



EPA Chief visits LA River



Corps officials brief EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy (left) on Los Angeles County Drainage Area projects during her visit to a Los Angeles River overlook point in Elysian Park Nov. 21. The newly appointed EPA chief visited Los Angeles to get a first-hand view of LA River revitalization efforts. (Photo by Jay Field)

Jay Field

LOS ANGELES—Newly appointed Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy stood with Corps officials atop an overlook in Elysian Park at the confluence of the Arroyo Seco and Los Angeles River Nov. 21 to see first hand plans for the river's restoration. The EPA chief said she was pleased to visit Los Angeles and view the work that's been done to connect the community to the natural world.

"It's building new partnerships with the Army Corps to look beyond these small parks and how we connect our communities to the river itself and how we restore that," said McCarthy. "It's an exciting moment."

McCarthy's day-long visit to Los Angeles included a tour of the Port of Long Beach and a nearby recycling facility. But the opportunity to kayak a portion of the LA River was scuttled due to rain. Instead, the head of the EPA took a walking tour along a bike path adjacent to the Glendale Narrows reach of the river with Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, the Corps'

South Pacific Division Regional Business Director Traci Clever and City Councilman Mitch O'Farrell.

In her remarks, McCarthy praised the partnership and vision of the team working on the ecosystem restoration plan.

"We have found that green infrastructure has tremendous value; for flood management, for water quality, for reconnecting people to natural resources and for building cities that people want to live in," she said. "The challenges we face need planning; green infrastructure, like this, is part of the solution."

The iconic river has gained national attention since EPA announced its declaration of the river as a Traditional Navigable Waterway. The Corps released the draft LA River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study for public review and comment Sept. 13, and received more than 500 comments as of the period's close Nov. 18.

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



(Above) South Pacific Division Regional Business Director Traci Clever, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti tour the Los Angeles River via a bike path adjacent to Marsh Park Nov. 21. The EPA chief was in Los Angeles to view river revitalization and ongoing cleanup efforts. (Right) EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy discusses Los Angeles River revitalization efforts during a site visit with Corps officials Nov. 21. The EPA chief was in Los Angeles for a first-hand view of the river and planned restoration and ongoing cleanup efforts. (Photos by Jay Field)



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Corps officials said they are reviewing the comments and plan to release a final report next spring.

When asked why he is advocating Alternative 20, while the Corps' tentatively selected plan is the less costly Alternative 13, Garcetti said the river team is lined up with more in common than in difference.

"It's a wonderful place to be to

where we're all discussing how much money, not whether to invest in this project," said Garcetti. "The city and the state have already made huge commitments and spent that money to revitalize the river."

Clever said Corps officials are reviewing agency and public comments. She said the Corps will work with the city to prepare a final report to be released next spring.

"Without the support of the city, in

partnership with the Corps of Engineers and so many more organizations that work in the LA River basin, none of this would be possible," Clever said. "I'm proud the administrator is here and able to witness the strong partnership that we have here and where we're going forward to advance restoration of this important resource and move ourselves towards a congressionally authorized project and realizing some of the benefits."

District teammates:

Our sustained operations rely on a critical practice that I think is perfect to highlight during the holiday season: partnerships. Whether they consist of relationships we have forged with military customers, government agencies, civic organizations or members of the public, our partnerships are absolutely vital to everything we do.

For example, in November, the District and the South Pacific Division partnered with the City of Los Angeles to host Environmental Protection Agency administrator Gina McCarthy on a tour of a segment of the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study area. Although the weather resulted in a change of plans for the event, I think we still managed to not only highlight the magnitude of our work with the river and the study we have drafted, but also the complexity and significance of the partnerships we were able to manage throughout the process between the City of Los Angeles, the EPA, non-government organizations and the myriad of other stakeholders.

Another example of great partnerships occurred right here in the District headquarters during our Thanksgiving potluck. It was great to see so many members of our team

come together to put together a tremendous event, but also to sit together in fellowship over a fantastic meal. It was a sight to behold and even more inspiring to watch as many of us reconnected or connected with co-workers for the first time there. Creating and maintaining partnerships among staff sections and divisions is as important as maintaining those outside of our organization.

Partnerships are the bridges to more fruitful communication, increased effectiveness and more meaningful mission accomplishment.

I want to thank each of you for your hard work and dedication in 2013. Your efforts have helped make this District what it is today.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to everyone. Please be safe during your travels to spend the holidays with loved ones. It's these partnerships with family and friends we must take the time to cultivate, nurture and hold in the highest regard. They are the partnerships that give us the energy

and drive to come to work every day to keep BUILDING STRONG!

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District counselors recognized

Greg Fuderer

LOS ANGELES – The Chief Counsel of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recognized Elizabeth Moriarty and John Bazan of the Los Angeles District's Office of Counsel for outstanding performance. Col. Kim Colloton, commander of the LA District, presented the awards during a Nov. 7 ceremony held at District headquarters in Los Angeles.

Moriarty receives Joseph W. Kimbel Award

Elizabeth Moriarty joined the Corps in 2006 through the Chief Counsel's Honors Program. The justification for the award states, "From the very start of her career, Elizabeth has displayed exceptional ability as a lawyer, as well as an aptitude for leading and mentoring fellow attorneys and project delivery teams for a variety of significant civil works programs."

