves, 18, of Dallas, Texas, enjoys the automatic toilets and the "comfy" beds. Pvt. William Moore, 21, of Memphis, Tenn., said the barracks felt like home.

"It was comfortable, clean and more than I expected," Moore said.

Some of the Soldiers expected to live in

Soldiers stand in formation to march to the dining facility.



Photo: (Above)The three-story barracks, located on 55-acres of land, consist of four sleeping bays that can hold an average of 60 soldiers. However, the barracks have been designed for 288 soldiers, just in case the installation has a training surge.
Photo: (Right): Jennifer Lee, 21, prepares her TA-50 equipment for a room inspection.



log cabins or in the woods in tents, but the barracks exceeded their expectations.

The new barracks eliminated a duty long-despised by basic trainees – the need for round-the-clock dorm guards.

“Engineers designed an alarm for the sleeping bay doors so that the Soldiers environment can be monitored from a central station in each building, eliminating the need for a guard or ‘fire watch’ in each sleeping bay,” Dickens said.

Although the BCT complex has many features, the classrooms and the living areas impressed Johnson the most.

“It’s an opportunity to show the Soldiers that the Army provides high standards and gives soldiers higher confidence that the Army will take care of you,” said Johnson.

“The goal of basic training includes having the Soldiers realize their potential as human beings, so they will become good people and good warriors, and also to be better prepared to fight the global war on terrorism,” said Johnson.

The Soldiers really enjoy the dining facility. Some even said the food was better than home.

“All they think about is food. They want to know when lunch will be served after they just finished breakfast,” said Johnson.

The dining facility prepares ten meals a day. The shift leader, Laurie Cobbert who arrives at 5 a.m. and leaves at 2 p.m., said that she enjoys working at the clean facility, plus the drill sergeants and Soldiers make work enjoyable.

Fermin Borrero, Savannah District project engineer, oversaw the construction of the BCT facility that began April 15, 2002. The first cycle of Soldiers moved in January 2005.

The goal of Borrero and his team was to deliver a high quality project on time in order for Fort Jackson to meet its mission. Borrero

said that it took the commitment and dedication of many individuals to make things happen. The success could not have been possible without the support of the Savannah District construction division and the contractor Clark Construction Group, Inc. of Tampa, Fla., said Borrero.

The three-story barracks building, located on 55-acres of land, consists of four sleeping bays that can hold an average of 60 soldiers. However, the barracks have been designed for 288 soldiers, just in case the fort has a training surge.

The BCT facility has a number of features such as the environmentally friendly heating and cooling system and no-drip sinks and showers. The resin flooring is easy to maintain and clean. The sleeping bays have hard sheetrock ceilings with the heating and cooling registers. Another feature, secured light fixtures, helps recognize things that are not allowed in the barracks. Also, it provides for gender separation within the same sleeping bays. At a later date if needed, the bays can be partitioned down the center length of the bay. Each side would have its own bathrooms, laundry rooms, lighting, heating and cooling controls, and stairwells as one side mirrors the other.

Since the events of September 11, 2001, Fort Jackson has taken precautionary security measures. For example, the barracks do not have the starship design which allows the buildings to connect. This precautionary tactic decreases the chance that a terrorist could harm a

few, then many. The barracks also have steel bollards and cables, in order to keep vehicles from barreling into them, said Borrero.

“We wanted the Soldiers to feel at home and secure,” said Borrero.

Pvt. Matina Newson, 17, of Bay City, Mich., said that she experienced good living conditions at the barracks and also acquired a new family of friends. At first, it took the women a while to get along. Issues included sharing bathrooms, the room’s temperature and the different cultures. After a few weeks, they learned that in order to get through the process, they would have to stick together.

The camaraderie was reflected throughout the sleeping bays. The soldiers’ motivation, esprit de corps, and warrior spirit are good signs that this new facility is appreciated by the Army of One at Fort Jackson.



Soldiers enjoy a healthy meal in the state-of-the-art dining facility at Fort Jackson.



Equipment thefts at district headquarters raise security

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

It's been almost two months since the district headquarters experienced a string of equipment theft that left it at a loss of thousands of dollars in equipment. In light of these recent incidences, district team members have increased their vigilance when it comes to property accountability.

"It makes you feel like you have to look over your shoulder at your own job," said Craig Boles, a structural engineer, whose laptop was stolen. "You can't leave anything out. I definitely feel violated and less secure."

Boles returned to work on a Monday morning and discovered that his laptop was missing. "At first I thought that someone went TDY and borrowed my computer," said Boles. "My boss and I walked around our section and discovered that another co-worker's laptop was also missing. We put two and two together and called security."

