Foreword

This illustrated history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides an overview of many of the missions that engineers have performed in support of the U.S. Army and the Nation since the early days of the American Revolution. A permanent institution since 1802, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has effectively and proudly responded to changing defense requirements and has played an integral part in the development of the Nation.

Engineers have served in combat in all of our Nation's wars. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Corps built coastal fortifications, surveyed roads and canals, eliminated navigational hazards, explored and mapped the Western frontier, and constructed buildings and monuments in the Nation's capital.

In the twentieth century, the Corps became the lead federal flood control agency. Assigned the military construction mission in 1941, the Corps constructed facilities at home and abroad to support the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. During the Cold War, Army engineers managed construction programs for America's allies, including a massive effort in Saudi Arabia.

When the Cold War ended, the Corps was poised to support the Army and the Nation as we adapted to the new era. But the events of September 11, 2001, changed the diplomatic and military climate dramatically. After supporting recovery efforts at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Army engineers played an important role in the rapidly evolving Global War on Terrorism. Following combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Corps of Engineers established new overseas districts and a division in those countries to help rebuild their shattered infrastructures and foster a new era of peace and democracy in the region. The results of that effort will shape the Nation's future in the twenty-first century.

Today, building on its rich heritage, the Corps is changing to meet the challenges of the future. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a broad-ranging engineer force of highly qualified civilians and Soldiers, working with our partners to deliver innovative and effective solutions to the Nation's engineering challenges. We are a values-based organization, focused on our mission and those we serve, dedicated to public service, and a vital part of the U.S. Army.

Our mission areas include planning, designing, building, and operating water resources and other civil works projects; designing and managing the construction of military facilities; providing immediate and long-term support to the public during natural disasters and national emergencies; and offering design and construction management capabilities for other Defense Department and Federal agencies and for foreign countries.

I hope that readers of this history will gain an appreciation of the military, political, economic, and technological factors that shaped the modern U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We in the Corps, both Soldiers and civilians, are proud of our many past contributions and look forward with confidence to continued service as a relevant, ready, responsive, and reliable organization, proudly serving the armed forces and the Nation.

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