

PRADO DAM MEMORIAL UNITES 3 STRANGERS

The Prado memorial story begins on page 11.

‘It never rains in California...’



By Greg Fuderer

But when it does, watch out! Prado Dam held more water from this winter’s rains than in many previous years combined. Compare the difference between the photo above and the ones in the Prado Dam memorial and Bicentennial stories in this issue of the Newcastle.

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On the cover:

Prado Dam is home to an almost-forgotten memorial. The full story is on page 11.



Our Heroes, 'Downrange'

GWOT team members recently took a break from work to gather for a Hail & Farewell in Iraq.



In the front row, left to right, are MAJ Chuck Klinge, SGM Jeff Koontz, COL Dick Thompson, Ross Maris and John Keever.

Standing in the second row, left to right, are Rion "Doc" Cole, Dick Aldrich (out of uniform), Kayla Eckert, Louis Uptmor and Shaun Frost.

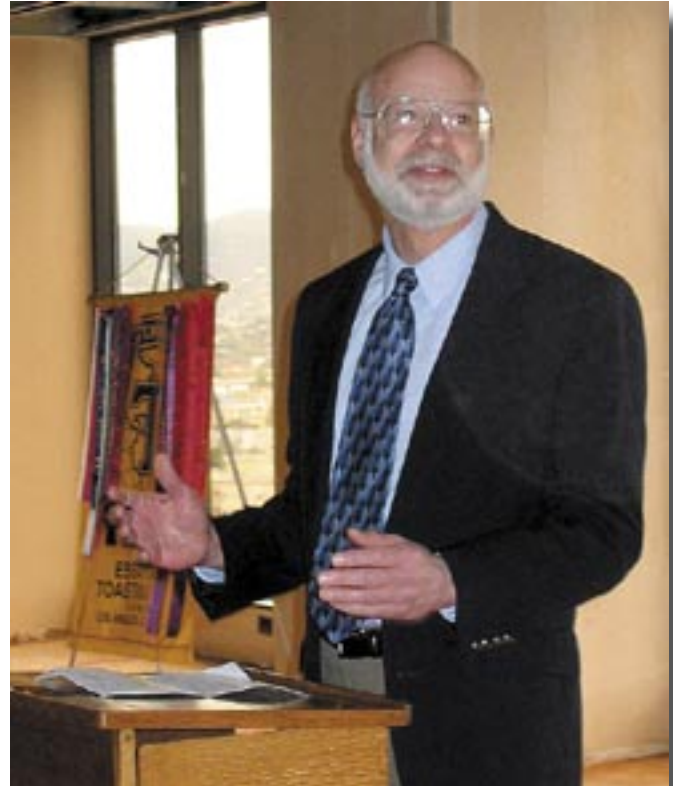
LA District's work to give women a voice at the podium changed national policy

In 1954, the District Engineer, COL Arthur Frye, Jr., was concerned about the number of requests he received from civic organizations requesting a speaker to talk about the work of the Corps of Engineers and their various projects. He realized that he was unable to accept all of the invitations and that non-attendance could be harmful to good public relations with the requesting organizations. He was somewhat reluctant to send an inexperienced substitute to these meetings because of the lasting impression a speaker would have on the audience.

COL Frye inquired as to what could be done to improve the public-speaking capability of members of the District. Toastmasters International was contacted for information regarding chartering a club within the Los Angeles District Corps of Engineers. Evaluators from a local Toastmasters club attended the first and second meetings in 1954, and within months Essayons Club launched the third meeting. Early the next year, the club received its charter.

As a result of COL Frye's desire to spread the news about the Corps and its projects, Essayons Toastmasters Club 988 recently celebrated its 50th year of service.

During the 1950s and '60s, District women were encouraged to participate in public speaking by joining Toastmistresses. In 1971, Mary Ann Mark wanted to benefit from the more business-oriented Toastmasters,



Joe Evelyn speaks about his historic part in changing Toastmasters International policy to allow women into the club at their 50th year celebration.

but was prohibited from joining – Toastmasters was for men only.

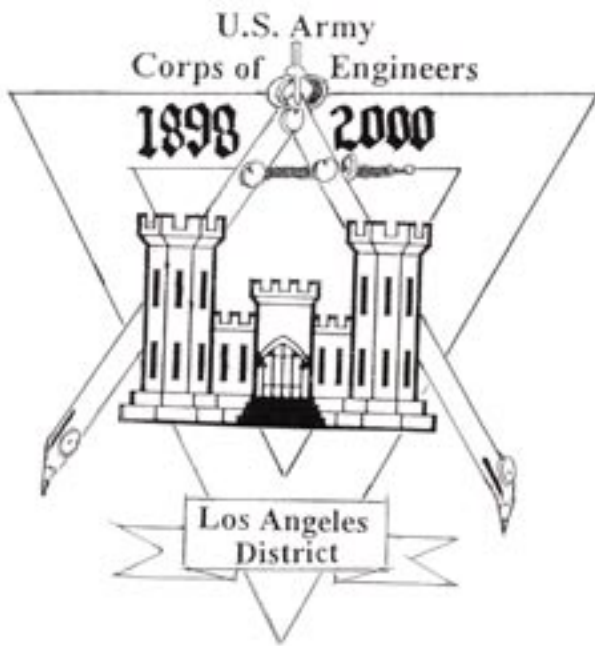
Then-President Joseph Evelyn began research into admitting women into the club in September, but it wasn't until February 1973 that the Toastmasters International allowed an exception to District bylaws for Mark. Three months later, Toastmasters International amended their own bylaws nationally to allow membership to women.

Essayons Toastmasters saluted Evelyn at their 50th birthday for his effort and support of members in 1973 and for identified the importance of including women into Toastmasters. The club continues to be an integral part of the Los Angeles District and a valuable means of gaining real experience in speaking publicly. For information on joining Toastmasters, contact Bob Stuart at x3811.



Essayons Toastmasters proudly displays their many ribbons on the club banner.

A century-plus-two of public service.



Story and photos by Mike Tharp

The town of Lucban in the Philippine province of Luzon is famous for its Pahiyas farming festival, held each May 15. Residents wear homemade harvest ornaments made of rice flour, houses are decorated with fruits and vegetables and townspeople parade through the main street, carrying giant papier-mâché dolls depicting a farmer and his wife.

Maybe that's one reason Joselito (Joe) Veloro of the Logistics Management Office, who was born in Lucban, has become a minor District legend with his spot-on caricatures and sketches of team members. Former District Engineer BG Larry Davis, now at Pacific Ocean Division, carried a Veloro caricature when he left Los Angeles. Many retirees treasure the renditions Joe has presented them over the years. He has also drawn T-shirt logos for the annual picnic and has even fashioned an eye-catching business card for colleague Romano Caturegli to hand out when he's donating excess District computers to schools and Indian tribes.

Veloro makes it look easy. While talking with a recent visitor, he nonchalantly began drawing lines and curves and dots on a blank sheet of paper. In less than two minutes, as astonishingly recognizable portrait of The Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, appeared behind his pen.

A portrait of the artist as a portrait-maker.