Having left his laptop at his cubicle many times before, Boles said that he never thought that this type of thing would happen to him. "This was the last thing that I thought would happen because the building is supposed to be secure," he said. "Definitely if you have locks use them, because I think that is the reason why my laptop was stolen."

Perry Gorsuch, chief of security and law enforcement, said that thieves target items of value which can easily be pawned.

"We have had laptops, camcorders, cameras, a global positioning system, and a 21-inch CAD monitor stolen," he said.

An estimated \$8,000 worth of equipment has been stolen, according to Gorsuch.

Equipment replacement cost is one issue,

but Gary Seibert, chief of information management says that a greater issue is the loss of valuable information.

"Although the data on our laptops is not classified, it represents a tremendous value in time and effort to the owners," said Seibert.

Todd McGuiness, information assurance network officer says that recovering information after a laptop is stolen is impossible unless the information is backed up.

Rosemary Cone, chief of information, implementation, and integration branch of Information Management, says that employees should copy their critical data to CDs and keep the CDs in a locked drawer.

Newer laptops are manufactured with physical security devices so that they can be secured with a computer cable and lock, said Gorsuch.

"Other items of value that can not be secured with a cable should be locked up in a file cabinet or desk drawer that is lockable", said Gorsuch. "The district is in the process of getting keys made for desks or file cabinets with locks but no keys, so that everyone will have the opportunity to lock things up," he said.

Gorsuch says that he makes random checks to ensure that employees are securing their items. "If I find something that is not secured, I confiscate it and notify the supervisor the next business day that the item was not secured."

"Everyone is the eyes and ears in this building," said Gorsuch. "We have over 600 people here, so if employees hear or see anything out of the ordinary, they need to give our office [Security and Law Enforcement] a call," he said. "Security and safety is everyone's business."

Laptop Security Tips

- Treat your laptop like cash. If you would not place a hundred dollar bill on your desk while out to lunch, do not do it with a laptop.
- Always secure your laptop in a locked desk or cabinet when not in use.
- Be alert to unfamiliar persons in your work area. Immediately report suspicious persons to the Office of Security.
- When using payphones in airports or public places, make sure that your laptop is in sight at all times.
- When traveling in a car, do not leave your laptop on the seat next to you, keep it out of sight in the trunk or place it under the passenger seat.

Office Security Tips

- Keep valuables and personal items under lock and key.
- Inventory and if possible, secure office equipment.
- Never leave money, including change, in your desk.
- Maintain key control procedures.
- Know your co-workers and question strangers, delivery or repair persons.
- Report broken lock and lost keys to the Office of Security
- Be cautious when working late or on weekends and holidays. Make sure someone knows of your whereabouts
- Report suspicious activity and incidents to the Office of Security.
- Have your office purchase cables and locks to secure your equipment.

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer
Photo by Jonas Jordan

Greg Monroe has had an interest in fishing and hunting since he was big enough to walk. And now that he's retiring, it's not surprising that he's planning to do just that.

"I'll probably go fishing or hunting...and then I'll go fishing or hunting some more," said Monroe, chief of emergency management division, when asked about his plans for retirement.

Monroe had a five year plan, which he implemented when he and his cousin began a hunting business called Sodak Pheasant Camp located in South Dakota. Since then he began another business called Monroe's Outdoor Exposures.

"I said that if the opportunity came up for me to do something that I wanted to do, I'd do it," said Monroe. "Not very many people get that opportunity and then take advantage of the opportunity when it's presented. The fear of change can be overwhelming," he said. "I have always felt that the things in life that we will regret most are the calculated risks and change that we were afraid to take."

Sodak Pheasant Camp is a commercial pheasant hunting camp where people come to hunt pheasants and Monroe's Outdoor Exposures plans outdoor hunting and fishing outings across the U.S and Canada.

"Hunting and fishing is my life," said Monroe. "I worked for 30 years, to support my family and to hunt and fish my way. Now that I'm retiring, I will hunt and fish for a living," he said. "I also have two grandchildren that will take up much of my time and I am looking forward to being able to teach them about the great outdoors."



Greg Monroe, former chief emergency management poses at his desk before his retirement on August 12.

"I have always felt that the things in life that we will regret most are the calculated risks and change that we are afraid to take. "

- Gregg Monroe

the history of the Homeowners Assistance Program and still is," he continued. "The program was a huge success because of the people involved. They were without a doubt the best group I have ever had the opportunity to assemble."

Although fishing and hunting are his passions, Monroe also has a love for real estate. His first experiences with the Corps were in 1984 when he began working with the real estate aspect of the first Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) in Anchorage, AK.

