



Col. Julie Balten, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, opens the West Point LEADS Program event at Monroe High School Feb. 17 in North Hills, California. JROTC cadets from four Los Angeles Unified School District high schools participated.

LA District 'LEADS' the way with West Point cadets

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN REESE
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES — Cadets from the U.S. Academy at West Point were joined by leaders from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District to share Leadership, Ethics and Diversity in STEM with JROTC cadets from four high schools Feb. 17 in Los Angeles.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, or STEM, is sometimes referred to as STEAM, with an "A" included for the arts. The West Point LEADS program is a workshop for JROTC students to learn about opportunities, leadership skills, leadership qualities, ethics and honor. The event was hosted by the Los Angeles Unified School District.

LA District commander Col. Julie Balten was the LEADS opening and closing speaker at Monroe and Los Angeles high schools, re-

spectively. JROTC cadets in attendance also came from Garfield and Washington Prep high schools. Altogether, the assembled JROTC cadet companies joined in battalion formation at Monroe High School before the event shifted to Los Angeles High School.

"I've been active duty for 27 years, but one day I was sitting in your shoes, and you all have a whole life ahead of you," Balten said. "I'm excited for you, and, if I could, I'd go back and do it all over again."

Balten described her upbringing in a small Michigan farming town of 450 with one school for the entire county and 150 students of all grades.

"I was lucky enough to dream big ... our parents really expected us to go to college, but they said, 'you're going to have to pay for it.' So that's a heavy lift, but dream big," she said.

After attending prep school, Balten was accepted at West Point to become a civil engineer.

"I'm so thankful I'm an engineer officer in the Army," she said. "The Army gave me the opportunity to lead at every level. That's one of the greatest things about the Army."

Cadets, students and faculty also heard from and seemed especially impressed with retired [Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Littrell, Medal of Honor recipient](#), taking turns shaking his hand and thanking him for his service.

Littrell talked about the six core values of the Medal of Honor. He described his experience April 4-8, 1970, when, as a sergeant first class, with a handful of American advisors, he withstood an intense siege alongside a battalion of South Vietnamese troops. These days, he visits schools across the country to

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Inside this issue: Aspiring engineer, student trainee earns Corps internship, inspires minds along way



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A job well done!



Col. Julie Balten, Los Angeles District commander, presents a Department of the Army certificate of appreciation to Jerica Richardson, outgoing supervising archeologist with the district's Plan Formulation Branch, Planning Division, during a farewell gathering Feb. 13 at the LA District headquarters building. Richardson received the certificate for her exceptional service from March through November 2022. According to the certificate, Richardson was "instrumental in ensuring continuity in the division during a period of intense change," and "was pivotal in developing an effective strategy to address environmental justice directives, in response to the Presidential Justice40 Initiative, and focusing those initiatives on smaller Corps planning programs, such as Continuing Authorities Programs, Planning Assistance to States and the Tribal Partnership Program."

Winter Wonderland



Courtesy photo by Brooks Hubbard IV

A soft blanket of snow covers the area surrounding the gated entrance to the Mojave River Dam Feb. 24-26 in San Bernardino, California. The dam, located above the Cajon Pass in what is referred to as the High Desert, is one of several dams operated and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District throughout Southern California, Arizona and Nevada. Snow levels in some neighboring areas above the San Bernardino Mountains reached more than a foot.

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Kudos to Veterans Affairs teams for positive design, construction evals

Hello, SPL Team!

I would like to give a HUGE shoutout to our teams working with the Department of Veterans Affairs project sites. I'd like to particularly highlight the hard work, conscientiousness and expertise that resulted in such favorable results and feedback for the recent Design and Construction Evaluation, or DCE, reviews at the San Diego and Long Beach VA locations.

For those unaware, the DCE is an internal review conducted through the Corps' headquarters Program Management Office and the South Pacific Division's Regional Construction Management Branch. The latest DCEs were conducted at the San Diego location in late 2022 and at the Long Beach location this month.

Based on the information we provided the review teams — which included everything from design documents to meeting minutes to give the teams in-depth overview of how the projects



COL. JULIE A. BALTEN
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

are progressing and performing — along with a virtual question-and-answer session, a visit from the team that included interviews with personnel with the Corps, the VA and the contractors, their evaluations were very positive.

I'm extremely proud of not only the work we've been doing at these VA locations alongside our partners from the VA's Office of Construction

and Facilities Management and our contractors, but I am truly impressed with the remarkably positive results coming out of these DCEs.