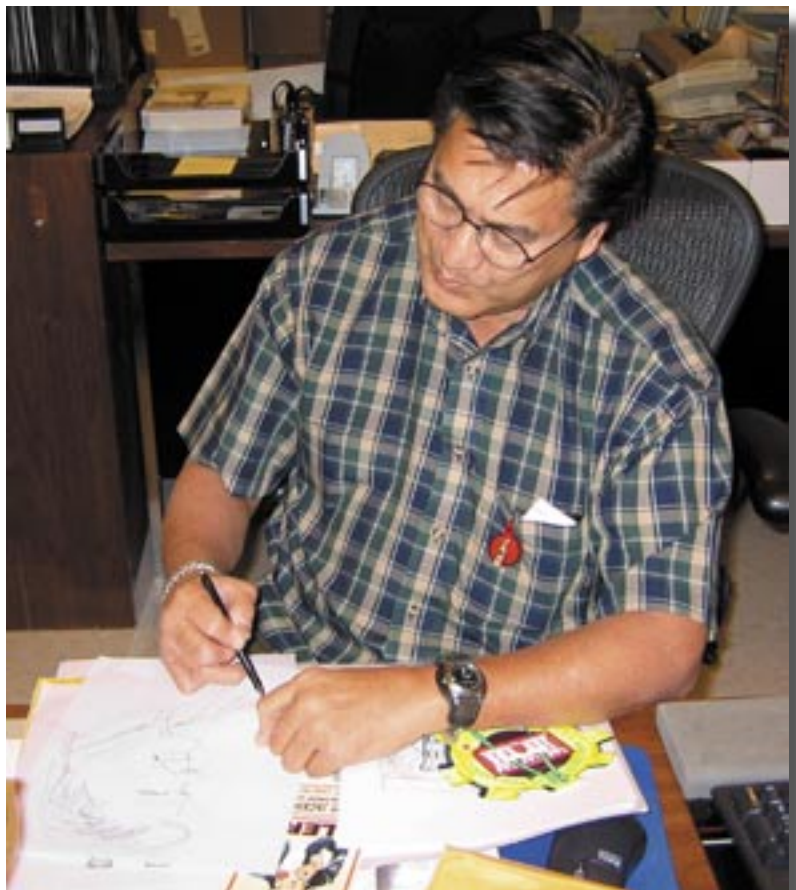
Frame this:

LMO's Veloro sketches his way into District lore

Veloro began drawing and sketching as a 10-year-old. Besides the tradition of craftsmanship in his native town, Veloro's father advanced his avocation by providing him with colorful comic books. "I liked reading them and looking at them," he recalls. A local art student also tutored the boy in freehand drawing.

One early canvas nearly earned him a whippin'. "Once I started, I kept on sketching," he says. "Even on my house. My grandma got mad at me for drawing all kinds of sketches on the wall."

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1954 and spent 20 years as a storekeeper on various ships, retiring as a petty officer 1st class. On one of his first tours, he took a course in commercial art, fine-tuning his natural talent. Officers





Joe brought special holiday cheer to his fellow team members.

Walter Lantz, creator of Woody and other cartoons, and got his permission to draw the flame-feathered character for the ship's logo. It went on T-shirts, lighters and other paraphernalia. "He even sent me a model of Woody Woodpecker," Velero recalls of Lantz.

After he got out of the Navy, Velero worked for 18 years as a civilian in the Navy's purchasing department at Long Beach. He joined the Corps nine years ago, and as anyone who ventures into the supply room can attest, he keeps it as well ordered as the clean room in a silicon wafer fab plant. He's also been active in his Philippine hometown's southern California association, designing the album cover for its 2002 grand reunion at the Hyatt Regency Alicante Hotel in Anaheim.

Velero has no immediate plans to retire. Whenever he does, will he draw a caricature of himself? "No," he laughs. "I already know what I look like."

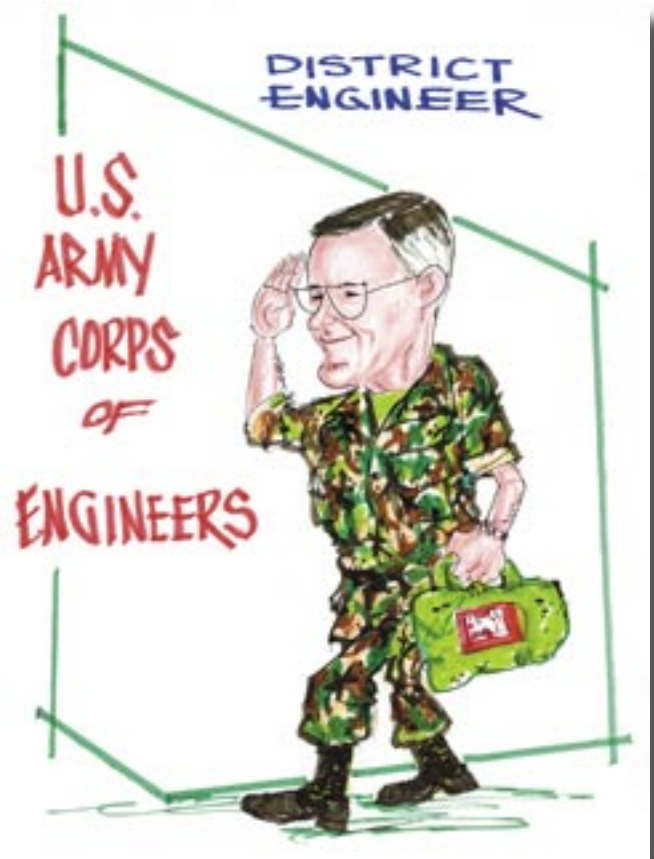
quickly discovered his expertise and had him apply it to all kinds of shipboard duties. Ships routinely published a yearbook of their cruises, and Velero often did the layouts, festooning their pages with his cartoons and sketches.

"At the Industrial Supply Center (in Long Beach), every time someone retired, they wanted me to draw a caricature," he remembers, "and I gave it to them as a keepsake." He enjoys doing caricatures "because it makes people happy when they see what they look like."

On the USS Havre, a training ship plying the Great Lakes, he painted a large mural in the dayroom. One wall showed a model of the newest modern guided missile ship; the other a recollection from his boyhood of Philippine beaches, palm trees and distinctive native Moro boats.

During his career, the brass decreed that all ships had to come up with a coat of arms, so for the Havre, Velero created one featuring an octopus whose arms were filled with training books and U.S. Navy decorations.

He was also stationed on the USS Woodpecker out of Yokosuka, Japan, and its officers—heh heh heh HEH heh!—wanted a woodpecker design. So Velero wrote to



BG Larry Davis exited the LA District with this Velero original.



Velero thinks this 101st anniversary logo has "too much detail." We respectfully disagree.

Corps work on armory for Lancaster Army National Guard includes Readiness Center for GWOT

Story and photo by Greg Fuderer

Recognizing the District's latest action to support the Global War on Terrorism, District Engineer COL Alex Dornstauder attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the California Army National Guard's new Readiness Center in Lancaster, Calif.

The two-story 53,000-square-foot armory will rise on a 14-acre site next to Gen. William J. Fox Airport and will include two smaller buildings. Salt Lake City-based ProTech Corp. is the contractor for the \$12.5 million project. "This is important work," said COL Dornstauder, who returned in September from several months' duty in

Scheduled for completion in May 2006, the armory will serve as home for up to 289 soldiers and 10 officers of the 756th Transportation Co., a unit Eres described as "the soul of the facility." One of the company's missions is to carry fuel and other petroleum products to frontline units.

The readiness center will also host 1184th Supply Co. Both have already completed missions overseas to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. The center is one of five to be built over the next two years.

Before the groundbreaking, Dornstauder received a project briefing from Alex Azares and Galen Cline at the District's High Desert Office in Palmdale. Azares is chief of

the office's Technical Support Branch and Cline will serve as the District's construction representative on the project.

COL Dornstauder intends to continue his indoctrination tour of the District in 2005.

Lancaster's post-World War II history is filled with similar examples of community support for military activities. It is near Edwards Air Force Base, whose test pilots were made famous in the book and film, "The Right Stuff."

