

# ST. LOUIS ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT **ESPRIT**

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Successful restoration of the Swan Lake ecosystem is heralded by the visit of more than 100,000 migratory waterfowl after the project's completion.

## **District Receives Environmental Design Award**

### ***Swan Lake Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Project is Cited***

More than a decade's planning, partnerships and hard work have gone into Swan Lake, on the west bank of the southern

reaches of the Illinois River, in the Lincoln Land's Calhoun County. The results have earned the St. Louis District a coveted Chief of Engineers Honor Award for the habitat restoration and enhancement project there.

The 4,600-acre project – part of the Upper Mississippi River System EMP (Environmental Management Program) – is a major element of the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge. It includes the

2,900-acre Swan Lake, 200 acre-Fuller Lake, 950-acres of bottomland forest and 550-acres of farmland. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Illinois Department of Conservation manage the lakes. Located near the similarly restored areas at Stump Lake and Calhoun Point, the total region comprises one quarter of the total wetland and deepwater fish and waterfowl habitats on the lower 80 miles of the Illinois River.

**Swan Lake Habitat Cont. page 3**



### Commander's Perspective



**MAJ Joseph D. Tyron**

I just spent the last week of April at ENFORCE – at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., where the Army and its Engineering Force was under discussion among the senior members of the Engineer Regiment.

I will begin by telling you that the Corps reputation is high and our value to the nation is deeply appreciated. For example: the World Bank estimates it will take \$55 billion over many years to right the damage that has been inflicted on Iraq by its previous misguided leaders. Of that, \$18 billion – about one-third – is being entrusted to the Corps of Engineers to manage this year alone.

Both the Army and the Corps are undergoing daunting change. The Army is embarking on the largest fundamental restructuring, since World War II, with the new organization being built on what are called Units of Action. Many weapons systems that have been “sacred cows” for years are being cancelled.

It is not “business as usual.” This will change the way the Army does business – the way it goes to war – as a more flexible, responsive and ready Army emerges.

The Corps of Engineers – and yes, each of you are part of the Engineer Regiment – is likewise undergoing far-reaching change.

Like our combat colleagues, we too are building better flexibility, better ability to focus on our customers and ways to enhance our ability to deliver on our projects and other assignments.

In this sea of changes, new weapons, tactics, new processes like PMBP and P2, some things won’t change, our values, principles and our ethic of service to this great nation.

Our principles, our values, are what set us apart from the armies of other nations and other government organizations.

While I fully recognize that the vast majority of our St. Louis District family are civilians members of the Army, I invite your attention to our organizational values, Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage.

These are principles that apply not just to the field of combat, but rather, to life as well. They are woven through the many guiding principles that guide us, such as our Environmental Operating Principles and the succinct message BG Riley recently conveyed with his leadership cards.

The Army’s principles call for us always to show loyalty to our organization and each other. They remind us that it is our duty to do our best to carry out our part of a project or mission. They tell us to respect each other and all with

whom we work, inside and outside of our Corps. By selfless service we mean doing things for the right reasons, never for personal gain. Honor means adhering to truth and sincerity in our actions. Integrity means standing behind what you say and do – always. And finally, personal courage is overcoming fear and uncertainty to do the tough things.

These characteristics are like muscles. They grow by exercise and repetition. So how does this all apply to our work in the District?

In combat, one of the most important elements is trust.

Often we in the Corps must be seen as honest brokers of disagreement, or to be trusted to overcome challenges like floods and other disasters. To be effective, we must build and earn trust.

Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage, you might not see these words on any billboards on the highway. They ought always to be in your mind however, just over every hill and around every curve as you follow your own road forward through life.

Again thank you for the job that you do everyday. I value your service to the Engineer Regiment.

Essayons.



**US Army Corps of Engineers**  
St. Louis District®

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**This closure between Swan Lake and the Illinois River both permits fish to move between the two and the Corps to manage water levels for optimum support to the lake's ecosystem.**

**Swan Lake Habitat Cont. from page 1**

The project was conceived in the late 1980s and only recently completed. Until it was finished, the near-term future of Swan Lake was as clouded as its turbid, increasingly silt-filled waters. The lake was being heavily impacted by silt from the Illinois River and runoff from surrounding farmlands. In addition, water level changes and wind-generated waves were increasing the turbidity of the lake. The silt, accumulating at a rate of one-third of an inch per year, was reducing the size of the lake and increasing danger to fish during extremely hot and cold weather. Loss of

acreage and vegetation was similarly driving migratory waterfowl from the area, which lies squarely in a major migratory flyway.

According to Sharon Cotner, the first project manager for the Swan Lake project, "When we began the project, the first thing that struck us was the opportunity it represented in habitat enhancement and preservation and how supportive and interested the local people, the State of Illinois and the US Fish and Wildlife Service were. We understood early on, how important this area was to them."

Cotner went on to remember, "We focused on what we wanted the area to ultimately look like and then identified some "out of the box" ways to get there such as the partnering with the Natural Resource Conservation Service for the upland ponds to reduce the sediment load in the lake and the concept of drawing down the entire lake to solidify the lakebed and encourage plant growth.

A big part of the project's success can be attributed to the innovative aspects of the project," she said with pleasure. Mike Thompson, to whom Cotner handed off the project, reinforced the danger Swan Lake was in. He said that at some point, absent effective restoration steps, water tolerant trees like cottonwoods would have established

themselves in increasingly shallow, intermittently-flooded areas and eventually the entire lake would have been lost.

It is probable that the lake may someday succumb to nature's will without some kind of equally effective future intervention – natural forces are patient and inexorable – but for long time to come it has been restored as a major element of the area's dwindling wildlife habitat.

Dave Gates, who started the project's planning more than a decade ago, remembered how difficult it was to secure agreement on even its goals.

"The things that make a water area good for fish are not necessarily good for waterfowl. In the end we divided the project, emphasizing fisheries in the southern area and waterfowl in the northern area.

Numerous alternative decisions went into the design to enhance its overall cost-effectiveness.

In the end the project sought three improvements: a way to manage water flow to mimic seasonal variations, reducing wind and waves to clear the water and enhance vegetation growth, and construction of deep water habitats to enable fish to survive both extreme heat and cold.

Cost-effective methods were needed to allow the project to go forward. It was



established that a channel would have to be dredged to enable effective water flow into and out of the lake at the best times for fish and waterfowl. The dredge material was in turn used to build islands to reduce wind turbulence and a levee to limit silt from the Illinois River.

Originally, wind-driven turbulence prevented most water plants from taking root in the southern reaches of Swan Lake and the stirred up silt kept even the few that did take hold from flourishing.