Moriarty received the Joseph W. Kimbel Award, which recognizes a Corps attorney who has demonstrated the highest potential for future legal achievement in the Corps of Engineers Legal Services Community. The award symbolizes the continuing tradition of extraordinary professionalism and performance exemplified by Kimbel, who served with distinction from 1913 until his retirement in 1956.

Moriarty advises project delivery teams and District leadership on the District's most high profile civil works projects.

She is the District's principal attorney for the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Study, which is being completed under an expedited schedule, and was a major contributor on the non-motorized boating program for the Los Angeles River, which has garnered very positive attention in national publications. Her work to facilitate correction of design deficiencies of the Santa Maria River levees contributed to the success of the highly visible project to reduce flood risk in a rapidly growing area of California. She also worked with resource agencies on the San Luis Rey River Flood Risk Reduction Project to allow maintenance of levees on a proj-



Los Angeles District Commander Col. Kimberly Colloton (left) and Larry Minch, chief district counsel (right), present John Bazan, an attorney for the District office of counsel (center) with the E. Manning Seltzer Award during a ceremony in the District headquarters Nov. 7. (Photo by Richard Rivera)

ect that had been plagued by delays for several decades.

Moriarty garnered expertise on environmental law through hands-on experience as well as training in all of the major environmental laws the Corps regularly encounters, including the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Act of 1980 (better known as the "SuperFund Act"), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Clean Air Act.

The award citation said Moriarty worked hand-in-hand with the Planning Division's Environmental Resources Branch to review and provide advice concerning the adequacy and scope of environmental assessments and environmental impact statements. "She has developed significant

expertise on the policies and procedures that the Regulatory Program follows, as well as having expertise on the broader environmental laws that the NEPA analysis required for the issuance of an individual permit always brings into play," the justification states.

Moriarty also has demonstrated abilities in the area of real estate law by authoring a complex opinion of compensability for the multi-million dollar relocation of the Santa Ana Regional Interceptor sewer line at the Santa Ana River and by revising real estate plans for several important civil works projects.

"Elizabeth is Office of Counsel's go-to attorney for almost all major civil works projects in the Los Angeles District," the citation stated. "She displays impeccable judgment and people skills

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Sol Teichman, a founder of the Emek Hebrew Academy and Holocaust survivor, is joined by his wife, Rith Teichman and Rep. Brad Sherman as he cuts the ribbon, formally dedicating the park in his family's name during a ceremony Nov. 7 in Sherman Oaks, Calif. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

Corps lot renamed to honor philanthropic family

David A. Salazar

LOS ANGELES—A 1.8 acre parcel of Corps of Engineers property in Sherman Oaks, Calif., was re-dedicated in honor of philanthropist and Holocaust survivor Sol Teichman and his family.

The park, part of the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area, adjoins Emek Hebrew Academy Teichman Family Torah Center, was named Teichman Family Magnolia Park in a ceremony attended by Rep. Brad Sherman and school officials.

The land was previously leased to Emek via the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks for exclusive daytime use as a playground and activity field and informally referred to as Magnolia Park after the street on which it is located. Since the lease began in 1995, the Teichman family funded beautification and maintenance efforts and transformed the dusty parcel into a green, grassy area more suitable for play and recreation.

"We are here to dedicate a wonderful adjunct to this campus—a park for the kids to play in. I want to thank the Teichman family for all they've done for this school and this community," said Rep. Brad Sherman, who represents the San Fernando Valley. Sherman presented the Teichman family with a flag, which was flown over the U.S. capital in their honor.

"Anyone who's familiar with the Teichman story, knows that it's out of the ashes—the ashes of the Holocaust," said Rabbi Mordechai Shifman, the head of Emek during the dedication ceremony, which featured several musical performances from Emek students and culminated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony in which the park's new sign was presented.

Sol Teichman, a native of Czechoslovakia, was captured by members of the Nazi party in 1944 as a teenager and shipped to the concentration camp at Auschwitz. Four of Teichman's brothers, his mother and baby sister were also captured. Except for one brother, Teichman never saw those members of his family again.

Upon liberation by U.S. forces, Teichman moved to New York in 1946, then to Los Angeles a few years later, where he began his business, Teichman Enterprises. His philanthropic efforts began when he helped found the Emek Hebrew Academy in 1959. Teichman and his wife, Ruth, supported the school's expansion since its beginning and, for their efforts, became the namesakes of the school in 1995, when it was named the Emek Hebrew Academy Teichman Family Torah Center.

Sepulveda Dam is a flood risk reduction project located in the south-central portion of the San Fernando Valley. It lies across the Los Angeles River, 43 miles above the mouth of the river, and six miles above the confluence of Tujunga Wash and the Los Angeles River.

In addition to its primary purpose of flood risk reduction, Sepulveda Dam provides recreation, agriculture and wildlife mitigation benefits. Sepulveda Dam regulates flows on the Los Angeles River and is designed to reduce the risk of flooding along the river below the dam. It forms part of the system of flood risk reduction structures located on the San Gabriel and the Los Angeles Rivers and their tributaries, which are collectively known as the Los Angeles County Drainage Area.

