



## About Us

### A Tradition of Service Since 1775

The Army Corps of Engineers traces its beginnings to the opening days of the Revolutionary War when Boston native, Col. Richard Gridley, was named chief engineer of the Massachusetts Volunteers and, shortly thereafter, chief engineer of the newly-formed Continental Army by Gen. George Washington.

The first Army engineering action occurred on the night of June 16, 1775, when Gridley designed and supervised the construction of an earthwork on Breed's Hill overlooking Boston Harbor that would prove impregnable against British bombardment during a fierce battle the following day. Although the patriots lost the position after running out of ammunition, the Battle of Bunker Hill (as it was later called) marked the beginning of the long tradition of service to New England that the Corps continues today.

After the Revolutionary War, the Army's engineer corps was dissolved until it became apparent that the growing nation had a continuing need for military engineers. In 1802 the Congress established a Corps-operated military engineering school at West Point, New York. West Point served in that capacity until 1866 when it became the U.S. Military Academy. West Point was the nation's only engineering school for many decades, and graduates provided the engineering skills that built the nation from eastern seaboard to western shore.

In 1824, the Congress expanded the Corps' responsibility by passing the General Survey Act which authorized it to survey and build a network of internal improvements, including roads, canals and railroads. And with the passage of the Rivers and Harbors Act the Corps was charged with improving navigable waterways, especially the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, the fledgling nation's main commercial arteries.

### ***The Corps Today***

From these historic acts, the civil works and military engineering mission of the Corps of Engineers has grown.

Today, the Corps supports the armed forces of the United States with modern facilities, both at home and abroad, to strengthen the nation's defensive capability and ensure combat readiness.

The Corps' primary civil works mission is to develop



*The first Army engineering action was the design and construction of earthwork on Breed's Hill overlooking Boston Harbor at the outset of the Revolutionary War.*

and manage the country's water resources. Its projects reduce flood damage, improve harbors and navigation channels, protect streambanks and shorelines, generate hydroelectric power, and preserve and safeguard the environment. These improvements include over 12,000 miles of inland and intracoastal waterways, 235 locks, and over 600 dams and reservoirs.

The Corps also serves as manager for major construction projects undertaken by other federal agencies and allied governments.

The military and civil missions complement each other, allowing Corps professionals to develop, in peacetime, the skills the nation would need in war or other emergencies.

As the nation's largest provider of outdoor recreation, the Corps hosts approximately 360 million visits a year at its lakes. Supporting visitors to these recreation areas generates 600,000 jobs across the United States.

Civilian employees account for 98 percent of the Corps worldwide staff; military officers make up the remainder.

There are eight Corps divisions, with 41 districts in the United States. The New England District is part of the North Atlantic Division, Fort Hamilton, New York.