Other base history includes the famous aviatrix Pancho Barnes and her nearby Happy

Bottom Riding Club featured in both the book and movie. Other aircraft tested near Lancaster were the U-2, B-2 stealth bomber, SR71 "Blackbird" and the B-1b.

MG Eres said, "There are three constants that are essential for soldiers to accomplish their mission. Support from family, employers and community. We need all those."



MG Thomas Eres and COL Alex Dornstauder discuss the new Readiness Center for the Army National Guard in Lancaster.

Iraq. "It's a great opportunity to work with the Guard, build relationships and provide the support they need for this project and others in the years to come."

MG Thomas Eres, Adjutant General for the California Guard, told an audience of local officials, civic leaders and military representatives that the center is a crucial part of the nation's defense.

Executive orders let District donate used computer gear to schools, Indian tribes

Story and photo by Mike Tharp

President Clinton signed 364 of them. So far, President Bush has signed 168 of them. President Clinton's ranged from designating the Adriatic Sea as a combat zone to seat belt use to the Lake Tahoe Ecosystem. President Bush's have ranged from the Bob Hope American Patriot Award to five separate ones on Iraq.

They are executive orders, defined as official documents through which the President manages operations of the federal government. The District, in the missions carried out by Romano Caturegli and Glynn Alsup, has put two such executive orders to good use.

One is No. 12999, April 17, 1996. Among other things, it "streamlines the transfer of excess and surplus Federal computer equipment to our Nation's classrooms...." The other is No. 13270, July 3, 2002. "Tribal colleges," it reads, "are both integral and essential to their communities. Often they are the only postsecondary institutions within some of our Nation's poorest rural areas. They fulfill a vital role...."

Logistics and Management Supply Officer Caturegli declares simply: "I give (computer equipment) to people who can use it. I don't sell it. I don't make a profit. Why not give it to people who can use it instead of it just gathering dust?"

Some Corps Districts turn over their outmoded computer gear to the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office. "They just throw 'em into bins, pulverize 'em and sell 'em to contractors to be used to fill potholes in the streets," Caturegli says.

Because LA District must compete with other public agencies and the private sector for customers, its information technology must be cutting-edge. That means there's a lot of turnover in computer gear, leaving dozens of computers and computer peripherals available for free distribution. "Once a year on my trips (to inventory Corps equipment) I take them to Indian reservations and schools," Caturegli says. "(Tribal Liaison Officer) Glynn (Alsup) does too. It's the trickle-down theory."

In 2004 Caturegli clocked 4,598 miles on his government van, inventorying equipment at 33 District offices and leaving a trail of smiling computer customers in his wake.

Among the closest was Luis Marquez, who had to drive only as far as the District Baseyard to pick up equipment from Caturegli. Eight used computers and eight used monitors may not sound like much to most people, but for Salesian High School in suburban Los Angeles, it was a Windowsfall.



LMO's Romano Caturegli (left) arranges computer donations with Salesian High School's Luis Marquez.

Marquez is the school's computer specialist, and after the two men loaded the gear into his vehicle, he said he'd noticed steady progress in his students' computer skills over the six years he'd been in the job. "This is awesome," he said after closing the doors on the computers and monitors. "In the past we put some of them in the lab, others we raffled off for kids."

Principal Manuel Villareal also appreciated the donation. "We've had a lot of kids doubling up because we didn't have enough computers," he said. "Right now everybody in the class has his or her own computer and they're thrilled. We saw that their quality would function for a high school setting."

Terri Allison, a coordinator at the Santa Barbara Charter School HomeBased Partnership, voiced a similar reaction. "It's been fabulous," she said of the computers, monitor and printer they recently received. "We're able to do a lending program with some of our home-school families that don't have computers. We're really appreciative."

Like a frontier circuit preacher, Caturegli wended his way through the Great Southwest this autumn. At the San Lucy District of the Tohono O'Odham Nation in Gila Bend, Ariz., he left 14 computers and monitors. "They seem to be in pretty good shape," said Albert Manuel, chairman of the Indian district.

For the Apache Tribe on the San Carlos Indian Reservation in rural northeastern Arizona, Caturegli left 14 pieces of computer gear with Brenda Victor at the Boys & Girls Club. In Flagstaff, he left one at South Beaver Elementary School and in Mesa, at Sousa Elementary School, 15 computers and monitors were donated.

"It's a satisfying feeling to be able to help people like that," Romano reflected. "We don't remove the Corps of Engineers stickers from the computers, so it's good PR. You're not afraid to say, 'I'm from the Corps of Engineers.'"

Corps helps lead high-schoolers into the future of engineering

By Jay Field

The Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) color guard opened Viva Technology Day Jan. 28 at Roosevelt High School by presenting the colors and leading participants in the Pledge of Allegiance. Then began the daylong activity to educate, excite and empower students about careers in engineering.

More than a dozen volunteers from the Los Angeles District coached the Roosevelt students in the design of a mock engineering project. The ambitious task—clean up the Los Angeles River, making it more inviting to visitors. The District partnered with the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC) to sponsor the first such technology program at the East Los Angeles school.

Ray Mellado, chairman and CEO of HENAAC, said, "It's absolutely necessary that we partner with organizations that need engineers and scientists so the kids can understand what they need to do in middle school and high school. Then they can participate in technology when they graduate from high school and go to college and become an engineer or scientist."

About 100 9th-graders from the school's Environmental Learning Academy were put through a series of fun and competitive challenges to help them learn about engineering, science and technology. The program started with activities that tested their knowledge and introduced them to the Army Corps of Engineers, Mellado said. "The students learn what great work the Corps accomplishes in



By Jennie Salas

Members of the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps color guard presented the colors and led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance to open the daylong Viva Technology program at Roosevelt High School.

our community, especially along the Los Angeles River, which is in the backyard of Roosevelt High School," he added.

Corps volunteers, or role models and mentors, helped students through team challenges that included a quiz, a slogan contest and a hands-on dream invention model, all related to revitalizing the Los Angeles River.

Ninth-grade student Sarah Valdez said she had fun solving problems and exploring ways she can improve her community. "It was really nice because we're all helping—we're trying to make Los Angeles better so people can come and have a nice time," she said.

HENAAC brought in several local college students, including Carlos Barron from California State University-Los Angeles, to serve as team captains. Aside from leading their teams through the series of learning events and competitions, they engaged the high school freshmen in dialogue about college life and personal ambitions. "And it helped us, the college students," Barron said, "because

Tucson resident engineer Julie Martinez helps students learn about the engineering field and what the Corps of Engineers does in Los Angeles.



we got to learn that they have lots of great ideas, they have a lot of potential and they have what it takes to make great engineers.”

Roosevelt Career Adviser Teresa Carreto was excited to collaborate with the Corps and HENAAC in an effort to expose her students to engineering. “What really interested me in getting this program was because it’s hands-on,” she said. “Our kids don’t have that opportunity in our community.”

Having encountered and overcome challenges similar to those facing students today, Tucson resident engineer Julie Martinez found it easy to relate. As one of the featured speakers, she shared her personal life experiences with the students and encouraged them to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Martinez, a 25-year veteran of the Corps, represented female Hispanics in engineering and helped judge the students’ work. “I was impressed with the projects that the kids put together and how well they just stuck it out—it was a long day,” she said. “The questions they asked just kind of floored me a little bit, so I was impressed with the whole thing, from start to finish.”

Civil Engineer Dr. Julio Arocho was another featured speaker. The assistant director of military programs for research and development at USACE Headquarters spearheaded the Corps’ involvement with the Hispanic community nationally. Arocho was one of five HENAAC Luminaries honored last year as a top Hispanic professional in engineering, science and technology. He related his experiences in becoming an engineer.