One big factor underpinning the LA District's success in these reviews is the close coordination up through the division and headquarters, with our partners throughout the VA's CFM teams and, of course, with our contractors. Using lessons learned from our previous DCE in Long Beach, being mindful of having the proper documentation on hand and following stringent program requirements were all also significant contributing

factors in the positive reviews.

I'd like to give special kudos to Project Manager Jenn Rivo and Department of Veterans Affairs Branch Chief Andrea de la Peña Rodríguez at the San Diego VA campus, and to Project Manager (Capt.) Cristina Palomino and Resident Engineer Kevin Thomas at the Long Beach location. These LA District superstars and their all-star teams were instrumental in coordinating the right information and ensuring on-site teams were ready for the reviews.

All our VA teams are doing excellent work — not only in San Diego and Long Beach, but in Arizona too. You can see more coverage on our VA projects in San Diego and Phoenix in this month's issue of The NewsCastle.

Once again, I'm so very proud to be your commander, and please keep up the great work of delivering bold solutions to serve and strengthen all of our communities!

Sincerely,

Col. Julie A. Balten

Around the District

"I'm seriously motivated and I'm glad USACE gave me an opportunity at professional growth."

Clint provides computer and network support for District employees in the greater Los Angeles area. He is an Air Force veteran. Clint is from Diamond Bar, CA and has worked with USACE for nine months.



Clint Almendra
IT Support Technician



Click the links below to find us on social media!



Division regional business director visits two key VA San Diego project sites



Cheree Peterson, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ South Pacific Division regional business director, second from right, gets her first closeup look at the still-under-construction Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center during her visit to the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus Feb. 17 in San Diego.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SAN DIEGO — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division regional business director visited two key project sites at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus Feb. 17 in San Diego.

Cheree Peterson, who also serves as the Senior Advisory Group chairperson for the project, spoke with representatives of the Corps, the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Office of Construction and Facilities Management, and contractors. Peterson saw firsthand the progress of the Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center and new seven-story parking structure.

Projected to open in fall 2024, the SLI/CLC facility will provide care to veterans and active-duty personnel with spinal cord injuries and disorders who live in the San Diego and Imperial counties in California, and in Arizona and southern Nevada.

Peterson said being on site to see the work with her own eyes provided a context for her of the project that looking at photos or sitting in on a briefing can’t match, such as how tight the campus is.

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Cheree Peterson, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ South Pacific Division regional business director, second from right, receives updates from Walsh Construction and Archer Western Lead Superintendent Jim Major during a walkthrough of the Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center construction site while visiting the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus Feb. 17 in San Diego. They are joined here by Imad Slaiwa, LA District supervisory civil engineer, and David Van Dorpe, the South Pacific Division’s Department of Veterans Affairs Project Execution Office chief.

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“Seeing the progress and how well they’re managing it as they go through the project, it’s very enlightening and shows how committed they are to the schedule and delivering on time,” she said.

“I was here for the groundbreaking, but I hadn’t been able to come back since,” she added. “To see, particularly, the walkways and how challenging it is to manage that safely for the workers and for the patients — it’s hard to visualize that in pictures.”

Perhaps more important than getting a closeup look at the construction is talking to those on site and seeing the working relationships, she said.

“The partnership between our project man-

ager and the [Construction and Facilities Management] senior resident engineer is impressive,” Peterson said. “I can’t speak for all the other campuses, but it’s certainly one of the best in SPD.”

Peterson added that it’s the most diverse construction office she’s ever visited.

“That’s certainly a USACE goal, but for SPD in particular, it’s something we are trying to encourage and do more of — things like reaching out to local universities, trying to make sure people feel welcome once they get here so they stay — people of all ‘types and stripes,’” she said. “It’s something that is clearly going very well in this office.”

The new facility, which is replacing the current building at the campus, will be a

197,000-square-foot, four-story standalone structure. The current center is one of 25 spinal cord injury and disorder facilities at VA centers throughout the U.S. Each center has teams of experienced medical professionals trained to deal with the unique challenges that affect those with spinal cord injuries and disorders.

“One thing that really stood out was how thoughtfully the SCI was designed for different levels of care and how we’re working with them and the Paralyzed Veterans of America to make sure that it is going to be the best facility we can possibly give our veterans.

“This was also a good opportunity to see the project that is going the best for the VA-USACE partnership in all of the Corps.”