Sepulveda Dam consists of an earth-filled embankment with a reinforced concrete gated spillway and gated outlet works and was completed in December 1941.

District inducts two into 'Distinguished Civilian Employee' cadre in ceremony

Kristen Skopeck

LOS ANGELES — More than 40 retired District employees responded to an invitation from Los Angeles District Commander Col. Kimberly Colloton to attend a "State of the District" presentation and lunch at the District headquarters Nov. 12.

The event provided an opportunity for information sharing, as the retirees were paired with current employees who hold or previously held their job. It also presented an opportunity to unveil the names of two retirees who were chosen to be honored as Distinguished Civilian Employees.

Jack Hughes, a management analyst who worked for the District from 1965 to 1982, was selected as the 2012 Distinguished Civilian Employee for his innovative ways of helping to save tax dollars and demonstrated leadership skills.

"Jack was the 'go to' guy in the District for 17 years," said Dan Sulzer in the Planning Division. "And, he was the Golf Club President for 40 years!"

Sulzer said the fact that Hughes grew up during the Depression may have infused a sense of thriftiness in him, or the fact that he served in the military during WWII and the Korean War.

Regardless, he said, Jack always cared deeply about his



Jack Hughes, a management analyst who worked for the Los Angeles District from 1965 to 1982, was selected as the 2012 Distinguished Civilian Employee of the Year for his innovative ways of helping to save tax dollars and demonstrated leadership skills during a ceremony Nov. 12. (Photo by Richard Rivera)



The 2013 Distinguished Civilian Employee selectee was Brian Moore, who retired in 2012 after serving 44 years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Moore's title at retirement was Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, and, in that capacity, he served as the senior civilian in the Los Angeles District and was responsible for all of the District's major projects and programs. The honor was bestowed during a ceremony on Nov. 12. (Photo by Richard Rivera)

work and put in the hours necessary to do a good job.

The 2013 Distinguished Civilian Employee selectee was Brian Moore, who retired in 2012 after serving 44 years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Moore's title at retirement was Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, and, in that capacity, he served as the senior civilian in the District and was responsible for all of the District's major projects and programs.

"Brian Moore provided the leadership to bring (the District) an extraordinarily high level of achievement and recognition as a high performing military, civil works, navigation, and interagency and international services organization during his time with the District," said Kenneth Morris, deputy chief of Programs and Project Management Division. "He provided a consistent knowledge base to assist in addressing and solving issues that impacted the District and provided guidance to help the District execute its programs."

Large posters with the photos of Hughes and Moore were ceremoniously unveiled by Colloton during the retiree luncheon. She congratulated and thanked them for their many years of dedicated service.

She closed the session by telling everyone present that, "ensuring the entire Corps of Engineers family stays in communication and is familiar with current happenings will always be vitally important to me."

Dam operators play key role in public safety

Kristen Skopeck

LOS ANGELES — When thinking about federal employees who are "emergency essential," firefighters, police and air traffic controllers often come to mind, but people seldom think of dam operators. The work dam operators do each day helps keep people safe. In times of heavy rain, it can save lives.

Michael Moran is a dam operator at Santa Fe Dam and Reservoir, which is a flood risk management project constructed and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District. Built in 1949, the project is located on the San Gabriel River about four miles downstream from the mouth of the San Gabriel Canyon, near Irwindale, Calif. It is one of 13 dams in the District.



Moran

A typical work day for Moran includes performing gate and generator operations, compiling reports for the Reservoir Operations Center, inspecting miles of river channel, and tackling various mechanical maintenance duties at a project that is directly upstream from the homes of millions of people.

Relatively new to the Corps, Moran joined the District in February. He said he likes working outdoors and knowing that his work makes a difference.

"Most people don't realize Santa Fe Dam is a dam because the basin is almost always dry, but it was built to collect flood runoff from the uncontrolled drainage areas upstream, store it temporarily, and release it into the river at a rate that does not exceed the downstream channel capacity," Moran said.

In fact, Santa Fe Dam has 16 six-foot wide by nine-foot high hydraulically operated slide gates that, combined, can release water at a rate of 41,000 cubic feet per second. Since an Olympic-sized swimming pool holds about 88,000 cubic feet of water, those gates

could drain the entire pool in two seconds. While in "stand-by" position, one outlet gate is opened to six inches and the rest are closed, which allows water to trickle through during low flows or impound during high flows.

"Dam operators constantly keep in mind that flooding is the most common, costly and deadly natural disaster in the U.S. each year," he said. "It's impossible to prevent floods entirely; however, Corps' projects lessen the risk of flooding to homes and businesses, saving lives and millions of dollars in potential damages."

According to Moran, during the initial stages of a flood event, Santa Fe Dam will release as much of the inflow as is physically possible. This will minimize the amount of stored water and impact to structures located within the basin. However, as the river channel downstream approaches its capacity, he or his fellow dam operators will begin to close the gates in the gated outlet passages. Then, more water will be stored in the reservoir and held back from flooding downstream.



View of Santa Fe Dam after storm event. (Photo by Greg Fuderer)

"The primary purpose of the dam is to reduce the risk of flood damage for the densely populated area between the dam and Whittier Narrows Reservoir," Moran said. "The operation of Santa Fe Dam is coordinated with the operation of other Corps' dams in the Los Angeles County Drainage Area system."