While the keynote speakers addressed the students, District Commander COL Alex Dornstauder headed to the classroom to visit with JROTC cadets. He talked about his service as a military engineer and about his recent duty with the Gulf Region Division in Iraq helping to rebuild the war-torn nation. COL Dornstauder told the cadets about the Corps’ work in Los Angeles and shared his leadership

philosophy with them before returning to the Viva Technology Day activities.

Although 52 schools feature the Viva Technology program, Roosevelt High School is the first school the Corps has become involved with. COL Dornstauder welcomed the opportunity to partner with HENAAC and was enthusiastic about pioneering the program for the Corps.

“This is our chance to give something back to the community,” he said. “It’s our chance to develop the youth of America and to show them that, not only is this a critical capability that we need in developing scientists and engineers, but also can be a lot of fun.”

Fun and challenging. That combination made it real for the students, COL Dornstauder said. “It’s something that challenged them intellectually, something they put their hands on—something they made—and then had to present to their fellow students,” he said. “It was quite an experience; one that I didn’t have when I was in high school.”

Mellado was pleased with the results of the program at Roosevelt and praised the volunteers from the Los Angeles District. “They’re the ones who made the difference,” he said. “They’re helping these kids understand that they really do have a future if they do the right kinds of things.”

COL Dornstauder said he hopes the success of this pilot program can be exported to other districts throughout the Corps of Engineers. Sponsorship of Viva Technology Day programs across the nation would continue the Corps’ commitment to HENAAC to enhance opportunities for Hispanic students preparing for careers in engineering. It would also help develop the talent pool of future engineers who will maintain the Corps as the world’s preeminent engineering organization.

COL Alex Dornstauder strikes a “manly” pose with college students from USC and Cal State-LA who led teams of 9th-graders through a series of competitive challenges designed to teach them about engineering.



Tale of two heroes: Distance runner maintains Vietnam vet's memorial behind Prado Dam

Story by Mike Tharp
Photos by Dr. Fred-Otto Egeler

This is a tale of two heroes.

One, Navy 1LT Dennis Cook, died April 6, 1966. His A4E jet accidentally fell from an aircraft carrier into the South China Sea offshore South Vietnam. His body was never recovered. He was 29, a husband and father to two young daughters.

The other, Tim Barden, is a Rhode Island-born insurance underwriting manager from Costa Mesa, Calif. Now 45 and the father of a teenaged son and daughter, Barden is a dedicated distance runner, averaging 35 miles a week. He has never been in the military.

Their paths improbably crossed in the wilderness behind the Corps' massive Prado Dam east of Los Angeles. It's countryside long familiar to District archaeologist Steve Dibble, himself now drawn into the saga of the Navy pilot and the patriotic runner. For years, Dibble has walked through the tall grasses and past brooding eucalyptus trees behind the giant earthen dam, finding and preserving archaeological artifacts.

He was also used his forensic skills on three MIA recovery missions to Vietnam and Laos in 1996, 1997 and 1999 with the Central Identification Laboratory. That experience would affect his response this fall when an unexpected e-mail landed in his queue.

Barden likes to run in wooded areas, and began exploring trails in the Cleveland National Forest north of his suburban Orange County home. In 1994, Barden was running in the alluvial basin behind the dam when he saw something strange. Curious, he jogged closer. "I was meandering down the trail, off the beaten path," he recalls. "I saw a little clearing and a flagpole, then came across this plaque."

It was a grave marker inscribed: "Lt. Dennis Cook,

Killed in Action, April 6, 1966."

Most people would have sighed and moved on. Most people would have forgotten about the lonely memorial. Most people wouldn't have bothered to find out who Dennis Cook was.

Tim Barden wasn't most people.



The memorial is surrounded by eucalyptus trees and a protective fence.

He came back to the site, hedge-clippers stuffed in a backpack, and began to prune some of the weeds sprouting in the rocks against the marker's stone wall. Because the area is remote, there wasn't much litter, but Barden made sure the scene was tidy before he left. On his next visit, he planted three small American flags he'd bought at a hardware store.

Ever since, whenever he was jogging in the area, Barden would stop by for a few moments to pay his respects. So it was with some concern that he recently saw signs of the District's massive project to elevate Prado Dam by 28.4 feet and its spillway by 20 feet. Dozens of workers and huge machines were passing within a few meters of the memorial, now behind a wooden fence built as a noise barrier to protect wildlife.

Barden wrote the District, asking: "Why isn't anyone maintaining this memorial for this serviceman?" The message was forwarded to Dibble.

The runner also posted a note on a Vietnam War Memorial Web site and soon heard from Lt. Cook's 62-year-old widow, Barbara ("Bobbi") Cook Klein, and the officer's sister, Claudia Cook Tamblin. Klein, recently widowed again, lives in Los Altos, Calif., and Tamblin works in Santa Cruz, Calif.

In June 2004 Tamblin wrote the following for a database page about Lt. Cook:

My brother Dennis was killed in 1966 in an aircraft carrier accident while he was aboard the USS Hancock in the South China Sea. He and his plane were not recovered. The catapult malfunctioned and gave him some power but not enough and he was not able to eject. He was a father of two baby girls, Laura and Christa, who were only 3 and 2 years old at the time. It was a tragedy that they never knew him as he was a wonderful loving man and would have been a terrific father for them. Now they are married and have babies so I am excited to be invited to the birthdays as a reminder that Dennis would be there too. Dennis had so many friends wherever he went. The 20-30 Club in Corona, Calif., had a plaque and flagpole memorial built for him at a Boy Scout camp in 1967. He was a great brother and I really miss him.

Moved by that passage, Barden began a quiet campaign to make sure the memorial was preserved, either at Prado or elsewhere. He was encouraged in the effort by archaeologist Dibble. "I am particularly pleased that someone is showing an interest in the memorial," Dibble wrote him. "Although I am not a veteran I have a particular interest and feeling for such things," citing his MIA work in Indochina.

And after Tamblin contacted her former sister-in-law, Bobbi wrote back too, calling her first husband "a remarkable young man":

I don't know exactly what is in store for the marker... Since Dennis was born and raised in Santa Barbara and was an active Boy Scout and Eagle Scout, we would love it to continue to be in a Boy Scout arena—in the Corona area or possibly in the Santa Barbara areas.



Augie, Tim Barden and Connie Ramirez get to know one another at the Cook memorial flagpole behind Prado Dam.

Why Prado? Cook's Scout Troop 11 was in Santa Barbara, but Corona-area Boy Scout troops were planning a camp near the Corps dam. Moreover, the young officer was stationed at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in Corona 1962-65, and he and Bobbi lived there then. Afterwards, he was assigned to Lemoore Naval Air Station near Fresno before joining his squadron aboard the Hancock in December 1965.

District Public Affairs Chief Fred-Otto Egeler, himself a decorated Vietnam War veteran, polishes a comrade-in-arm's marker.

Dr. Augustine Ramirez, principal of Corona's Norco Junior High School in the 1960s, was a friend and neighbor of the Cooks. After Dennis's death, he organized the effort to memorialize him behind Prado. Enlisting the aid of Corona's 20-30 Club, of which Dennis was once president, Ramirez received donations from more than 70 individuals and groups. "It was a labor of love," says Ramirez, who later became superintendent of the Norco-Corona School District. "We thought the world of him, and my wife and kids were very close to his. He'd do anything for you."

The ceremony included a posthumous presentation of the lieutenant's medals by CPT Edward Jarman, commanding officer of the Naval Weapons Center in Corona, to Bobbi Cook, then "Taps" was played. Congressman (later Senator) John Tunney later sent a flag that had flown over the U.S. capitol. Cub, Boy and Explorer Scouts also attended.