Since then he has worked for several other federal agencies such as the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Air Force, and the Army Reserves before returning to the Corps in 1986. He worked for the Army (installation

level) and the Corps since that time. His travels have taken him to many different countries before his return to Savannah District in 2003 and his position as Chief of the Emergency Management Division.

I have a Kansas Real Estate license, so I won't give up real estate after I retire," said Monroe. "I will probably dabble in real estate when I'm in Kansas and not hunting or fishing in South Dakota or some other great place in the USA."

Monroe said that he has made many friends during his time here at the Corps and that is what he will miss most.

Savannah to South Dakota

Kicking back means more work for Savannah retiree

Having worked for the federal government more than 30 years, Monroe has met a lot of people, been to a multitude of different countries, and seen a lot of things. His most gratifying experience, however has been his time working with the Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP) here in Savannah where he served as the chief from 1993-1998.

"It [the HAP Program] was the most rewarding as far as the satisfaction of seeing things get done," said Monroe. "We bought and sold about 2,500 houses and processed over 3500 applications in a period of 3-5 years. It is the largest program in

CASSANDRA RINEHART

TIP: Drink six to eight glasses of water a day. Rinehart kept a 32 oz. bottle of water a her desk to drink.



THE WEIGH

District Team members share stories of their journey to improved

By Rashida Banks
Editor/Staff Writer

Eight months after having gastric bypass surgery, Diane Davis is 88 pounds lighter. Her cholesterol is lower than it has ever been, she participates in a regular exercise regimen, and her friends and co-workers almost don't recognize her.

Davis, an administrative support assistant in the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center who underwent Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass surgery in January 2005, is one of many district team members who have realized the importance of achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle and overall well-being.

The turning point for Diane Davis was being hospitalized for the third time in June 2004 for high blood pressure. Before the surgery, Davis was battling high cholesterol, triglycerides, and was a borderline diabetic. She knew she had to do something.

"I've had a weight problem for years and my health was being affected more and more, so it was time for me to get off

the see-saw," said Davis. "It was a combination of things and it was getting worse by the day."

The health risks are one aspect of being overweight, but the physical and emotional scars are something that many can identify with.

"My health has greatly improved since I had the surgery six months ago," said Davis. "My confidence, my self esteem, and my social skills are improving, because before the surgery I had gotten to the point where I was very introverted to the outside world in my private life," she continued.

According to "Surgery for Morbid Obesity: What Patients Should Know," Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass surgery is the most commonly used form of weight loss surgery. It involves creating an egg sized pouch in the upper stomach and attaching a section of the intestine. The procedure reduces the amount of food patients can eat,

and results in less food being absorbed. This type of surgery is typically reserved for people 100 or more pounds overweight, whose previous weight loss attempts have failed.

Davis was a good candidate for the surgery because she tried traditional dieting methods, but the weight always came back.

"I had a lifetime membership in Weight Watchers for about 30 years," said Davis. "It was more effective when I was younger. I would lose and then gain," she said. "It didn't take very much for me to gain, because my metabolism had slowed down to nothing."

Like Davis, Tatjana "TJ" Tessneer, emergency operations coordinator, emergency management division also opted to have gastric bypass surgery. Tessneer also tried traditional dieting methods to no avail. Tessneer says that she never had a problem with exercise; however she would continue to gain weight.

"Although I did not eat alot - the things that I ate weren't good. The way my body is, it retains everything," said Tessneer.

At 247 pounds, Tessneer said that she experienced lower back pain and couldn't walk for long periods of time without her feet hurting due to the excess weight. Tessneer also had a more personal reason for having the surgery.

"I decided to do it also because both of my parents died at an early age, and I could see myself going that way. I want to live until I am eighty-something, not 50, and this is a way for me to stay alive longer."

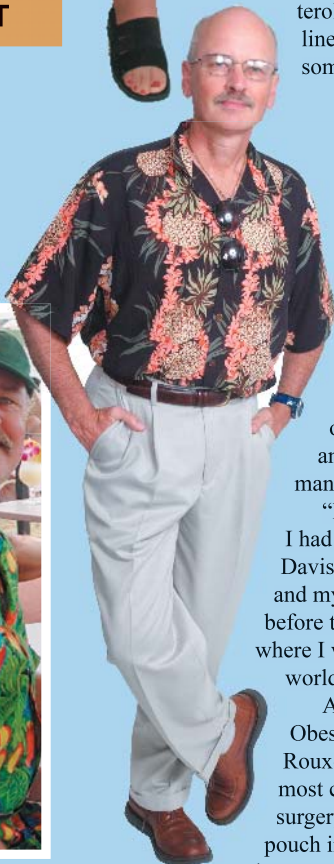
Although Tessneer's husband was concerned about the risks, complications, and side effects of the surgery, she felt that it was a decision that she had to make for herself.