He explained that once Santa Fe's reservoir level reaches 456 feet, flood control releases will be initiated.

"When impounded water can be released safely, the flood pool will be drained as rapidly as possible, consistent with the achievement of downstream flood control," Moran said. "This is done to empty the flood control pool in preparation for the next flood."

The work may not be highly visible, but U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Dam Operators like Moran perform an essential role in public safety at 654 dams across the nation. The dams serve a variety of purposes besides flood damage reduction, like navigation, water supply, irrigation, hydropower, recreation, environmental enhancement and combinations thereof.

District working on new Nellis AFB equipment building

Daniel J. Calderón

NELLIS AFB, Nev. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Nellis Resident Office is working to ensure the incoming F-35 squadrons at Nellis Air Force Base have the best facilities available. This includes a new Aviation Ground Equipment facility the District is building on the base.

"This facility is for maintenance of the ground equipment for the aircraft," said Brett Young, a civil engineer with the District's Resident Office. "It's one big service station."

The facility is designed with both indoor and outdoor repair areas for maintenance equipment. Most of the equipment which will be brought to the facility can go in either area; however, the larger equipment, the vehicles which have large ladders attached to them for example, can only be worked on in the outside bays. Inside, there are eight work areas in both the North Bay and the South Bay. The inner bays also have a heating and a cooling system in addition to a ventilation system which can help keep the air clean for workers. The Corps is looking at completing the \$11 million facility either late this year or very early in 2014. The date originally scheduled for completion is June 2014 so the project is ahead of schedule. Young said the new facility takes strides forward both in what it can do for the Air Force and how it will improve working conditions for the AGE maintainers.

"This is a huge improvement over what they currently have," he said. "At the current facility, there is one restroom and no locker rooms."

The new facility will hold two separate bathroom and locker rooms with shower areas for employees. An upgrade that might not be noticed except for those who really need it is the drinking fountain. The new facility has an addition to the fountain that can be used to fill water bottles. In the past, anyone with a bottle or a cup had to tilt it to try and get water into it. The new fountain dispenses water from above the bottle or cup so anyone who uses it can keep their receptacle upright. It might seem like a small thing; but, Young said it is part of the drive to provide employees and the Air Force with the best facilities available.

"The break room is plumbed for a refrigerator and there is no break room at the current facility," he said. "This space is going to be dramatically improved."

Improvements to the facility cross the gamut of processes. The power wash facility, which uses water and steam to clean AGE, is equipped with bio filters that separate petroleum and other contaminants from water before the water is put back into the system on base to be recycled. The shade structures for the outdoor bays are equipped with photovoltaic cells with are designed to provide up to 16 percent of the power for the facility.

"This is our first project with the Corps of Engineers as a prime contractor," said Ronald L. Reed, president of R.L. Reed, Inc, the prime contractor on the AGE project. "I've been working with the Corps on projects since 2000."



Workers at the site of the new Aviation Ground Equipment facility on Nellis AFB work on one of the exterior work bays. The Los Angeles District's Nellis Resident Office is working on construction of the new facility which will contain interior and exterior work bays in addition to an enclosed area to power wash the equipment. (Photo by Daniel J. Calderón)

Reed said he appreciates the opportunity to work with the Corps on this project. His company is designated as 8(a). According to the Small Business Administration site "The 8(a) Business Development Program helps small, disadvantaged businesses compete in the marketplace." Before a business owner applies to the SBA for 8(a) status, information on the site encourages them to ask themselves a few questions: "Am I a small business according to SBA's size standards? Is my business 51 percent owned by one or more individuals who qualify as socially and economically disadvantaged and are U.S. citizens? Is my business controlled, managed and operated by one or more individuals who qualify as disadvantaged? Have I been in business for at least two years?" There is much more information on the SBA site. Reed said his experience as an 8(a) company working with the Corps has helped his business improve and that in turn has helped his customers.

"Learning the proper procedures and processes have been great for us," Reed said. "Each step along the way has advanced our knowledge base. Over the years, we've been able to elevate our quality and professionalism until we are now up to the standards of the Corps."

Although the contractor and the Corps are working through the final details of the project, they have turned over pieces of it at the request of the Air Force. Young said they completed and turned over the running track across from the facility to the base in addition to the parking lot.

Reed said he looks forward to working on future projects with the Corps.

"The Corps has the highest standards of quality that we know of," he said. "So, we're very proud to be working with the Corps."

LA District helps prepare Nellis for F-35s

Daniel J. Calderón

NELLIS AFB, Nev. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Las Vegas Resident Office is working to help prepare Nellis for the arrival of the incoming F-35 squadrons.

"This has been quite an involved project," said Andy Fikus, the District's project engineer for the F-35 hangar and squadron operations project. "It's been done very well and totally on time and on budget. That doesn't happen just by accident."

Fikus gave the majority of the credit for the success of the project, which is due to be turned over to the base in December, to Straub Construction, the District's prime contractor on the project. He said there were some unforeseen issues with the construc-

tion. One of the larger ones came before the contractor even started pouring any concrete.