Ralph Moore, Cook's cousin in Santa Barbara, was a few years ahead of him in scouting. After the South China Sea accident, Moore says truckloads of rocks from the Rancho Allegra Scout Camp near Lake Cachuma, where the cousins had camped as Scouts, were taken to Prado. "They put it in the memorial as backfill," he remembers.

As a boy, Cook was also hooked on flying. His sister Claudia recalls that their parents had a friend who was a Navy pilot and once took them to see the Blue Angels in San Diego. "From that time on my brother had model airplane mobiles hanging in his room from the ceiling," she says. "He went to Cal Poly to major in architecture but ended up changing to aeronautical engineering." Before completing his degree, he signed up in Pensacola, Fla., to become a Navy pilot. "I think after he had his family he may have wanted to come home and fly commercial," she adds.

That was not to be.

Instead, 38 years later, a man he never met is helping to preserve Dennis Cook's memory. After he learned about the man behind the monument, Barden took photos of it, scanned them and e-mailed them to Cook's widow and sister. "I wanted her to have them for a photo album for their kids," he explains.

Barden's own kids figure into his actions. Jason is 17, Alyssa 15, "and I told them they've got to do some things



for other people, like supporting veterans, not always doing things just for yourself. Maybe it was passing the baton. Maybe they'll take it on themselves."

Though he was never in uniform, his father was in the Air Force, an older brother in the Army, and he had older friends who'd served in Vietnam. "I saw how they came back," he remembers, "and I wondered why they were being treated like that. I had a soft spot for Vietnam vets. They never talked about it." One buddy in particular, Mike Bell, had been in Vietnam for two tours. "That's all he ever said about it," Barden says. "He lives life on the edge."

So when he discovered Dennis Cook's plaque amid the eucalyptus trees, the distance runner reacted. "Here's this thing out in the middle of nowhere," he explains. "Someone obviously had put in some effort, and it was getting overgrown, neglected. I just felt an obligation.

"These folks (Vietnam vets) had been passed over when they came back. There's still probably a bunch out there who deserve more than they got."

Cook and Barden. Barden and Cook. They never knew each other. But through a destiny that cannot be explained—only accepted—they now share the mantra engraved in marble at the memorial

By your life only
can you prove
Your principles to
the world
And show to all...
There is a life worth
living



Retired educator revisits friend's memorial he organized nearly four decades ago

Story and photo by Mike Tharp

There's a third man in this theme.

Dr. Augie Ramirez, 75 and retired in Corona, always told folks he had only two goals in life: To get a doctorate from the University of Southern California and to become superintendent of his hometown school district in Norco-Corona.

Count him two for two.

An unforeseen—and unwanted—achievement was his leading role in the drama to build a memorial to his friend and neighbor, 1LT Dennis Cook. Although he would have preferred never needing to be involved, Augie (as he likes to be known) readily assumed responsibility once he got word that Dennis had been killed offshore Vietnam.

“He was a very, very dear friend of our family,” Augie recalled. “We got to know his folks very well and we kept up with them.”

Augie marshaled members of the Corona 20-30 Club, a service organization made up of men in those age categories. Nearly all pitched in to design and build the memorial.

Recently, Augie and his wife Connie, also a close friend of the Cooks, returned to the memorial for the first time in 37 years. There, for the first time, they met Tim Barden, the runner who had assumed the unofficial role of caretaker for Augie's project, which was finished a year after Dennis Cook died. Tim was eight when the memorial was dedicated.

On a warm December day, the trio donned mandatory hard hats and neon-orange safety vests ordered by District construction representative Ernie Saenz.

Stepping gingerly through high grass and muddy ground on his two artificial hips, Augie approached the flagpole and stone wall he had arranged to be built long ago for his friend. Connie and Tim talked quietly as Augie read the marble plaque whose words he had written as a tribute.

“He's really done the work out here,” Connie said of Tim. “Just trying to keep stuff cut down,” Barden replied.

The Ramirez couple observed that when the memorial was built, there was no freeway nearby, “and none of these trees were here,” she said. “In 30-some years, trees just grow,” her husband responded.

Augie remarked that he and his wife once took a rubbing of Dennis Cook's name at the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C. Barden mentioned that he had been on a business trip there three years ago “and I went to the wall and found his

name too. It's a connection.”

Augie leaned on the waist-high wall and looked behind it. “He physically helped with those stones,” Connie said. Added her husband: “We worked hard. This wall came up with all the help we had. The (steel) flagpole took a couple of weeks.”

Pointing south, Augie described where the dozens of people stood at the Veterans Day ceremony 37 years earlier. He himself had delivered the “In Memoriam.” A bugler had played Taps.

Gesturing toward the two hankie-sized American flags fluttering at the base of the wall, he asked, “Tim, did you bring the flags?”

“Yeah.”

“Sweet.”

Then three people, strangers until that morning, took one last look at the memory, etched in marble, steel and stone, that had brought them together. As they trudged away through the weeds, Tim offered his arm to Augie, who took it. Connie led the way. The wind sighed through the blue-grey eucalyptus leaves. The sun was shining.



Fujimoto wins Construction Manager of the Year award for two big projects

By Mike Sharp

In 17th century Japan, in the city of Kumamoto on the southern island of Kyushu, ruler Kiyomasa Kato built a castle whose reconstruction still stands revered today. Kato was also an accomplished civil engineer, building flood-prevention works and other projects.

That history may help explain why Project Engineer Stan Fujimoto won the South Pacific Region's 2003

“His work is the usual fine job we've always received from the Army Corps—and he's gone even beyond that,” says Art Aguilar, co-general manager of the Central Basin Municipal Water District. “Stan is very reliable, very competent. He's a good partner.”

Adds Mark Serna, a senior engineer with the West Basin Municipal Water District who worked closely with Fujimoto: “Stan was a key part in the success of our project. He was instrumental in coordinating several contractors and consultants to complete our project and is an outstanding professional. He's done a great job for the district, and I was very privileged to be able to work with him.”



Construction Manager of the Year award. His mother is from Kumamoto (his father is Japanese-American), and her son's DNA may have benefited from the 400-year-old civil engineering tradition in her home prefecture.

Fujimoto was presented the award at a recent ceremony at South Pacific Division headquarters. He was cited for his work on high-profile projects at the Port of Los Angeles and an ambitious water-recycling project in southern Los Angeles called the West Basin Water Recycling Project. Fujimoto, the award said, helped complete both projects on time and under budget.

Fujimoto has been with the Corps 15 years, though not consecutively; he spent six years in the private sector with Japanese construction giant Kajima Corp. His civil engineering bachelor's and master's degrees are from Cal Poly Pomona, and his MBA from Cal State Fullerton. Even before he finished his B.S., Fujimoto had worked part-time at the L.A. District, coming on full-time after graduation.

The Harbor/South Bay Water Recycling Project is a huge effort aimed at reducing the region's dependence on imported potable water, according to the Central Basin Municipal Water District Web site. Historically, the water district has relied on supplies from the Colorado River, but because of drought and other factors, that level has fallen by half; thus the district's dependence on water from the Sacramento River Delta in northern California has increased.

“We're at the scary edge right now,” says water district vice president and 16-year board member Ed Little. “We need to use reclaimed water. Our intention (with the recycling project) was to replace half the water (we

need) with reclaimed water, and that's where the Corps of Engineers has been so wonderful—they've really been a godsend for us."

The water recycling plant "has been so successful, it's unbelievable," Little adds. "The biggest mistake we did was not to put a turnstile on it—people are coming from all over the world to see it."

Fujimoto worked on two of the projects main parts: the \$3 million Victoria Lateral Project, which consists of nearly 1.4 miles of pipeline beneath the city of Carson; and the Cal State University Dominguez Hills Mainline Extension, a \$1.8 million expansion project consisting of a recycled water transmission pipeline linked to the Victoria Lateral and running throughout the university campus.

