

**THE ALASKA DISTRICT
UNITED STATES ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
1946 — 1974**

**A history
prepared by W. A. Jacobs
from a manuscript researched
and compiled by Lyman L. Woodman**

**Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska
1976**

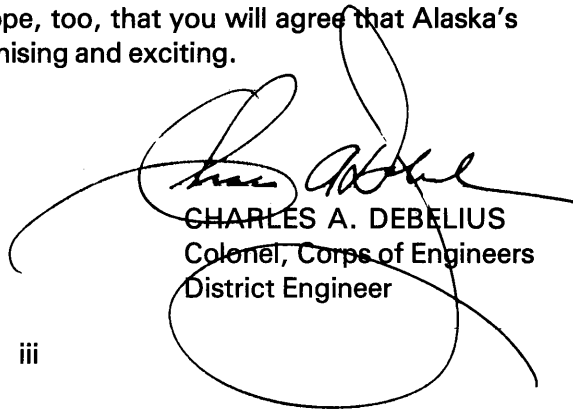
FOREWORD

The first 30 years for the Alaska District have been fruitful and important. Even so, Corps of Engineers involvement in Alaska began more than 100 years ago. Thus, this story of the District is a story of the Corps as well, and the Army, and of their love affair with the beautiful State of Alaska.

Hundreds of hours of careful research, tedious sifting, and lengthy interviews were a necessary prelude to the publication of this history. Lyman L. Woodman, a long-time Alaskan, deserves great credit for investing those hours and for producing a comprehensive initial version of our story. We are indebted as well to Dr. Will Jacobs, professor of history, University of Alaska-Anchorage, for this final manuscript which draws from and condenses Lyman's work.

Those of us who have been a part of Corps of Engineers adventures in "The Great Land" know of excitement, privation, exhilaration, danger. We know that there is a can-do spirit in the Alaska District that somehow compels us to persevere even when the odds seem insurmountable. There are those with us who can truly lay claim to the title of pioneer, for they joined the District when it was first formed and stayed ever since. They know first-hand of the early days of temporary shacks, the initial mystery of permafrost, the deluge of Cold War construction projects, and the unique camaraderie that grows when hardship and adversity are shared.

On behalf of all of us who have ever served in the Alaska District I sincerely hope your own vicarious experiences in reading this tome will convince you that we are proud of our heritage. I hope, too, that you will agree that Alaska's future and that of the District are promising and exciting.



CHARLES A. DEBELIUS
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF THE

REPUBLIC

OF AMERICA

FROM 1776 TO 1876

BY

CHARLES A. BEAMAN

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO

1876

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

1876

CHICAGO

1876

CHICAGO

1876

CHICAGO

1876

CHICAGO

1876

CHICAGO

1876

PREFACE

This work is a short history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Alaska; it concentrates on the work of the Alaska Engineer District from its foundation in 1946 through 1974. While the Alaska District is a relatively young institution, it can point with substantial pride to several major achievements, chief among them an important role in the construction of facilities for a permanent military establishment, the improvement of navigation and moorage for many Alaskan communities, the construction of flood control facilities, the development of an innovative hydroelectric project in Southeastern Alaska, and participation in comprehensive water resources management. This brief history is an attempt to record those activities against the general background of Alaskan social and economic development and the changing importance of Alaska in the national defense of the United States.

A note should be made about the division of labor in the production of this history. Lyman L. Woodman of the District's Public Affairs Office did all the research for this project. From this research he constructed a preliminary manuscript. The District retained Dr. W. A. Jacobs to write the final document which constitutes this work.

Mr. Woodman's research was very much helped by the good advice and assistance rendered by various members of the District staff. Special acknowledgement goes to those most often consulted: Warren George, Donald Wilbur, John J. Longacre, Ralph E. Melbo, James K. R. Clodfelter, William L. Armstrong, and Hulda Melbo. The aid of the District's library staff--Barbara Berg and Cheryl Bixby--has been greatly appreciated.

W.A.J.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I—THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS IN ALASKA, 1869-1946	1
World War II	11
General Summary	19
Notes	20
CHAPTER II—THE ALASKA DISTRICT AND THE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION MISSION	22
Post-War Organization	22
Scope and Nature of the Military Construction Program	24
The Korean War and the Construction Program of the 1950's	29
The Development of Alaskan Communications	40
Pipeline Construction	42
The Construction of Aerial Defense Facilities	44
The Port of Whittier	45
The Nuclear Power Plant	47
Support of the Army and Air National Guard	47
The Sixties: Atomic Testing and the Vietnam War	48
The Whittier-Anchorage Pipeline	52
Real Estate Management: The ACS Sale	53
Summary and Conclusion	53
Notes	54
CHAPTER III—CIVIL WORKS IN ALASKA, 1946-75	57
Navigation Improvements	58
Southeastern Alaska	58
The Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound	72
Cook Inlet and Kodiak Island	76
Western Alaska	85
Flood Control Projects	87
The Rampart Canyon Dam Project	93
Major Emergency Operations	97
The Fairbanks Area Flood of 1967	104
Summary and Conclusion	106
Notes	107

CHAPTER IV – THE ALASKA DISTRICT IN THE MID-SEVENTIES	111
Navigation	112
Flood Control	114
Hydroelectric Power	117
Flood Plain Information	124
Projects Under Study	125
Notes	127
Appendix A: Photographs of District Engineers	128
Appendix B: General Order No. 6	129
Appendix C: General Order No. 12	130
Appendix D: The Original Cast	131
Appendix E: Civil Works Processing	132
Appendix F: Alaska District Expenditures	134
Appendix G: Permafrost	135
Appendix H: Distances by Air from Anchorage	138
Appendix I: Organization Chart	139
Bibliography	140
Index	144