"Three buildings were demolished and we had to do a lot of over-excavating" said Robert C. Huse, Straub's superintendent for the project. "That means we had to remove several feet of material and bring in structural fill to create a level that's solid so the building doesn't sink over the years."

During the course of the over-excavation, the team came upon three 18,000 gallon metal tanks buried. They contacted the District and the base to request a way forward. Nellis' archeologist came to survey the site and found information on the tanks that dated them to World War II. According to base officials, the tanks contained benzene so the Straub team conducted

a hazardous material cleanup prior to getting into the construction phase.

Since that time, the construction has gone well, according to both Fikus and Huse. The facility is designed to meet the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Silver standards. The District has installed plaques throughout the hangar and squadron buildings which detail aspects of the building's "green" construction and design. Huse said the labor for the project did come from multiple locations; however, the company did use local contractors for masonry, electricity and specialty subcontractors. As someone who knows the local area, Huse said he plans to use more local labor if he is involved in future contracts.

The hangar was turned over to Nellis AFB Nov. 15.



Workers put the finishing touches on the newest F-35 hangar and squadron operations facility on Nellis AFB. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Las Vegas Resident Office is working to help prepare Nellis for the arrival of the incoming F-35 squadrons with the new construction project. (Photo by Daniel J. Calderón)

Students wish deployees 'Happy Thanksgiving'

David A. Salazar

LOS ANGELES—Local students of all grades from elementary through high school, offered happy—and often adorable—sentiments for the Thanksgiving holiday through handmade cards fashioned for Corps employees and troops supporting operations in Afghanistan.

More than 1,400 cards were delivered to the District headquarters by the goodwill program's sponsoring agency, the Veterans Advocacy Group of America, on Nov. 1. The cards will be forwarded to employees of the Los Angeles District and others serving in temporary assignments in Afghanistan.

One card read: "Happy Thanksgiving. Thank you for going out and fighting for our freedom. We are very grateful for you serving our country. It has to be hard away from all your family. I know how it feels. I felt that way in kindergarten. So I hope you enjoy all this yummy food. Love, Alex."

The goal is that the cards arrive at the Corps' various offices in the South-west Asian country in time for Thanksgiving. Sterling Barbour, VAGA's vice president and Army veteran, said the initiative is meant to brighten troops' and civilians' days as they spend the holiday away from loved ones.

"I'm a Vietnam veteran, and to get cards and letters when you're out there—it means so much. I know it's going to make the troops happy and put smiles on their faces. We try to do



From left to right: Sterling Barbour, vice president of the Veterans Advocacy Group of America; Jennie Ayala, the District's outreach coordinator; Tova Barbour, VAGA's president; and Lori Lieberman, a VAGA volunteer, sort through a pile of holiday greeting cards at the District headquarters Nov. 1. The cards will be mailed to deployed troops and civilians in Afghanistan as part of a goodwill outreach program initiated by VAGA. (Photo by David Salazar)

anything possible to make their days better," he said.

Sterling's wife, Tova, is the president of VAGA, a non-profit organization headquartered in Encino, Calif., that seeks to improve training, employment and other post-military service benefit opportunities for veterans and their families.

"The card campaign is a way to connect the local community with veterans. The card campaign is a sense of responsibility and respect for our overseas troops," Tova said. "By having students and local organizations help with the cards, it gives them a sense of pride and heightened awareness. This is a way to show patronage to our troops for the outstanding job they are doing in defending our country. Our overall mission is to raise awareness for our troops with commitment, compassion and respect."

Anne Hutton, chief of the District's emergency management office, manages the District's family support and civilian deployment efforts. Hutton's department periodically mails deployees copies of the District family newsletter, on which cards are sometimes

attached for coinciding holidays.

"Oftentimes, what you see is that the recipient will send us an e-mail because they're so touched by the card," Hutton said. "It's always the favorite item in the packages we send."

Although the Los Angeles District maintains an average of 30 civilian employees deployed to Afghanistan at any given period, the high volume of cards received for the Thanksgiving holiday will be put to good use and distributed to many others in the region.

"Not every district is in a huge metropolitan area with lots of schools, so even though we have 40 people deployed from the District, we know that these cards are being shared," Hutton said. "They're always well received by an entire office as opposed to just an individual and we know that extra cards are making their way to others around the country."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has maintained a presence in Afghanistan since 2002 overseeing Afghan military, police, and civil works, operations and maintenance, and capacity development projects on behalf of U.S. Forces and the Afghan government.



A pile of roughly 1,400 holiday greeting cards were delivered to the Los Angeles District headquarters as part of a holiday card drive initiated by the Veterans Advocacy Group of America. (Photo by David Salazar)



The Los Angeles District was tasked with a seemingly impossible mission in the wake of the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces on Dec. 7, 1941: To camouflage acres upon acres of Los Angeles real estate where military aircraft were being built. At left, Lockheed Aircraft's Burbank factory before and after (right) the District was done with its groundbreaking camouflage project. (Photos courtesy of Lockheed via thinkorthwim.com)

In WWII LA, no task was too tough for District

David A. Salazar

LOS ANGELES—Many people understand the engineer's role in society. Among the definitions of engineer, the Oxford Dictionary lists one as "(verb) to skillfully or artfully arrange for an event or situation to occur." This is certainly the definition most befitting of the myriad of challenging missions the Los Angeles District undertook in the days after Japanese forces bombed the Pearl Harbor Naval Air Base on Dec. 7, 1941.