Building either phase in a heavily built-up area—let alone both—would be a major managerial challenge. But Fujimoto also had to contend with ongoing construction by one of the project's chief customers—the Home Depot Center. The sprawling complex is home to the L.A. Galaxy professional soccer team and features many other sports venues.

All those fields require massive irrigation, a natural

demand for the project's recycled water. "There were all kinds of (construction) trades running around while we were trying to get our work done," Fujimoto recalls. "We ran into their stuff on a handful of occasions. Either we adjusted and went under, over or around, or if we couldn't, they relocated."

Today, the Home Depot Center is using recycled water from the project, as is the nearby Victoria Golf Course. "There were a lot of entities involved," Fujimoto says. "We basically established a rapport with everybody to get the job done with minimum disruption and complication. I tried to deal with everything in a professional manner."

Fujimoto hasn't had much time to treasure his award—not that he would in any case. "I don't seek any glory," he insists. "I was just doing my job." He's now deeply involved in the next phase of the project, the Madrona Lateral, which will supply water to the city of Torrance, Madrona Marsh and parks and schools in the area.

Another big job. Daunting? As Fujimoto's mother might have said, in the distinctive Kumamoto dialect: Nansama shiten. Try anyway.

And he is.

Edwards Air Force Base site of \$19 million Joint Strike Force test facility



From left to right: Rear Adm. Steven Enewold, Joint Strike Fighter Program Executive Officer; Brig. Gen. Curtis Bedke, Air Force Flight Test Center Commander; Brian Ramsey, W.E. O'Neil Construction Co.; COL Alex Dornstauder, LA District Commander and Col. Drew Jeter, 95th Air Base Wing Commander break ground for construction of a new JSF flight test facility Nov. 8 at Edwards Air Force Base. The Corps awarded W.E. O'Neil Construction the \$19 million contract, which includes renovation of two buildings and construction of a maintenance facility and two mission control rooms.

Out of the office, but not out of mind

Romano Caturegli does more than deliver computers. Here are a few of his photos of District folks and sights from recent trips.



The District's Jerry Griffin and Art Stoddard (recently retired) at the Flagstaff office.



Resident office folks at Edwards AFB: (L-R) Stephanie Bledsoe, Steve Roach, Bob Cline, John Smock (resident engineer) and John Crase.

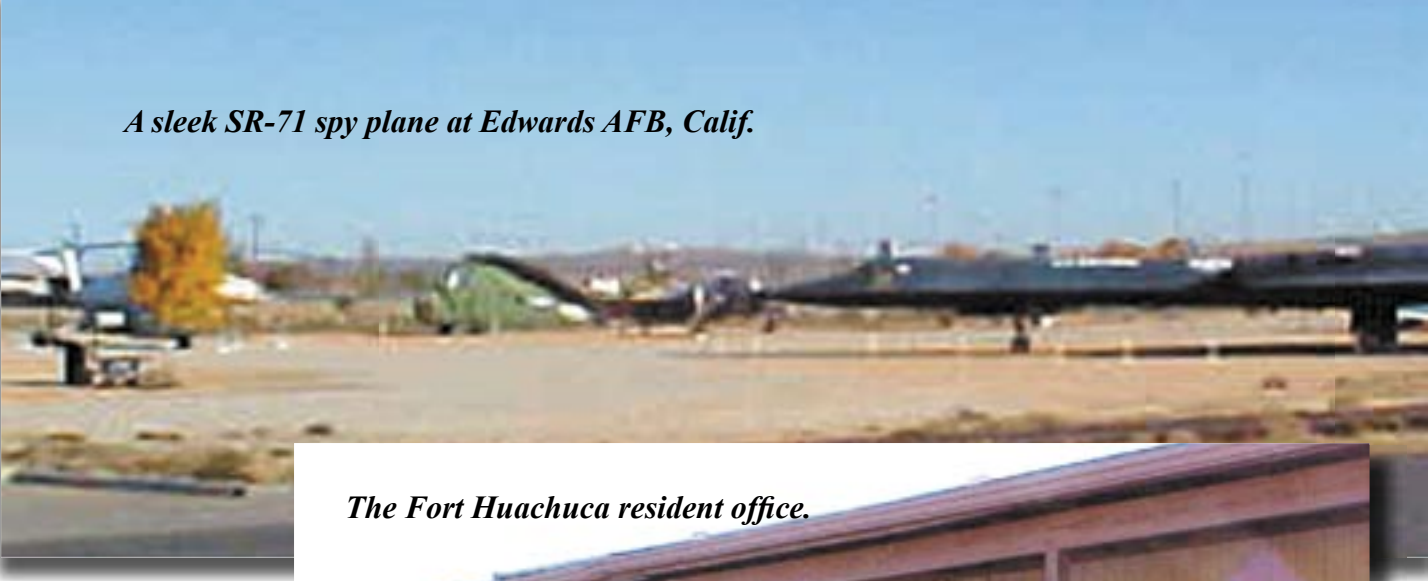


Resident engineer Chris Robbie at Luke AFB.

The District's Alamo Dam office.



A sleek SR-71 spy plane at Edwards AFB, Calif.

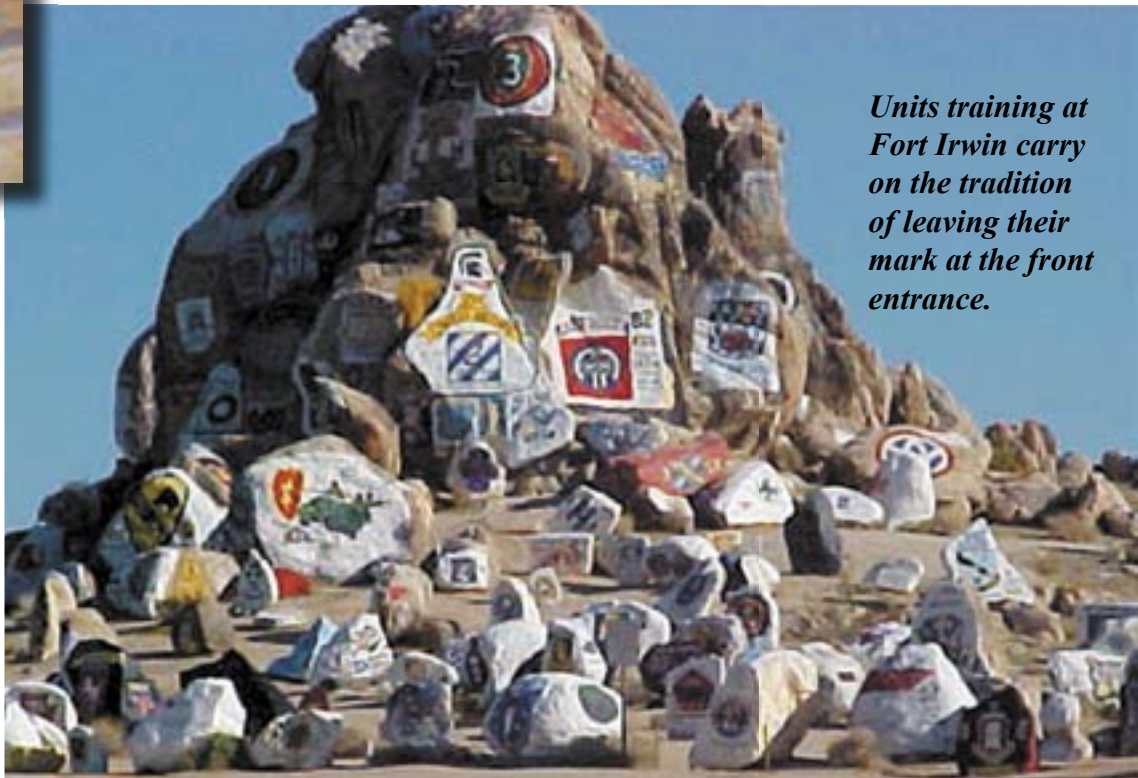


The Fort Huachuca resident office.