Dave Gates, who led the early planning effort, told how silt from farmland was dealt with. “We could have built large upland detention areas, but that would have consumed valuable farm land. We could have built delta-like areas where water and silt from the land flowed into Swan Lake, but that would have consumed lake acreage, which we were trying to enhance. In the end we built a series of small ponds – about five acres each. Everyone was happy and it worked,” he noted.

Other innovations included cost-cutting measures such as installing previously used sheet pile steel for structures. “The sheet pile was used during construction at Mel Price Locks and Dam and was slated to be sold for scrap,” Mike Thompson noted. “Now that we have shown how to reuse it, we can hardly get our hands on any more of it. Everyone wants it from here to Texas,” he added.

Thompson described the project as very complex – a delicate balance of engineering disciplines and environmental management issues. Managing water levels and sedimentation can be very complex,” he said. Levees are normally built to keep water off of dry land, but the ones at Swan Lake are designed to keep water on the river side and away from the interior lake. In this case we want to do sort of the same thing, but at various times we want to encourage the water to flow into an area and then perhaps get rid of it – all in consonance with the ecosystem,” he concluded.

The Mississippi Valley is no stranger to recognition for environmental design. In fact, this year the St. Paul District garnered the top design award for its work in Pool 8.



**“Out of the box” ideas helped make this complex project a reality.**

As noted earlier, all that is certain for the long-range future is that the region will continue to change. But for decades to come, a vital connection between the Illinois River and what was a relatively swiftly dying river backwater area has been restored.

A long-range study will observe the movement and numbers of fish as well as the physical changes such as the rate of silt accumulation. Such changes are difficult to measure. Indeed, some are almost microscopic. But one mark of success has already been met.

The bulk of the northern reaches of Swan Lake were lowered drastically last summer to complete closures separating the lake from the Illinois River.

As the water receded, sunlight reached

muddy ground and into shallow waters. Plant life growth exploded. This last fall – only weeks later – the area became a welcome rest stop and feeding area to more than 100,000 migratory water birds that had been increasingly avoiding the lake over recent years because it had become an unreliable food source.

The new deep channel provided comforting warmer depths to fish, escaping from the colder river. They voted with their wings and fins; a panel of distinguished experts in environmental design made their decisions: the votes are in and all are winners.

*(Note: To see how the winners of this award are determined, see: <http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/pubs/apr04/story9.htm>*



**Dredge material was used to build islands that helped reduce wind turbulence.**



## Lewis and Clark Academy in Alton

By Nicole Dalrymple

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with the help of the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, has formed a training academy that reinforces Army presence in the Lewis and Clark expedition.

"We want people to recognize that this mission was funded, manned, and supplied by the Army," said Jean Nauss, assistant coordinator for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The academy debuted in 2002 in hopes that participants would gain a basic knowledge of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, an interest to learn more, and an understanding of the parallels between the "Corps of Discovery" and the Army of today.

Training sessions are offered to park rangers, teachers, and public affairs officials who might be asked questions about the expedition by the general public.

Each session starts with an overview of the complete Lewis and Clark experience, and then addresses more regional topics. In total, the Corps has held 10 sessions, the last of which occurred Feb. 20-21 in Alton, Ill.

The Alton session opened with historical interpretations from differing perspectives on the Lewis and Clark journey. Among these was York, the slave of Capt. William Clark, and the only African-American on the trip, interpreted by Hasan Davis, and Sacajawea, the young Native-American interpreter that helped to propel the mission, presented by Amy Mossett.

"These are some of the finest presenters at the national level doing Lewis and Clark presentations," said Tim Bischoff, Rend Lake Park Ranger.

Bischoff, along with Mark Twain Lake Park Rangers, Mary Ann Heitmeyer, Diane Hellhake, and Robert Crocker, attended the training in Alton.

Mary Ann Heitmeyer said she enjoyed

the first-person presentations the best. "It makes the audience part of the experience, and it gives us the basis for tailoring presentations for our local audiences," she said.

Diane Hellhake was able to do exactly that, tailor her Lewis and Clark presentation for the local audience. "I thought it [the academy] was wonderful. I gave a Lewis and Clark program March 10 and based my program on what I heard in Alton. It made my original program so much better."

Tim Bischoff said he learned a great deal from John Luzader of Living Museums of the West. "He presented a session on interpreting Lewis and Clark through the use of first-person interpretation. He was trained by Freeman Tilden, the father of modern interpretation, and I found his presentation style and views very interesting."

This was the third Lewis and Clark Academy Bischoff's attended. He attended his first academy in Louisville, Ky., where he began to learn about the Lewis and Clark story, as well as learning about the expedition member he now portrays, George Drouillard. He attended his second academy last year in Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

The Alton Academy marked the first time Bischoff was asked to present. "It was a great honor," he said. "Especially when you see the company I had, Hasan Davis, Hal Stearns, Daniel Slosberg, and others. It was both a daunting challenge and a great compliment."

Also in attendance were four members of Captain Lewis' Company, the official re-enactment group for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The company is comprised of park rangers, project managers, and lock operators from all over the nation, as well as, volunteers from the Frontier Army Living History Association out of Fort Leavenworth

The training session culminated with a focus on the significant events that occurred in Illinois during the expedition.

The Lewis and Clark Corps of



**Tim Bischoff, portraying George Drouillard, discusses the role of an interpreter during Corps II's visit to the National Great Rivers Museum.**

Discovery spent the winter of 1804 at the mouth of the River DuBois, located northeast of Colonial St. Louis at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers.

Lewis and Clark departed Camp DuBois on May 14, 1804, heading west up the Missouri River.

The Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau hosted a reception for the participants at the National Great Rivers Museum. The attendees were treated to a viewing of the Corps of Engineers' Lewis and Clark movie that was recently completed. They were also treated to fiddle music from Larry Spizak, a Corps lock operator on the Monongahela River, and nationally renowned fiddle player, Daniel Slosberg, who portrays Pierre Cruzatte.

"Each year, they get better," Bischoff said. "The Alton Academy is probably the best training I've been to on Lewis and Clark, and it was the largest they've ever had."

*(Editor's Note: Portions of this article are courtesy of an Army News Service article by Ashley Stetter)*



## Skillful Management of Drought Earns Stemler MVP

By Nicole Dalrymple

Joan Stemler, senior water control manager in the St. Louis District, carries herself with an easy grace. Her calm and composed manner and soft voice make it easy to forget that her high-pressure job often involves making daily decisions that can sustain or halt millions of dollars worth of commerce on the nation's inland waterways.

While Joan has never been one to boast, and is even a bit uneasy with recognition and accolades, she received a noteworthy award from the River Industry Action Committee on March 16 at the Inland Waterways Conference in New Orleans, La. Raymond Hopkins, RIAC's chairman, presented Joan with the committee's first ever "Most Valuable Partner Award."