Arguably the most notable of these endeavors was the mission to camouflage entire expanses of Los Angeles County. Japanese forces had done something that was unthinkable at the time—reaching Hawaii by fighter planes via naval carriers. This led defense officials to believe enemy forces potentially had the resources to reach the coast of California. Aside from concerns for public safety, officials believed the coastal area—specifically, that in Los Angeles—would be a strategic target for enemy forces for another reason: More than half of all American military aircraft were manufactured there.

The War Department put the Corps of Engineers in charge of creating solutions for passive protection for the aircraft factories as well as military installations and other critical facilities. The project scope included the construction of 278 separate items for protection at 17 industrial plants, encompassing acres upon acres of highly urbanized landscape.

Luckily, the District had an ace up its sleeve. Lt. Col. George Hazenbush, a veteran of World War I and a U.S. Army

Reserve camouflage officer, was working locally in the motion picture industry. He was brought into the District on active duty to oversee the unprecedented task.

He quickly turned to his contacts in Hollywood who were well-versed in the art of transforming theater stages into film settings: set designers. Hazenbush and a team of engineers and Hollywood professionals devised a plan to cover entire factories in overhead nets and tactically-colored garlands. The team also developed paints that were nearly undetectable by infrared cameras.

"The know-how which the motion picture industry developed to persuade the American public to accept what they saw as reality was exactly what the country required to deceive the enemy by converting movie technology into camouflage techniques," wrote Dr. Anthony Turhollow of the event in "A History of the Los Angeles District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: 1898-1965".

Entire mock villages were built on top of the netting, complete with fake trees made with colored chicken feathers, which could replicate the motion of leaves blowing in the wind.

By May 1942, the District had nearly completed the project, using millions of square feet of netting. Although enemy forces never made it to California's shores, the camouflage stayed a part of the Los Angeles landscape until the war ended in September 1945.

Editor's note: This article referenced two works by long-time District historian Dr. Anthony Turhollow: "Do You know? Vol. II" and "A History of the Los Angeles District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: 1898-1965".

The road to fitness: One girl's journey

Mindy Grupe

I can't believe it's been a year since I started on this journey. I've never lasted this long before. Something always made me stop – I'd "screw up" and then decide to quit because I'd "ruined my diet." Or I'd use the excuse of the holidays to undo all of the progress I'd made. I came up with excuses, convinced myself that it wasn't my fault, and revert right back to where I was before.

You know what? No. Something didn't make me stop. I made me stop. It wasn't an external force that made me drop the celery and pick up the chocolate - I consciously made that decision on my own. And that idea is a revelation for me. This was all me. No one else made me gain this weight. I did it myself.

Not anymore. I've made it a year! And, I have no intention of stopping now. I still have a long way to go, but let's take a look at the progress I've made so far.

One year ago:

- The hill outside of my office left me huffing and puffing and dragging my feet across the lobby so I could get an elevator by myself and catch my breath in peace.

- A half day at Disneyland had my entire body complaining about overexertion. And I'd eat an entire turkey leg by myself (1000 calories!!!).

- I couldn't fit into a single seat on the train while commuting to and from work, constantly earning what I thought to be dirty looks from other people who had to share the double with me (working on the dirty looks thing - most of that is simply in my own mind).

- I wouldn't have dreamed of working out in front of other people, because if it was possible to die of embarrassment, I'd find a way to do it.

- I was wondering why, with all of the healthy eating I was doing, that I wasn't losing weight. I didn't - wouldn't - admit to myself that I'd only eat healthy during the day at work, when I had other people who might possibly judge my food choices. At night, on my



A year and 13 days later, Mindy Grupe, of the District's Reservoir Regulation Section, has made a significant change in her diet and transformed herself. (Image courtesy of Mindy Grupe)

own, I ate whatever I wanted, usually more than I needed.

Today:

- That hill is now a non-issue. Except when it's raining. Someone please point me in the direction of the person who thought it was a good idea to install tile instead of concrete sidewalk. It's slick! But at least I can breathe while skating up and down.

- I no longer have my Disneyland passes (way too expensive), but I definitely don't have the issue of overexertion anymore. And I haven't had one of those turkey legs in ages!

- People sit next to me on the train without thinking about it anymore. I fit in my own seat! But, now that means I almost always have someone sitting next to me. People have started noticing me on the train, too. Some of you may have had this experience before – many people's eyes kind of slide over you when you're not physically "ideal." Apparently I'm heading in that direction, because people seem to "see" me now.

- I don't care who is in the gym now. I'm there to work – not win a popularity contest. I also have a lot of friends in the gym. I'm still a bit embarrassed by the parts of me that still jiggle, but I've started to realize the vast majority of the people in the gym aren't judging me. Instead, they're admiring what I've done. And, I'm way ahead of those still sitting on the couch!

- I hold myself accountable for my choices. I plan for what I want to eat – for example, my husband and I went to see a movie last Friday. I got up early and busted my butt on the elliptical in order to be able to eat popcorn. And it was good popcorn. I don't deny myself anything – it only leads to temptation, and I don't need any more than I already have.