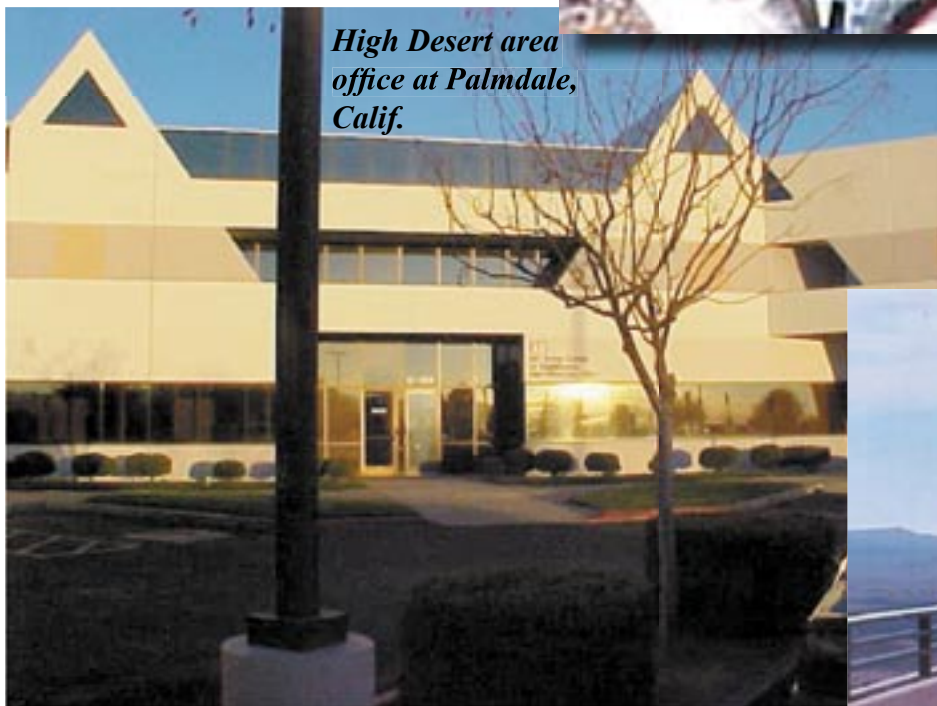
Larry Perry at the Davis-Monthan AFB resident office, Tucson, Ariz.

Units training at Fort Irwin carry on the tradition of leaving their mark at the front entrance.

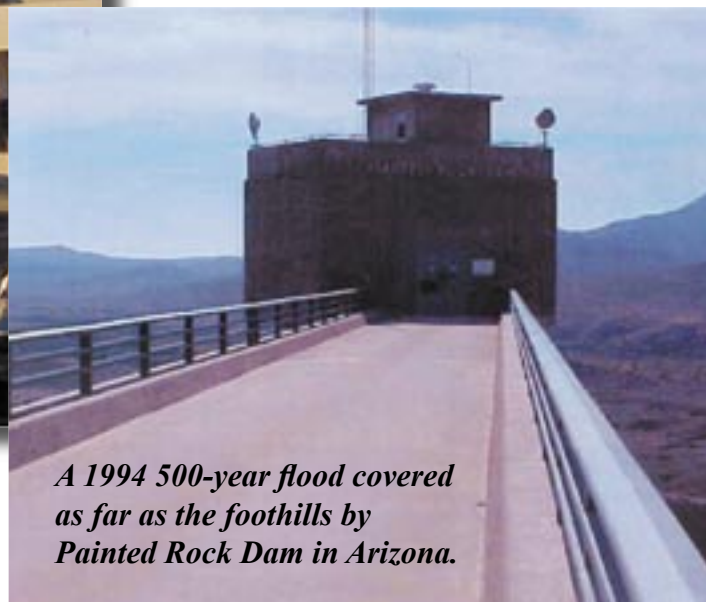




*Nancy Mehaffie
outside the
District's office at
Fort Huachuca,
Ariz.*



*High Desert area
office at Palmdale,
Calif.*



*A 1994 500-year flood covered
as far as the foothills by
Painted Rock Dam in Arizona.*



The Rio Salado project office in Phoenix.



Ron Kammeyer stands by his contest-winning mural for the Prado Dam spillway, painted in 1976.

Prado Bicentennial spillway designer still proud of work

Story by Mike Tharp
Photos by Dr. Fred-Otto Egeler

In early 1976, America was hungover.

Hungover from the war in Vietnam, which had ended the previous year. Hungover from Watergate, which led to President Nixon's resignation two years earlier. Hungover from the '60s, whose cultural legacies still divided the nation.

That year, America's zeitgeist could be seen in its movies—"All the President's Men;" "Dog Day Afternoon;" "Taxi Driver." It could be heard in its music—"Take It to the Limit;" "Taking It to the Streets;" "All by Myself." It could be watched on television's debut shows—"Charlie's Angels;" "Laverne and Shirley;" the Blues Brothers on "Saturday Night Live."

Clearly, as the United States entered the year it was to celebrate 200 years of nationhood, the center was not holding. Things weren't falling apart, but neither were they uniting. "I got some bad ideas in my head," said cabbie Travis Bickle in "Taxi Driver," a thought that seemed to catch the mood of the day.

Then two events occurred—both in southern

California—twin tonics that together helped cure any psychic hangover lingering among most Californians.

The first happened in April 1976. During a baseball game at Dodger Stadium, Chicago Cubs player Rick Monday stopped two protestors who were trying to burn an American flag in the outfield. For his spontaneous courage, the former Marine Corps reservist got a standing ovation that day and in many other stadiums the rest of the season.

A month later, Ron Kammeyer and his Corona High School buddy Perry Schaefer glued together several pasteboards in Kammeyer's living room and began sketching patriotic designs. They had entered a Corps-sponsored contest for best Bicentennial logo for the huge Prado Dam spillway.

The juniors were in the class of '77 and were motivated by a "let's-beat-those-seniors" challenge. To the surprise of most everybody, their design was picked. By the time hundreds of cans of red, white and blue paint were empty, the spillway, once etched with gang graffiti, was muraled in symbols celebrating the nation's 200th birthday. "It was done on weekends and took us a month," recalls Kammeyer. "Putting the match lines down was harder than anything. The first white paint washed out, but then came all the

different colors and layout. It was a lot of fun.”

For his efforts, Kammeyer was awarded a \$25 United States Savings Bond. He has never cashed it.

The Eagle Scout had a secret weapon in the contest – designer DNA. His father Ken founded Kammeyer & Associates, an environmental design, planning and landscape architecture firm. For three decades, it has been recognized as one of southern California’s most innovative firms, bringing its expertise to such diverse projects as the Western White House for President Nixon, the Navajo Nation War Memorial, Isamu Noguchi’s sculpture garden at South Coast Mall and the Sherman Library and Gardens at Costa Mesa.

“I just always liked it,” Ron says of his penchant for design. “I’d see my dad sketching and I liked to sketch. It was the perfect job—you were out in the field some and behind the (drafting) board some, spending other people’s money.”

Like a lot of Prado’s neighbors, Ron thought the newly decorated spillway would again fall prey to rogue spray-painters. But it didn’t. The design lasted...and lasted...and lasted. It wasn’t until two years ago, in fact, that Ron approached L.A. District with the idea of donating the paint to brighten the now-faded colors at the dam. However, tougher environmental screening rules on lead-based paint had been passed since 1976, and the District had to reluctantly turn down his offer.