"Joan solidified our 'partnership' through the recent crisis by showing us that the Corps and Industry's interests are one and the same, safety of people, equipment, property and the environment," Hopkins said.

The region has been impacted by a five-year drought that really bared its teeth in the fall of 2002, and has tested the resilience of all involved. The drought is by far the "worst and longest" Joan has experienced. "The twenty-year average is typically twelve days of zero or below on the St. Louis gage, but last water year [the same as a fiscal year] we experienced 112 days," Joan explained.

In past years, similar low water events have caused Mississippi River navigation to halt for many days. But this time, throughout the extended period of low water, barge traffic kept moving. "Joan's efforts helped stop many barges from grounding," Hopkins said.

"It's not that I'm unappreciative [of the award], but it's a bit uncomfortable being singled out," Joan said. "There are so many people working behind the scenes like Mary Miles and Dave Gordon [both hydraulic engineers in



Raymond Hopkins congratulates Joan Stemler on being designated "Most Valuable Partner" by the River Industry Action Committee.

Water Control]."

During the drought, Joan was often the District's point of contact for Industry and the Coast Guard, but she stresses that her job would not be possible without daily coordination and cooperation with individuals in the District's operations and engineering divisions.

"Many people don't have any idea what a great data collection network the St. Louis District has," Joan said. "I've been to a number of districts and in my opinion the network developed by Don Coleman and maintained by Mike Barfield and Bill Williams is the most reliable I have seen. The Water Control office would not have been able to produce the results we did without this reliable network."

Joan worked tirelessly, gathering extensive data from the network on flow

rates from the Upper Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois Rivers, and making sensitive adjustments at the three District dams north of St. Louis.

Mel Baldus, Chief of the District's Engineering Division, had nothing but high praise for Joan's efforts. "In addition to being very technically proficient and experienced with water control issues and nuances, she has developed outstanding and trusting relationships with our many customers and the division office," he said.

Joan's river stage forecasts became one of the "most important information outputs" during the critical low water conditions. Her award states, "Her accurate and timely information enabled Industry, along with the Corps and the Coast Guard, to develop a proactive plan to adjust tow sizes, barge drafts, buoy



placement and dredging.”

Water Control staff worked closely with Locks 24, 25 and Mel Price during the low water event. At critical points, flows had to be monitored every two hours, and Water Control would issue gate instructions, as needed, to the lock and dam operators.

Joan was not only getting up every two hours, but she was taking work with her wherever she went. “I always travel with a laptop in my car,” she said. “I remember having to use a friend’s house once in order to log into the Omni and check the latest flows when my son was playing in a basketball tournament.”

Water Control took additional steps to help manage the low water. “The District received special permission from Division to maintain a half a foot deviation at Mel Price for nine months last year,” said Dave Busse, Chief of Potamology. A deviation is required

whenever actions differ from those prescribed in the water control plan.

The extra water can make all the difference, Busse said. Whether the water is released quickly or slowly, it can increase the St. Louis gage by one to two feet. “The deviation was used at least ten times last year and every time it was successful,” Joan said.

Gate instructions were issued to Mel Price Locks and Dam for over seven months in 2003. “When we take over management of the gates, it’s not because the lock and dam operators have done anything wrong,” Joan said. “In fact we have the best lock and dam personnel in our Division.”

Mel Price is just the last opportunity to impact river stages in the St. Louis Harbor, she explained. “When unforecasted fluctuations occur, we are able to make adjustments by using the pool at Mel Price so industry is not

affected.”

“Joan’s hard work helped control any extreme fluctuations in river levels that would have endangered the movement of barges from St. Louis to Cairo, Ill.,” Hopkins said.

Whenever there was an unexpected change in the river levels, Joan called RIAC. “When Joan called us we were able to notify the barge industry immediately and let them know which barges to move and which ones to hold until the water levels increased,” Hopkins said.

“Her continued communication with us helped the barge industry load barges deeper and take advantage of short windows of increased river levels, even if ever so slightly,” he added.

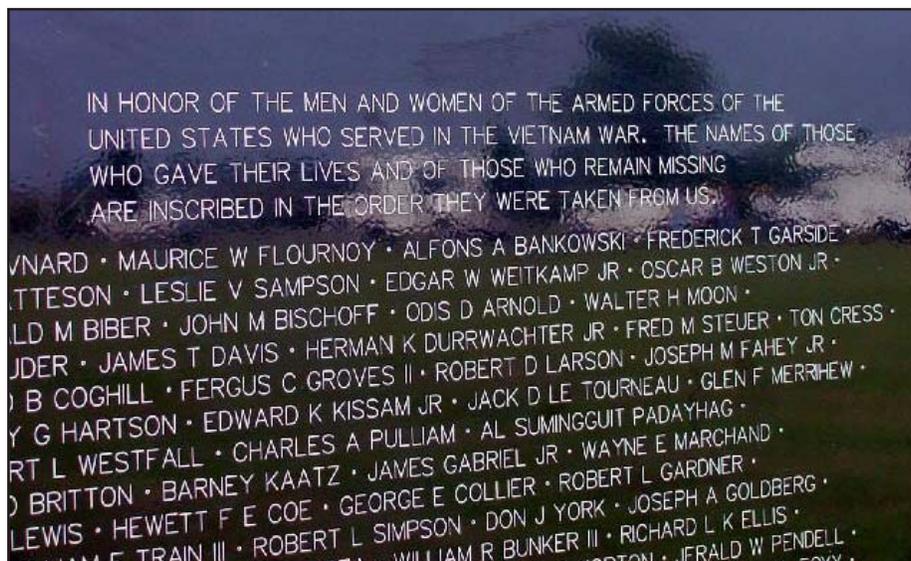
“Joan has definitely gone above and beyond seeking to understand the concerns of our stakeholders and providing the best and most timely service possible,” Baldus said.

## Vietnam Veterans Memorial Traveling Wall at Mark Twain Lake

The generous donation of thousands of dollars by General Mills employees in Hannibal, Mo., will bring *The Wall That Heals*, to Mark Twain Lake, Monroe City, Mo., June 10-13. The Wall, a dramatic half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., will be open at the M.W. Boudreaux Visitor Center 24-hours a day beginning with opening ceremonies at 10 a.m. June 10 through closing ceremonies at 5 p.m. June 13.

*The Wall That Heals* is a 250-foot replica designed to travel across America visiting cities and towns. The exhibit, which includes a traveling museum and information center, speaks not only of the loss, but the lives of the 58,000 men and women whose names are inscribed on the wall.