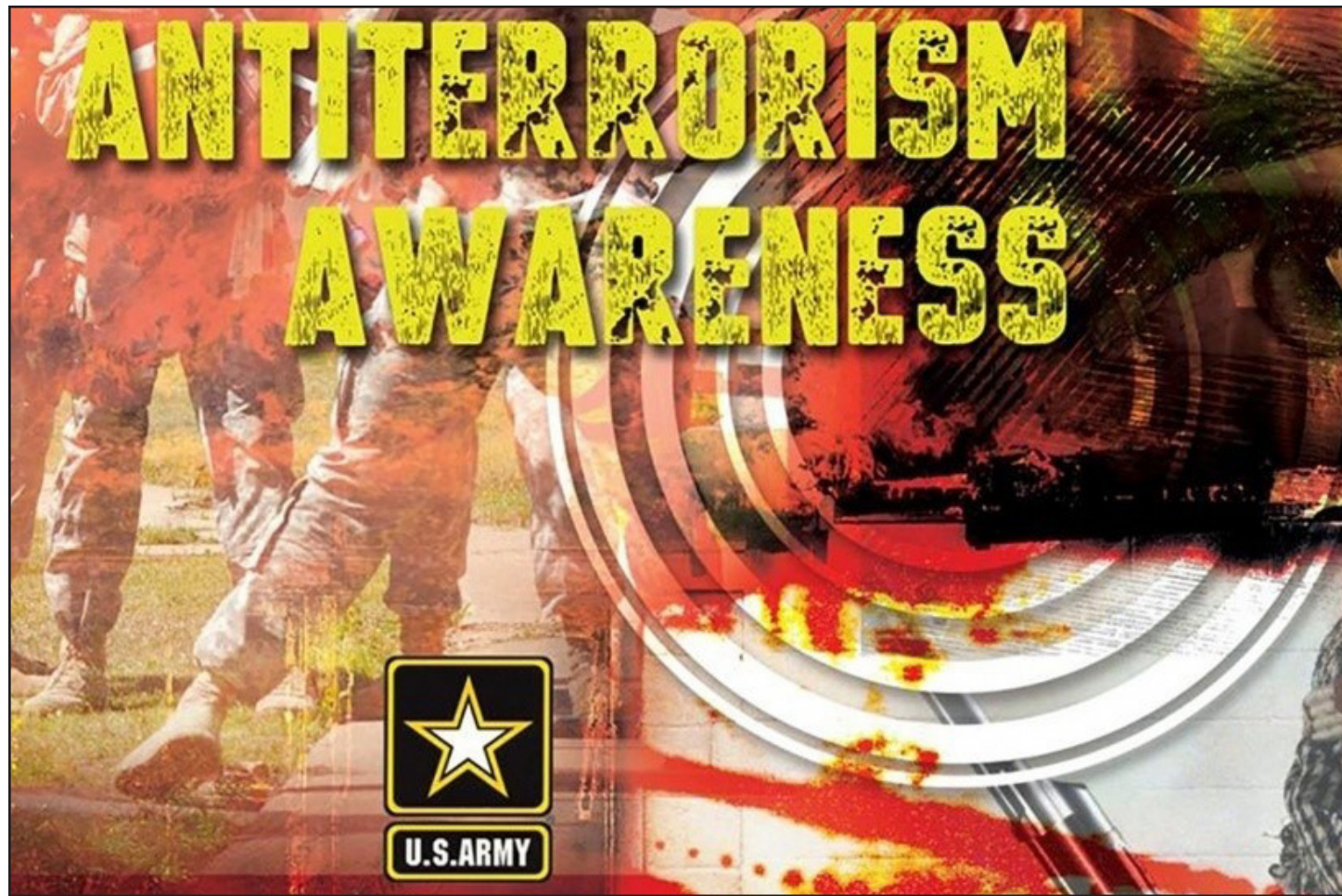
Photos by Stephen Baack

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: David Van Dorpe, the South Pacific Division’s Department of Veterans Affairs Project Execution Office chief, left, briefs Cheree Peterson, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ South Pacific Division regional business director, on the progress of the Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center during her visit to the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus Feb. 17 in San Diego. Dorpe and Peterson here are viewing the SCI/CLC from the new, nearly complete seven-story parking garage.

The Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center and the nearly complete seven-story parking garage, both still under construction, are pictured at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus Feb. 17 in San Diego.

Imad Slaiwa, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District supervisory civil engineer, left, points out details of the under-construction Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center to Cheree Peterson, the Corps’ South Pacific Division regional business director, during her visit to the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus Feb. 17 in San Diego.