Three years after 9/11, with the Stars & Stripes unfurled nearly everywhere, it’s hard to remember that, back in the

day, the Bicentennial didn’t spark a patriotic flame in the hearts of all Americans. Sure, most communities and many individuals planned to do their part in honoring the country’s birthright. But others simply couldn’t be bothered.

But Ron’s true-blue—and red and white—sentiments were genuine. “It was just a natural thing for me,” he says. “I was into Scouting, into my country. It was a period when everybody was into going to Canada or against the war.”

That’s the reason that Ron ranks the spillway design “at the top” of his professional achievements. “Because it was a time when it wasn’t popular to be patriotic,” he explains.

“...it was a time when it wasn’t popular to be patriotic”

His design seemed to touch a nerve-ending in the population. Once a tempting concrete canvas for taggers, the Prado spillway has remained virtually free of graffiti ever since.

Besides reaching Eagle Scout rank, Ron also became a member of Order of the Arrow, one of Scouting’s highest honors. The Order’s motto is “Brotherhood of Cheerful Service,” and one of its four purposes is “to crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness in to a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.”

And like Rick Monday’s valiant actions in the Dodger Stadium outfield, Ron Kammeyer’s cheerful service at Prado Dam has inspired southern Californians for 28 years.

The Prado Dam spillway today.



Around the L.A. District

Straub Construction takes local and national awards for work on Vandenberg Air Force Base missile bridge

By Mike Tharp

Corps contractor Straub Construction Inc. has won both national and local Excellence in Construction awards for its work on the El Rancho Road Missile Transport Bridge at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The awards are presented by the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), a national construction organization representing more than 23,000 construction and construction-related firms in 80 chapters across the U.S.

Straub won a national award, called an "Eagle," from among 300 entries. It will be given in February 2005 at the association's annual convention in Orlando, Fla.

The family-owned firm, based in Bonsall, Calif., also won the ABC San Diego chapter's Excellence in Construction award for the bridge project. Mark McMillan with the Corky McMillan Cos., Randy Minnier from MPE Consulting Inc. and Ron Smith with Interpipe Contracting gave Straub's work on the bridge project a perfect score in San Diego chapter judging.

"Clearly, Straub was the right contractor for the job and complemented an already strong project delivery team with the necessary environmental consciousness and technical competencies to build this bridge," said Jim Mills, Corps Los Angeles District project engineer. "This is the first time I've seen a project of this magnitude that had the full commitment of the major contractor and his team go to such extraordinary lengths to protect the habitat and at the same time make absolutely sure that they met or exceeded

Oops, we goofed

The Consolidated Support Facility Ribbon Cutting Ceremony story from the August 2004 issue of the Newcastle misnamed the design firm.

Edward J. Cass & Associates in San Diego should have been named as the design company instead of Ed Cast and Associates.

every design spec and deadline—no matter what the obstacles."

Initially scheduled to take two full years to complete, the \$12 million bridge project was finished in only 424 days. It replaced an old flood-weakened bridge that had crossed San Antonio Creek on the sprawling base. Missiles launched from Vandenberg often had to be trucked from one part of the base to another over the bridge.

Besides national security implications, the bridge project also involved particular care given to endangered species and other environmental issues, as well as archaeological and cultural issues related to the Chumash Indians.

Said Rick Straub, president of Straub Construction: "To have tops in the class nationally is just outstanding. What's incredible was the team—we couldn't have gotten there without the assistance of the Corps. The whole team went out on a limb right from the get-go."

Kudos to LAD Public Affairs Office

Last week I was down in Los Angeles District on several matters, one of which was gathering information to nominate the LACDA project for the SAVE Del'Isola Construction Award. Just want to pass on how helpful Dr. Egeler and the Public Affairs Office was during my quest. Bill Ziegler, Los Angeles District VEO, and I popped in quite suddenly, they dropped everything, and within a short period provided me with a lot of good stuff.



Hopefully, over the next couple of weeks, thanks to their effort and others, I will deliver and get out an award winning nomination package for this excellent project. Please pass on my thanks to everyone down in the Los Angeles District PAO for their assistance last week.

Tom Chamberland
Value Engineering Officer
South Pacific Region

FINANCIAL MANAGERS

Continued from back cover

By Mike Tharp

PFM.

Maybe not as sexy-sounding as P2 or USACE 2012. But if some Los Angeles District trailblazers have their way, PFM will soon join the pantheon of groundbreaking Corps business strategies.

The initials stand for Project Financial Manager.

In the fall of 2004, the District began a new experiment to strengthen civil works project delivery by partnering resource managers more closely with project managers. One manager would take care of overhead, another the project.

In other words, put a bean-counter/check-writer at the table to follow the money so the honcho can focus on running the show. “It’s a revolutionary concept for the Corps,” said Jim Hearn, chief of the Resource Management Office, who came up with the idea. “Project managers are engineers, not financial managers. Some of them can’t balance a checkbook.”

Already, several other Districts have shown interest in the experiment, and LA team members have sent informational packages to them. Recently, in a car on the way to LAX, Hearn described the plan to Chief Engineer LTG Carl Strock. “He was very much in support of it,” he says.

Hearn asked Dave Boals, who like Hearn holds a doctorate from USC, to kick-start the pilot program. Applying his 15 years in the Corps, as well as eight years experience in Germany supporting Army bases, Boals got to work. Because new civil service jobs would be created, Hearn had to get headquarters’ permission, and did, initially hiring seven people.

Boals was tasked with developing the “position descriptions,” a more critical job than usual because the PFMs’ roles and functions would be unprecedented. Moreover, those descriptions had to be ironclad so other interested Corps parties could use them off-the-shelf. Jay Edwards, chief of Manpower, Management Analysis and Budget Branch, worked closely with Boals to ensure a strong transition between development and implementation of the Budget Execution Section.

In addition, Boals worked with Kelli Johnson, chief of Programs Management, and Mike Carillo, a budget analyst, to formulate training standards and experience requirements for all levels of PFMs, from GS-5 through GS-12.

As the pilot program unfolded, Boals also established mentoring arrangements that pair current PFMs with new hires so they could become familiar with administrative details and project management structures.

Four advantages in using Project Financial Managers:

- PFMs free up project managers to focus on core project management tasks by relieving them from processing financial transactions;
- using professionally trained managers to do financial transactions cuts error rates and time-consuming corrections;
- PFMs have the time to plan and coordinate project funding early in the process to avoid funding crises;
- finally, professional finance managers have the time and expertise to free up funds and avoid waste by closing out inactive accounts when necessary.

The five basic services PFMs can provide to PMs:

- project funding transactions, including preparing monthly obligations and expenditures, doing financial analyses recommending revisions to schedules, resolving funding issues and discrepancies and helping with monthly unliquidated obligation reviews;
- long-term studies of funding streams and execution plans to make sure funding is aligned with whatever project requirements are expected;
- working closely with project sponsors to make sure that external funding flows into projects in a timely and effective way, such as working with escrow accounts and drafting letters to sponsors;
- closing out projects in a timely way; and
- providing data and charts for the many briefings used in delivering projects.

Abacus-dabra: New financial managers bring magic-money touch to District civil projects

By Mike Tharp

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The PFMs' background in crunching numbers has quickly allowed them to start running budgets, doing accounting and performing manpower and management analyses. "You don't want your PMs counting beans—you want them solving problems and helping customers," Boals explains. "The PM needs to be assured that financing is handled appropriately."

Adds Hearn: "My mantra is: Our job is your (the PM's) project."

Story continued on page 4.

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