The museum chronicles the Vietnam War era and the unique healing power of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, while the information center serves as a venue for people to learn about friends



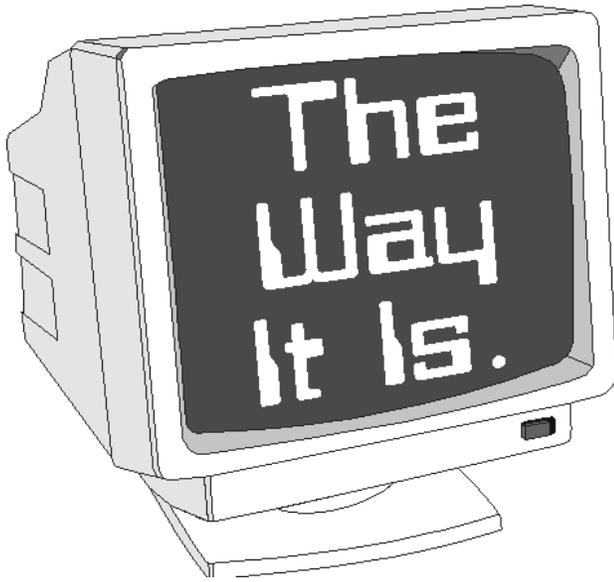
Close-up of the Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall

and loved ones lost in the war.

“*The Wall That Heals* transcends the Vietnam War to help our great nation renew its relationship with veterans of all wars,” said Jan C. Scruggs, founder and president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. “It helps veterans from all wars find healing and powerful connection through their common military experiences.”

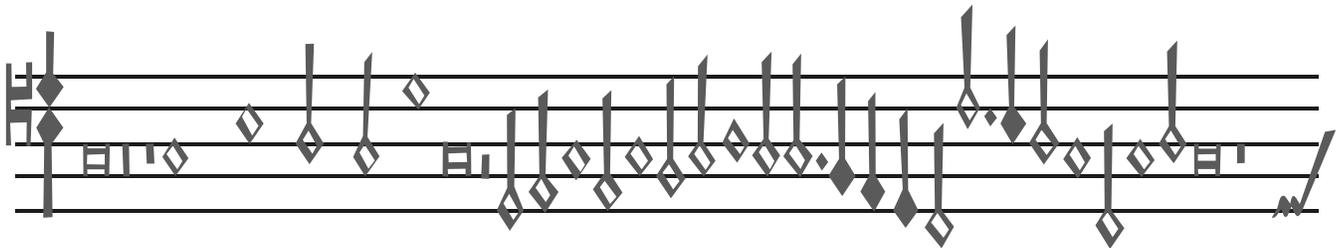
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is pleased to host this exhibit at Mark Twain Lake in cooperation with General Mills employees, the Mark Twain Lake Chamber of Commerce, local VFW Posts and other volunteers.

Additional information about the wall is available at [www.wvmf.org](http://www.wvmf.org) and the Mark Twain Lake Project Office can be reached at 573-735-4097.



I have been writing a series of articles for the Esprit entitled, "The Way I Remember It." I enjoy thinking about past events and the people I used to know. It is even more fun, however, to think about "the present - the now," and to appreciate things that are happening around us. There are many interesting events and people within the St. Louis District family we need to acknowledge and celebrate. The stories of who they are and what they do outside of the workplace are generally unknown to most of us. As a result, I redirected my focus to current events, and the people I know now. I hope you find the article and our featured MVS family members as interesting as I do.

According to the dictionary, talent is defined as a special, often creative or artistic aptitude. Music is defined as vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody or harmony. So if you put these two words together and you find someone with musical talent – you have a very nice combination of potentially entertaining ability. There are many talented people in MVS that satisfy this definition. Right now, I would like to tell you about just two of our very talented St. Louis District employees. Maybe we can call this a "Tale of Two Alans."



### Alan Brandt

First, let me give you some personal background, employment information about Alan Brandt and then I will tell you about his musical abilities. Alan Brandt works in CO-T, Construction Operations and Readiness Division. Alan is married to Catherine, a dental technician and they have 3 children, Ryan, Matthew, and Laura.

Ryan, age 21, is a student at SIU-Edwardsville. There he is majoring in biology/ecology with a minor in music (trumpet). Matthew, age 18, a Waterloo High School graduating senior is a volunteer with the St. Louis COE District presenting talks in Herpetology (study of snakes, frogs and turtles), his intended college major. He also is an ice hockey goalie and plays guitar. Laura, age 16, is a high school sophomore and plays clarinet.

Before Alan started his career with the Corps he worked as a Field Engineer for Luhr Brothers, mainly at Corps projects. (1975 to 1980). He then took a job at the old Granite City Army Depot as a Facility Engineer (1980 to 1984). In 1984 he moved to the U.S. Army Aviation - Troop Command on Goodfellow as a General Engineer/Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) responsible for engineering service contracts on helicopters and military equipment (1984 to 1997). After briefly worked for an A-E firm, he began his work for the Corps of Engineers in April 1998. He was interviewed and hired by Paul Kornberger. Alan is a General

### Alan Edmondson

Another of our talented co-workers is Alan Edmondson, CO-F, Regulatory Office.

Here is some personal and employment information about Alan. He is 35 years old and was recently married to his wife Megan, on 15 November 2003. They met each other in college on a blind date, and dated for 5 years. They now live in Edwardsville, Illinois.

Alan spent 6 years in the U.S. Army and was trained as a military policeman. While in service in Germany, he had his Mom send him his guitar, but he was never able to balance a performing career with his military assignments.

After the military, he went to work for a private security company in Washington, DC. Then he went to school at SIU-Carbondale and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry in 2000. While he was a student, he worked in the summer of 1998 at Rend Lake. After he graduated, he went to work for the National Park Service at the Acadia National Park in Maine. His duties with the Park Service included law enforcement and fire fighting. He came into the Corps family with the Memphis District's Regulatory Office and came to St. Louis about 18 months ago.

Here he works on the River's Team and processes Section 10 permits for the Rivers Section.

When are you going to get to the part about the music, Claude?



**Alan Brandt (L) and Alan Edmondson share a love of music.**

Engineer and has several responsibilities including acting as a liaison between the field offices and the various district office elements.

What about Alan’s other life – the musical talented life? Alan plays a 6-string electric guitar and is a lead singer with “Butch’s Polka Kings.” This group plays polka, waltz, country, swing, and blues music. He helped form this group in 1971 when he was a student at SIU-Edwardsville. “BP-Kings” plays for fund raising dances, anniversaries, weddings and graduation parties, averaging about two performances per month. They have a full spectrum of fans that range from the young to the “more mature.” (Like me, Ha, Ha) About a year ago, the group acquired a new performer, Alan’s son Ryan.