"My husband didn't agree with my decision to have the surgery. We have been married for a long time so he was afraid that something was going to happen and that I wasn't going to be around. But, it was my decision and he knew that he couldn't talk me out of it."

Tessneer opted to have the surgery done through open incision, whereas Davis had the laparoscopic procedure performed. According to the Georgia Coast Surgical website, the laparoscopic procedure is less invasive and reduces pain and the risk of wound complications, because it involves making small incisions performed through the aid of

DAN PARROTT

TIP: In order to succeed at dieting, you have to be willing to change your basic habits. "Education, proper balanced diet, and portion control have helped me most in the process."



AFTER
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POUNDS

THEY WERE

inspirational weight loss success health and overall well being.

a laparoscope.

Both Davis and Tessneer said that the pre-operation process was very thorough.

"The doctors put you through a lot to make sure it's right for you. Psychologists, dieticians...you take blood tests," said Davis.

After the surgery, there was a drastic change in diet for both women.

"They give you a book to follow in stages. At first, I was lucky to eat an ounce – a little bit of peas or couple of bites of chicken. They make you focus on eating protein, because one of the side effects is hair loss," said Tessneer. "No breads, no pasta, and no carbonation until after the first year. It's just like learning to eat all over again."

Unlike Davis and Tessneer, Weight Watchers proved effective for Cassandra Rinehart, a realty specialist with the district.

Rinehart, who has been a member of the district's Weight Watchers Program for two years, lost 50 pounds.

"I never thought that I would loose 50 pounds," said Rinehart. "I thought that I would maybe lose 20 pounds."

Similar to Davis, Rinehart was dealing with high cholesterol. However hers was hereditary. She says that the program was effective because she didn't feel like she was on a diet.

"Even though it is a diet, you can eat whatever you want," she said holding up a pack of Kit Kat. "You just have to keep track of it," she said. "You are not denying yourself anything. When you do that you run into problems and begin to have cravings."

Weight Watchers allows participants to enjoy the full range of food options, but encourages them to make better choices through the use of a points system.

Not many men have participated in the district's Weight Watchers program, but Dan Parrott is an exception.

Dan Parrott, chief, civil programs and project management, said that the Weight Watchers program taught him about proper eating habits, portion control, and the importance of exercise.

"I realized that I was eating portions that were too large, and I was eating too much of the wrong things. This system is nice because you can tailor it to yourself. You get a certain amount of points per day and its up to you how you want to use those points.

Parrott, who also lost 50 pounds, since joining the program in August 2004, says that the Weight Watchers meetings are also an essential part of the process.

"The peer pressure works wonders," said Parrott of the weekly meetings. "No one sees how much you have weighed, but you do talk about how much you have lost or gained. Once I got into it, they became my family."

Parrott says that another positive aspect of attending the meetings is the exchange of recipes and weight loss success tips.

Tina Burns, the Weight Watchers leader, says that the program has had a very positive impact on district team members.

"We see people using the exercise room more frequently and taking walks," said Burns. "People come to the meetings with their lunches. They really enjoy the meetings."

New Beginnings

Having achieved their goal of weight loss and improved health, Davis, Tessneer, Rinehart, and Parrott have a renewed interest and outlook on life.

For all, the idea of wearing smaller clothes is something they are enjoying, but have to get used to.

And the compliments flow in. For Parrott the comments are reinforcing.

"The 'old me' when people would say that I look great, I would say, that means I can go back and eat some pizza again. Now when people say I look great I say thanks," he said.

For Davis, attending her 35th class reunion was a memorable experience.

"I felt very proud and very good. Had I not lost the weight, I would not have gone and I would have really missed out," said Davis. "I feel like it's [the surgery] the best thing that I've done for myself and I wish I had done it sooner. I feel like I've lost a lot of time not being able to participate in life, because I sat on the sidelines for a long time, but now I am a participator in life."

DIANE DAVIS

TIP: The surgery is not a cure, it's a tool to use to get to your goal.

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TATJANA TESSNEER

TIP: If you make the decision to have gastric bypass surgery, do it for yourself. If you feel good at the weight that you are, stay that way. It's all about being happy with who you are.

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POUNDS





In order to promote water safety, the Corps uses floating buoys, such as this one to mark the places where people have drowned on the lakes. They serve as a reminder to practice good water safety measures at all times.