- Probably one of the biggest things is that I've come to terms with the fact that I've never really tried to change before. Sure, I dieted. But I never really wanted it like this. My other weight loss

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Safety is key, especially during the holidays

Steve McCombs

From the Los Angeles District Safety Office Staff, to all of you, our most sincere wishes for a safe and joyous holiday season. Regardless of what holidays you celebrate, there are some things to consider when planning your upcoming adventures. Here's a question: If you were to be injured or, heaven forbid, killed over the holidays, what do you think would be the cause?

- Fall from ladder while putting lights on your house.
- Fire in your home.
- Recreational injury.
- Traffic accident.
- All of the above, but most likely (d.).

If you picked e., then you're right on the money. Now go spend some of that money on gifts and help stimulate the economy!! But I digress. Any of the accidents listed above are likely to occur during the holidays. We know this from organizations like the National Safety Council and the Centers for Disease Control. These accidents are predictable and they occur every year. That's the bad news. The good news is that when you can predict accidents, you can lower your risk with some easy-to-use precautions. Forewarned is forearmed! Here is a link for some very good tips to use in the coming season: <http://www.nsc.org/Documents/Holiday%20Safety%20Tips.pdf>.

By the way, did you know that it is state law in California



Cold weather and snowy or icy road conditions are major factors in holiday traffic accidents. The high volume of travelers on the roadways also increase the risk of serious accidents. (File photo)

to have a Carbon Monoxide Alarm in your home? I could not find any such legislation for Arizona or Nevada, but just because it's not mandated doesn't mean you shouldn't have one. I've written before how one saved my own life and the life of my wife and son. Here's the Cali link: <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/pdf/bml/Frequently%20asked%20questions%20on%20Carbon%20Monoxide.pdf>.

And someone at the Centers for Disease Control put together a very nice little piece of music you should hear. Speakers on and open the link! <http://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/12waysSong.htm>.

As always, buckle up and drive sober and safely. And to add one more chunk to my monthly slogan, "put your cell phone away when you're driving!!"

Best Wishes to All,
Safety Steve

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attempts were half-assed at best. This time, it's whole-assed.

Finally, to round out this note, some numbers:

Weight Lost: 79.5 pounds

Body Fat % Lost: 7.9%

BMI Points Lost: 8.3

Inches Lost:

Chest: 4.0 inches

Bicep: 2.0 inches

1-in Above the Umbilicus: 9.5 inches

Hips: 15.25 inches

Thigh: 3.25 inches

Calf: 1.5 inches

Total: 35.5 inches!

I can't even begin to explain how much better I feel than last year. I'm much more confident and comfortable in my own skin. I'm not wearing plus sized clothing anymore, so now I have more choices than sweatpants and tents that Wal Mart seems content to offer large women. My husband revels in the fact that he can actually get his arms all



"Like" Mindy Grupe's growing public facebook page "The Fat Equation" (<http://www.facebook.com/thefatequation>) to follow her weight loss journey. (Image courtesy of Mindy Grupe)

the way around me. And, to be honest, I love all of the attention I'm getting now.

Now that I'm a year into this process, I find that the calorie counting comes naturally. I think about everything that I eat - how it will make me feel, if it's worth the calories and the exercise it'll cost me to eat it. I admit, I still suffer from food guilt. Oh, you know what I mean. Even if I have more than enough calories to eat something, and I do eat it, I feel guilty afterwards.

That probably won't change, and I'll have to learn to manage it.

I am walking, talking proof that it's possible to lose weight with dietary change and exercise. You don't need pills, gimmicks, or surgery. You don't even need to exercise (but it certainly helps!). If I can do it, so can you.

Here's to a year of success, and more to come! Keep on shining, my friends.

~Mindy~

Is it the most wonderful time of the year?

Daniel J. Calderón

It's a bright season, isn't it? It's supposed to be the season of silver bells, tinsel and sparkling trees lighting up stores and homes around the country. Thanksgiving has come and gone and now is the right time for Christmas decorations to go up around the country. Carols and assorted Christmas tunes should be playing on radio stations while friends and family should be looking forward to merry get togethers and overindulgence in food from binges that most of us are going to regret the week after they happen.



But, what about the shadows? What about the darkness at the edge of the light? I think too many people are afraid of the darkness, especially at this time of year. Too many bright lights. Too many twinkling, tinkling pinpoints of brightness piercing the night and trying to force away the dark. But, it's still there. Why can't people acknowledge it? Is it because they think they're supposed to be absolutely and completely bright and gay (Yes, I know what it means and I think the people at Hallmark who decided to change the quote on their sweater ornament to "Don we now our fun apparel" are complete idiots) during the holiday season? Where is that written?

Instead of being afraid of the dark in our lives, it seems more sensible to embrace it. After all, there can be no shadows without light and the sharper shadows seem to be cast by the brightest lights. I think people who do experience the darkness at this time of year feel they are somehow wrong to do so. They are often told by their well-meaning friends that this is the best time of year and they should be happy. After all, there's so much light and so many apparently happy people. Why should

they feel so depressed or upset or alone? Why should they wallow in the dark when there is so much light everywhere? Why should they be depressed when there is so much joy and love in the air?