Now here is the part I have never understood. Alan, as well as the rest of the band, can all read music but don’t use sheet music during their performances – they play by “ear” and memory. They listen to a tune, practice a little and then play the song. How can you do that, I can’t? I need sheet music. And sometimes even that doesn’t help much.

Alan started playing guitar when he was only 9 years old. He was the first one in his family to play a musical instrument. His parents encouraged him and he has enjoyed performing for his fans ever since his first public outing at age 15. If you need a band for your activities, you can call Alan and ask him for more information. Hopefully they will come to a hall close to me and I can dig out my old horn and join in with them. On second thought, I am kind of rusty, out of tune, and if they don’t use sheet music, I’d better count myself out. Instead of making the music flow, I’ll just stick to keeping the rivers flowing instead.

Well, now, (with apologies to Paul Harvey) the rest of the story. Alan is a musician – he plays a 6-string guitar. (Are we starting to see a trend here?)

His interest in music began while he was in high school – at Mount Vernon Township high school in Mount Vernon, Ill., where he started his own musical group during his sophomore year (1985).

Alan is a self-taught musician. He’s one of those unusual and seldom seen people who actually learned by reading a book on how to play the guitar – and learned it very well. His initiation to the performing arts world was with a 3-person band (guitar, bass and drums).

Today Alan is a member of the rock musical group called, “strung360”. The group’s bass player performed with Alan in his high school band and the two have maintained their friendship through the intervening years — since kindergarten, in fact.

Alan co-writes the music and the lyrics for the band. His group plays at coffee shops and winery shows (outdoor events in the vineyards). His fans bring lawn chairs, blankets and have picnics during some of the outdoor performances. The strung360 and Alan average a performance every other month.

Alan has created a website for his group. If you want to learn more about his group, you can visit the site at [www.strung360.com](http://www.strung360.com). This site gives a nice history of the ensemble and has several pictures of them during some of their past performances.

Alan enjoys his work at the Corps of Engineers and he enjoys his music. He believes the combination of his fulltime work and music created in his after-work hours provide a nice balance in his life. His goal is to eventually produce a CD of his music.

There you have it. Look around you. Not only are there a lot of smart engineers, biologists, park rangers and support people. A lot of them lead fascinating and from us – hidden lives – all legal, of course. I never cease to be amazed at some of the things our people do. I believe that far from detracting from their Corps jobs, they make them better rounded, happier people with richer lives. And you know what, we’re all richer too for knowing them and working with them. We’re just plain lucky.



*Claude Strauser*



## St. Louis' COL Kevin Williams Pounds Pavement in Baghdad

Baghdad, Iraq – Our own COL Kevin Williams was there when personnel from the Gulf Region Division (GRD) did some serious pavement pounding at Camp Victory near the Baghdad International Airport, Sunday, March 28. But this was not construction work. COL Williams was in his running shoes, and with 15 other personnel from Central District and Division Headquarters participated in the Camp Victory 10K run sponsored by a battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division.

When one of the people assigned to Williams' unit in Iraq, Ron Plante spotted a race flyer at Camp Victory, he figured there was no chance of participating. He was jogging his normal three days a week in the green zone surrounding the former Main Presidential Palace, but did not expect to run in the 10K – slightly more than 6 miles. Baghdad Area Engineer Allen Lantz was more optimistic and suggested asking the Colonel for his support. Much to their delight, Col Williams was not only enthusiastic about fielding a team, but volunteered to take part himself.

After a few e-mails, it became obvious there was a lot of interest among GRD runners. One motivator was the free t-shirt to the first 350 finishers, though few of the "more mature," 40 and 50-something civilians expected to beat many of the much younger GIs. However, the always-optimistic Lantz pointed out, "We run because we want to, they run because they have to."

A group of fifteen made the trip to Camp Victory and linked up with Capt John Henderson of the Victory Area Office. While some of the group were serious runners, most planned to do their best and finish, not win.

It was sunny and comfortable at the 7 a.m. start as the GRD runners joined about 450 much younger soldiers for the race. Even though numerous weapons were available, the traditional starting



**(L to R) Front Row: Ed Morente - Jacksonville, FL District; Jay Morgan - Seattle, WA District; Dong Shin - Sacramento, CA District; Ron Plante - Rock Island, IL District; Allen Lantz - Vicksburg, WV District; Rob Martinson - New Orleans, LA District; MAJ Bob Cabell, USAR  
Back Row: Dan Pridal – Omaha, Chris Schreiber - Seattle, WA District; NE District; Dean Hall - Baltimore, MD District; MAJ Dave Bitner – Savannah, GA District; Rob Weakland - Anchorage, AK District; Mike Zumstein – New Orleans, LA District; Eddie Miller - Vicksburg, MS District; John Henderson, Vicksburg, MS District; COL Kevin Williams, St. Louis, MO District**

gun was replaced by a verbal "ready-set-go." The course looped around the well-known palace on the lake and then continued east around another lake.

Although the temperature remained relatively cool, the runners did not. By the 2-mile water point, everyone was sweating. The leader of our pack was Dan Pridal from Construction Division, a very modest 41-year-old grandfather who finished in 40:42 for a very impressive 29th out of 460. The other GRD runners followed Dan to the finish line and cold Gatorade.

While some may not consider running a 10K race as "fun," runners would disagree. "Running is a stress reliever," said Ed Morente, adding that "Going to Camp Victory and running that 10K was like R&R. It was a wonderful break from the long hours."

As Construction Division's Eddie

Miller said, "It was a great day. I was going to run that morning anyhow, and I got to do a 10K in Iraq. I ran just to be able to brag about running in such an event. I never considered the possibility of running fast enough to earn a shirt, but I did. It doesn't get any better than that."

While some of the GRD runners will soon be back running in their home districts, other members of the team continue their running in the green zone. Whether it's to relax, lose weight, or train for the next race, these guys just keep on running.





## Here Comes P2!

The next piece of the Project Management Business Process, known as P2, is about to deploy. In fact it is already being implemented at headquarters, Southwestern Division, and Northwestern Divisions. With the benefit of their lessons-learned, these trailblazers will hopefully make integration in St. Louis much easier. The Mississippi Valley Division and the North Atlantic Division are scheduled to start P2 transition May 3-21.

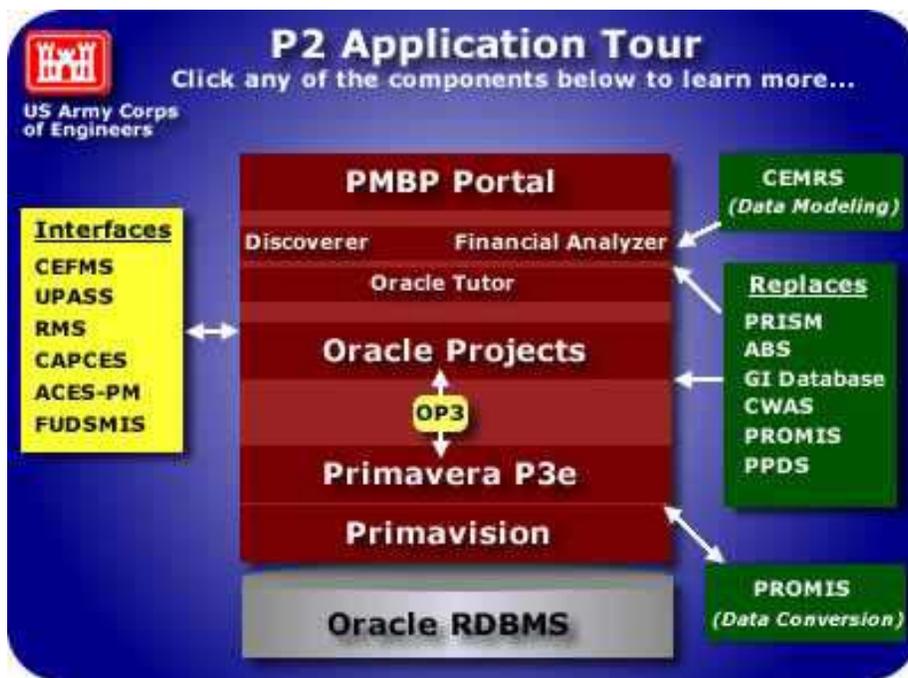
In case you haven't heard about P2, the program consists of a suite of automated commercial off-the-shelf project management, analysis and reporting tools, configured to support PMBP. P2 is to be used by the project delivery team and managers to plan, execute and report project and program information. P2 also allows people outside of the immediate PDT to review project information.

P2 has been designed to support effective communication within the PDT and encourage collaborative processes, which allow teams to function more interdependently. The program will help maintain project schedules, budgets and resources. The hope is to eliminate redundant data entry and create an ability to share data across district and regions whether teams are local or virtual.

The software allows Corps directorates to see beyond individual capabilities and integrate other functions, and other teams into business process planning and initiation. The software facilitates the cross-functional teaming making "one Corps, one project, one team and one mission" essential to Corps success.

There are four stages in the Corps' business process: initiation, program and project planning, execution and closeout. The P2 software allows project managers to continuously evaluate project outcomes and expectations. Information on P2 is available on the PMBP Portal at <https://pmbp.usace.army.mil>.

The PMBP Portal is jam packed with information and will certainly act as an important resource in the coming months.



Employees can take a P2 "Application Tour" at the PMBP portal, <https://pmbp.usace.army.mil>

The website features a frequently asked questions section and also provides a "feedback" option so that individuals can submit comments or questions regarding the system. There are also several documents that address P2 deployment and implementation, and a P2 deployment schedule is available for viewing.

The District's P2 PDT, led by project manager Mike Thompson, is currently working an integration plan, and training began April 26th.

### The Deployment Schedule as of April 13, 2004

**11 Feb—2 April**  
HQ, Southwestern Division, Fort Worth and Galveston Districts

**29 March—9 April**  
Little Rock and Tulsa District, POD

**12—30 April**  
Northwestern Division, South Pacific Division, Engineering and Support Center (Huntsville)

**17—4 June**  
Mississippi Valley Division, North Atlantic Division, Marine Design

**07 June—25 June**  
South Atlantic Division, IWR, Transatlantic Programs Center, Humphreys

### 28 June—18 July

ERDC and Great Lakes and Ohio River Division

*(Editor's Note: Article information obtained from the HQ P2 Communication Plan, the P2 Portal, and a St. Paul District P2 article published in November 2003)*

## Be careful with April-fool jokes.

In this age, we assume that no one is foolish enough to pull out a person's chair or do something similar. Those jokes are as old as the horse and buggy and just as obsolete, not to mention dangerous.

Words can be almost as bad. Giving someone a false message can take up their time or distract them from their work.

Saying something like, "The boss wants to see you at 4 o'clock," or "That project is cancelled," could really "pull the rug out from under him."

Whether it's the first day of April or some other day, horseplay is distracting and dangerous. At best, it's inconsiderate.



## District Says Good-Bye

By Nicole Dalrymple

Jim Brown and Joe Schwenk, Geotechnical Branch civil engineers, could mark the start of a mass exodus from the St. Louis District. There's been the occasional trickle of retirements over the past year, but the rate certainly seems to be increasing.

In two weeks the District said farewell four times to individuals whose combined federal service exceeded 120 years.

Aside from three years spent in Saudi Arabia, Jim Brown spent his entire 35-plus year career with the St. Louis District. Joe Schwenk dedicated 29 years of federal service to the U.S. Navy and the St. Louis District.

DeAnn Chambers, Contracting Division, retired after 45 years of employment, 25 spent in federal service, seventeen of which were with the District. Harry Hamell leaves the District after 18 years of service and 31 total years of service.

That's a lot of experience walking out the door.

As a matter of fact, within the next five years, a third of the District's civilian workforce will be eligible for retirement.

Brown may not be too far off the mark when he describes himself as the beginning of the end of a certain breed of civil servant. "Federal careers are not what they were when I started," he explained. "I'm probably the start of the last [employees] who will spend an entire career with a single organization."



**Joe Schwenk and his wife were presented the retirement certificates by Mark Alvey, chief of Geotechnical Branch.**

During his career, Brown saw five District projects, Kaskaskia Navigation Project, Lake Shelbyville, Mark Twain Lake, Melvin Price Locks and Dam, and Rend Lake, in the dry before water was ever against them.

Schwenk, who retired on a Friday and reported to his new job the following Monday, is putting his extensive work experience on the construction of Mel Price Locks and Dam to good use. "I'm joining a joint venture to construct the dam at Olmstead Locks and Dam [in Louisville District]," Schwenk said.

The Meramec Disposal Project, Valley Park, St. Peters, Chain of Rocks, and the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program are some of the key projects Hamell worked on. He made significant contributions while working in the Management and Disposal Branch and was recognized as a "highly motivated and very knowledgeable individual in the Acquisition Branch,"



**DeAnn Chambers, Contracting Division**

said Angela Sanders, Realty Specialist.