Because they do. That's really the only answer that makes sense to me. People feel the way they do because of what is going on in their lives. If there is difficulty, it really doesn't make a difference if it's Christmas Day, May Day or if it's June 3. They're going to react to the difficulty. If there is a darkness hanging over them, then it really doesn't help to tell them that they should be happy because Christmas is just around the corner. Masking feelings isn't a really helpful way to deal with them.

I think it's worse for people if you tell them to cheer up because it's Christmas. To me, that's like trying to guilt them into pretending to feel good. I know it's awkward to have someone at a get together who is bummed out. I get that. But, trying to force the issue doesn't really help anything. It's like gilding a pimple. The junk is still under there and it's probably getting worse because it can't openly heal as it's meant to under the façade.

If someone you know is feeling like they are in the dark during this holiday season, then you can step in and gift them some of your light. If they can use it, great. Hopefully, it will help bring them out of their funk. If they cannot, then you have to accept that as well. A gift of light, like any other gift you give, is freely given with no expectations of use, compensation or appreciation. It's hard, I know, to see someone take your gift and toss it aside. But, if your gift is given in the proper spirit, then you have to let it go.

If that person is someone you care about, a friend or a relative or even an acquaintance with whom you have a good tie with, they will remember that gesture. When the fog does eventually clear, they will recall your effort to help them. If the haze of whatever depression they are in doesn't dissipate, then, you will need to decide if the proper course of action is to continue trying to

brighten their spirits or if professional help is needed. The only surety I can offer is if that person signals an intent to do harm either to him or herself or to others, then it is time to bring in professional assistance.

Barring that, the best you can offer is an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean on. I have found that most people don't want advice or direction right away. They want someone who can listen sympathetically, someone who can nod and be a part of their thoughts for a while and someone who knows the value and healing abilities of silence.

For most, this is indeed the time of year when light finally triumphs and the warm feelings of friends and family dissipate the iciest grips of whatever has been bedeviling them throughout the year. For most, the woes of the world vanish in the embrace of holiday cheer, be it from Christmas, Hanukah, Yule or whatever other festivity takes them. To these people, I wish you all the best of the season. May your family and friends be welcoming. May your food be warm, tasty and plentiful. May your home be strong. May your holiday be filled with more joy than you ever thought possible.

For those who are in the throes of crisis and cares, I offer my ear with which to listen. I offer my shoulder on which to lean. I offer my heart in which they can pour theirs and know that they are safe. I offer my arms to embrace them so they know they are cared for. I offer my advice if they want it and my silence if that is preferred. I offer all of this freely and with no expectation of recompense.

During this season of giving, enjoy the gifts you receive. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having fun and enjoying the benefits of what others freely give you. In their eyes, you are worth all the gift represents and, very likely, even more than they have available. However, be ready to give as well. And not in money or in things. But be ready to give of yourself. You'd be amazed at just how limitless the well of your compassion can be if you'd only take the time to tap its depths.

Just a thought...

Donkeys-a-plenty



A group of donkeys--part of a herd of 100 total--stand in a specially-built corral at the Hansen Dam Recreation Area Nov. 8, after an art installation done to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Event organizers worked with the District's Asset Management Division to obtain a permit for use of the property. (Photo by Fenella Trabold)

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in advising district leadership on the most complex and difficult issues."

Bazan receives E. Manning Seltzer Award

When he joined the Los Angeles District after a two-year deployment in Afghanistan as a major in the Reserves with the U.S. Army JAG Corps, John Bazan inherited a case which the government had recently lost where the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals found that the government caused 218 days of delay and remanded the case for negotiation.

Bazan persuaded the board to sustain the termination for default of the design-build contract to construct a munitions maintenance facility for the F-22 program at Nellis Air Force Base. The decision saved the government \$7 million.

For this accomplishment, Bazan

received E. Manning Seltzer Award, presented to a Corps attorney who has made special contributions to its legal services mission.

The award is named for E. Manning Seltzer who served more than 40 years on the legal staffs of the Corps of Engineers, Federal Works Agency and the Department of the Army Construction Agency. From 1956 until his retirement in 1977, he was the Chief Counsel of the Corps of Engineers. He was renowned as one of the outstanding lawyers in the Government. His exceptional leadership, executive ability, foresight, judgment and tact placed him among the elite of the legal profession.

"(John's) success in achieving a favorable decision in the complex termination for default litigation ... is a testament to his tenacity and his litigation prowess," the nomination package states. "By Mr. Bazan's achievement,, the Government escaped significant damages. Mr. Bazan's contribution

preserved the relationship with the Air Force customer involved."

The decision established several principles of law applicable to government construction contracts in general and, in particular, government contract law concerning the termination for default clause.

With assistance only from a paralegal, Bazan conducted an eight-day hearing before the board in December 2010 and January 2011, during which he examined every witness, including subject matter experts from the contractor and the government. Afterward, he submitted a post-trial brief that contained 253 proposed findings of fact. In the May 2013 decision, the government prevailed on nearly every disputed issue of fact.

Bazan's representation of the government in the appeal to the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals articulated principles of law that will help the government in the defense of future terminations for default.

6 people matched with
therapy dogs
I make it possible



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