During her 17 years with the District, Chambers worked in Information Management, Resource Management and Contracting. Her work in contracting was dedicated to the three Illinois lakes: Carlyle, Rend and Shelbyville. She was responsible for advertising and managing all gate attendant positions, ranging anywhere from 24-27 positions. "The attendants became my best friends even though I only spoke to them over the phone," Chambers said. "I really enjoyed my job."

Having completed satisfying careers with the Corps all the retirees are excited about life post-U.S. Corps of Engineers.

"About two years ago I was fairly confident I would go once I was eligible," said Brown. "I'm a believer in having a purpose, and after 35 years of doing this kind of work, there's almost an obligation to go do something else. And, I wanted age and health on my side."

Retirement isn't going to be a permanent vacation though, Brown said. "There are all kinds of things that need to be done," he said. "I'm not one to go join a bunch of country clubs and watch the sun go down."

Brown, who owns a farm in St. Clair,



**Jim Brown (L) left a big pair of shoes for his successors to fill.**

Mo., plans to spend more time working his property, riding his three horses and helping the community. "I've always had to divide my time so much," Brown said. "I've already begun community involvement."

After 31 years of federal service, Hamell opted for the early retirement option. Making the decision to retire early wasn't easy. "What I considered a difficult decision initially, actually was not that hard in the end," Hamell wrote in a farewell email, "especially when I

considered the successes I've already been blessed with in my career."

Hammel and his wife Brenda, Management Support Branch, have been involved in a marriage ministry for 19 years, and he plans to expand their outreach. He is also in the beginning stages of a book, Brenda said.

Living the good life and doing what she wants to do is what DeAnn Chambers plans to do with her retirement. Her time will be spent traveling and gardening, but most importantly she'll be dedicating time to her passion, restoring antique furniture. "Right now I'm working on a 100-year-old dry sink, and I plan to strip and refinish the kitchen cabinets next year."



**MAJ Joseph Tyron took time from his busy schedule to present Harry Hamell's retirement certificates.**

Time is something they will all have a little bit more of these days. Whether they use it for work or for fun, we wish you all well and thank you for your service. And until our paths meet again, God Bless and God Speed. You will be missed.

## Would You Be Willing to Lend a Hand?

One of the Corps of Engineers' greatest assets has always been its talented people. Every time one retires, a library of historical



**Richard Boudreau**

knowledge and talent departs with them. But it doesn't have to be irretrievable and the St. Louis District is making plans to be better ready to tap into these special skills if the Corps and nation need them again.

The Human Resources Office in St. Louis is building a database of people who would be willing to return to work under certain circumstances. According to District HR Chief Kathy Tober, this would be for the domestic workplace and might include response to natural disasters or backfilling billets of people deploying to disaster areas, or even to

fill for those deploying for the Global War on Terrorism.

Tober pointed out that under new laws, individuals currently drawing annuities would not lose any of their retirement while they were employed. The window requiring support might be from a week to a year, she indicated.

The database will include names and points of contact, prior job experience with the Corps and a list of special skills, such as language capabilities or other "tools" a former Corp's employee might have to offer.

The plan does not reflect any current urgent requirement, nor would jobs necessarily be tied to former steps and grades. In fact, Tober pointed out that hiring would have to be authorized at the Assistant Secretary of the Army Level unless this was delegated downward. "But this is just good advance planning," she noted. She also stressed, "This is not a commitment on peoples' parts. They'd get to consider what we were asking them to do, when and for how long before they might chose to return."

Dick Boudreau is developing the database and answering interested individuals' questions. "This will help us to be ready if we have to rapidly acquire a specific capability. No body knows our business better than those who have already done it before. I'm charged with shortening the process of finding people with the skill sets we might need in time of emergencies. Knowing where to reach them is the first—step."

Dick can be reached at: 314-331-8456 or by e-mail at richard.boudreau@mvs02.usace.army.mil. If you are interested in being contacted for possible service, please contact Dick and provide him your name, mailing address, phone number, email address, and any special skills that you may have. You will then be added to the database. In the event of need, you would be contacted and allowed to make your decision regarding your actual participation.



# HUMAN RESOURCES CORNER



## More Potential Changes On The Horizon

USACE 2012 is “The Big Story” in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the moment, but there are other potential changes on the horizon that we all need to learn more about. One of those changes is the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). NSPS was approved and authorized under the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2004, and signed by the President on Nov. 24. The authorization provides broad legislative authority to the Department of Defense to establish a new civilian personnel management system for its civilian work force. The new personnel system will replace some of the Title 5 Civil Service regulations we have been using.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has spoken of the NSPS as the “most significant improvement to civilian personnel management since the Civil Service Reform Act of 25 years ago.”

The specific provisions of how the new system will work are currently under design. It is intended to provide managers greater flexibility in hiring and managing civilians, competing for high quality talent, offering compensation competitive with the private sector, and rewarding outstanding performance. It will be designed with a goal of transforming the personnel system for civilian defense workers so that the right person can be put in the right job to meet the challenges of today’s post Cold War world.



Human Resources Chief, Kathy Tober

NSPS will change how civilians are hired, assigned, paid, rewarded, advanced, and removed, as well as how appeals are handled — all within the context of merit system principles, accommodation of veterans’ preference, and respect for bargaining rights. Under this system, managers will have more flexibility to place civilian workers in jobs where they are most needed without needless delay. The promotion process will be streamlined and many job movements will not involve cumbersome competitive processes as they do today.

Under NSPS, employees will no longer have grades, but will, instead, be placed in pay bands based on occupation and level of position. The bands will be designed to enable managers to reward high performers with additional base pay and/or bonuses without the need to change the grade of a position or change positions to one of a higher grade. Pay increases will be based on assessment of performance rather than longevity.

“Managers have wanted a way to reward top performers with higher paychecks for decades,” said Kathy Tober, Chief of the District’s Human Resources Office. “It is discouraging under the current system to have to tell our best and brightest that they must change jobs to earn more money. We have lost a lot of talented people because of our antiquated pay rules.” NSPS also preserves the principles of equal opportunity, diversity, systematic development, ethical behavior, due process, protection against non-merit based actions, and preserves the rights of whistleblowers.

NSPS will not change many of the benefits we now enjoy, such as leave and

attendance, travel and subsistence allowances, training, health benefits, life insurance and retirement benefits, TSP options, and safety and drug abuse programs. Provisions of NSPS include other flexibilities such as permanent authority to grant voluntary separation incentive pay and voluntary early retirement authority when necessary for downsizing or restructuring, and elimination of pay offset for reemployed annuitants.

This new personnel system will be established in collaboration with national level employee representatives, and in coordination with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

The implementation schedule for NSPS has been delayed and the system is now scheduled to be deployed over several years with the first phase starting in the third quarter of FY 05.

We do not yet know when the St. Louis District will deploy the new system but current estimates are sometime in FY 06.

When the system is finally designed, employees in the District will be offered opportunities to learn more about the system through a variety of means.

Stay tuned! You can learn more about NSPS and its provisions at [www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/index.html](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/index.html).

*(Editor’s Note: Article from Engineer Update with contributions from Kathy Tober.)*

## Recycle single-serve water bottles

According to the Beverage Marketing Corporation, more than 1.7 billion gallons of water in single-serve plastic bottles are sold each year

The bottles are made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET). They are completely recyclable and can be turned into carpet, household products, and fabrics used to make clothing and blankets.



## Retiree's Corner



The retirees had their monthly lunch at the Salad Bowl March 18. Considering it was the day after St. Patrick's Day, there were quite a few, relatively sober individuals in attendance. Granted, some were in the company of their charming wives. Nonetheless they did make the lunch and seemed to have a great time.

Lee Robinson thanked all those who attended his performance in the South Side Lions Club's production of "Chicago." This is Lee's fourth year as

a cast member, and from all indications, he is enjoying the change of career. (Who would have thought that all the time he was acting as an engineer, he was really rehearsing for being a thespian.)

Sandor Dombi, the unofficial photographer of the group, said he has a very large file of photos taken at the various retiree luncheons. They are on a computer file and for a nominal fee he is willing to make a DVD copy, with appropriate background music. Many of the attendees requested copies. They should be available by the next luncheon Sandor said.

Ron Bockhorst mentioned that there was a television celebrity in the group. Seems that the Missouri Botanical Gardens opened a cafe adjacent to the Palm House and the McCarthy's, Larry and Sharon, were there when it was featured on a TV program. Larry's comment was "anything for a free meal." Larry did say that it is a very nice place to have lunch.

Lew Scheuermann mentioned the

Spring Golf Tournament in April, and the Division Tournament in June. He encouraged all the golfers to consider playing. Lew also mentioned hearing from Jim Baker recently. Jim reported although there have been earthquakes in California, his house didn't move. He still tries to get in a round of golf every day; that is until the course moves.

Don Wampler said he talked with Bob Maxwell who is doing great except for a bad back. Considering his many years of "experience," he is doing better than great.

There was some sad news mentioned about several of our retirees. Bob Muffler of the Office of Counsel, and Jim Bone and Bill Nettles of the Real Estate Division recently passed away. Our condolences go out to their families.

We are all gaining more experience in living life. Consider sharing your experiences with your fellow retirees at the luncheon held the third Thursday of every month at the Salad Bowl. Meeting time is around 11 a.m. Hope to see you there.

## Memorial To Honor 16 Million Veterans Of World War II

Almost 60 years have passed since the end of World War II. Now the wait is almost over for the 16.1 million people who served. The National WWII Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C., will be formally dedicated on May 29.

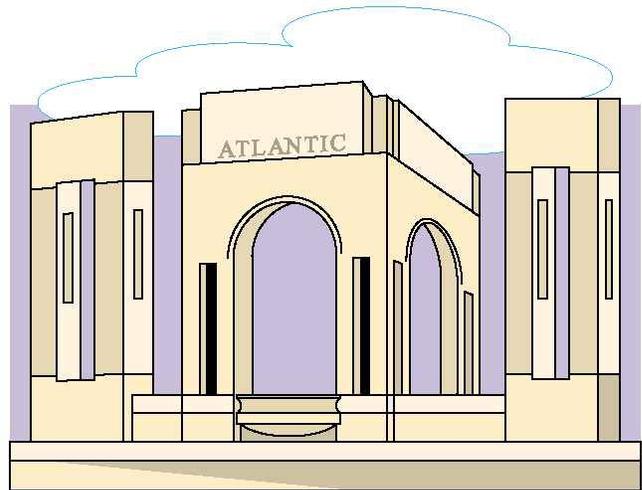
The four-day event begins with the WWII Reunion on May 27, will mark the dedication of the Memorial. It could be the largest gathering of WWII veterans ever. Open-air and tented attractions are free to the public.

A Salute to World War II Veterans, sponsored by the American Battle Monuments Commission, will be held at the MCI Center in downtown Washington. The Salute features armed forces personnel in a musical and narrative tribute to veterans. It will be performed

in the afternoon and evening of Friday, May 28 and on Saturday evening, May 29. To order tickets, call (800) 639-4992.

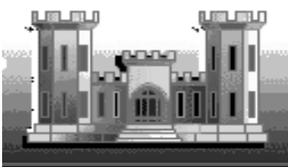
Gates to the dedication ceremony on May 29 will be opened at 11 a.m. President George Bush and all living former presidents are invited to the ceremony.

Pillars of the Memorial represent each state and territory from that era and the District of Columbia. Each is topped with two bronze wreaths. The Atlantic and Pacific arches symbolize the theaters of the war. Inside, each has four bronze columns that support huge American eagles.



Artist concept of the new World War II monument

There were 291,557 battle deaths in World War II and 113,842 non-theater deaths. Today, there are 4.4 million living veterans, but an estimated 385,369 die each year.



# US Army Corps of Engineers - St. Louis District

## Civilian Activities Council



*Corp Employees and families, Retirees, and Guests are invited to participate in the 2004 St. Louis District Picnic and Golf Tournament to be held at Forest Park, on July 1, 2004, starting at 0900. This year, in addition to a catered luncheon and games for both adults and children in the World Fair Pavilion, everyone will have an opportunity to visit the exhibits throughout Forest Park commemorating the 1904 World's Fair. For more details, please*

*go to: <http://www.slfpc.com/ForestPark.html>*



**TICKETS ON SALE: 17 May-18 Jun 04**  
**\$8.00 Per Person**

**(You may purchase a luncheon ticket or bring your own food and beverages.)**



**Lunch catered by:**

**Golf Tournament**  
**9 Holes**

**4-Person Scramble**  
**\$30.00/person**

**Tee Times beginning at**  
**08:00, Prizes**

**POC: Carolyn Ruebusch,**  
**RE, 331-8171**

**Games, Prizes**

**CAC Contacts:**

**Phyllis Thomas, Library, 331-8883**  
**Catherine Cummings, EEO, 331-8060**



1. Jefferson Memorial
2. Forest Park Forever
3. Lindell Pavilion
4. Cabanne House
5. Steinberg Skating Rink
6. Tennis Courts
7. Science Center
8. Golf and Tennis Club
9. Dept of Park
10. The Jewel Box
11. The Muny
12. P.D. Boat House
13. World Fair Pavilion
14. St. Louis Zoo
15. St. Louis Art Museum
16. Parks Golf Course
17. Davis Tennis Center
18. Turtle Park
19. Park's Bike Path