District specialist added to USACE AT Honor Roll

LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

An antiterrorist specialist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District was awarded the 2022 USACE Antiterrorism Honor Roll Individual for his superb leadership and efforts in the pursuit of excellence.

Valente R. Marshall, formerly with the district's antiterrorism office, competed against all USACE divisions and districts antiterrorism officers to make the honor roll.

"Mr. Marshall was the driving force that kept SPL on track," Andrew R. Samuels, district physical security officer, said. "He has written or touched every AT instruction and plan."

Marshall's attention to detail resulted in a significant increase in overall AT compliance and protection of people and mission essential functions of the command, Samuels explained.

During the district's higher headquarters program review, his actions earned "an AT compliance rating of 95.7 percent for USACE Strategy and 100 percent AT standards, achieving 100 percent quantitative objective!" Samuels said. "His program was one of the most interactive programs in USACE validating Los Angeles District as the 'showplace' in South Pacific Division."

According to district security officer Glen Tucker, Marshall is no longer employed by USACE "but has returned periodically as a protective security officer." The division's current antiterrorism officer is David Forbes.

Awards Program was established in 1993 to recognize deserving individuals and units in the antiterrorism field.

PREVENTING TERRORISM

Be aware and report concerns. Being aware and reporting concerns can help identify and prevent threats to our national security and local community. There are some things everyone can do to help prevent terrorism: Be observant and attentive. Remember details about people, places, conversations and vehicles. Report your concerns to authorities – local police or Army CID.

Crime Tips: www.cid.army.mil/report-a-crime.html Maintain effective antiterrorism programs to counter threats. The antiterrorism program is dedicated to protecting our people, information and critical assets against terrorist and extremist threats and activities. The Army Threat Integration Center provides integrated and fused threat reporting in support of force

protection. The Joint Analytic Real-time Virtual Information Sharing System is a common operating platform to inform leaders and enable them to make force protection decisions.

Detect to protect: Mitigation is a team effort, but it begins at the lowest level with early intervention. Insider threats include espionage, terrorism, unauthorized disclosure, extremist activities, and the loss or degradation of Army resources or capabilities. Commands are required to report suspicious behavioral indicators including extremist activities in accordance with DoDD 5205.16 and DoDI 1325.06. Insider threat is a "people problem" and requires both an individual and organizational focus to effectively identify and mitigate these issues.

What to report: When reporting suspicious activity or behavior, remember the acronym SALUTE. Size (number of personnel and vehicles, if applicable); Activity (what is suspicious); Location (address, vicinity); Unit (what unit they belong to; markings/insignia); Time (what day and time you observed it); Equipment (weapons, vehicles, communications).

(Editor's note: Some information for this article came from Redstone Rocket.)



Photos by John Reese

Col. Julie Balten, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, provides guidance and shares stories with West Point cadets at Monroe High School Feb. 17 in North Hills, California. One cadet's mother was a classmate of Balten's during her time at the U.S. Academy at West Point.

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encourage students to keep learning.

"Never stop learning. You don't have to take a class to learn something new every day," Littrell said, adding he is currently studying financial planning.

Littrell is one of 64 living Medal of Honor recipients. He was one of 63 living recipients that morning and said he received a text telling him another recipient had just been named.

JROTC cadets then broke off into groups, led by West Point cadets. The topics of most interest were ethics and paying for college.

Project manager Capt. Cristina Palomino facilitated LEADS at Monroe High School, while Capt. Derek Schwartz, a West Point graduate deputy and resident engineer with the Fort Irwin Resident Office did the same at LA High School.

At LA High School, Mario Guerra, civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army, told his story about coming to America as an immigrant and rising to the civilian equivalent of a lieutenant general.

Balten came full circle to end the LEADS day with closing comments.

"Just take the next step in whatever that is, and don't be afraid to fail," she said. "Personal courage is one of those huge foundations of leadership, and having that personal courage to

take that first step ... get excited about whatever that is, no matter what the outcome."

NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK

The West Point LEADS event led into National Engineers Week, which was Feb. 19-25. National Engineers Week was founded in 1951 and is led by the National Society of Professional Engineers. It is dedicated to

ensuring a diverse and well-educated future engineering workforce by increasing understanding of and interest in engineering and technology careers.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers supports National Engineers Week and is one of the largest employers of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math disciplines in the federal government.



Col. Julie Balten, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, gives the closing comments for the West Point LEADS Program event at Los Angeles High School, Feb. 17 in Los Angeles.

Aspiring engineer, student trainee earns Corps internship, inspires minds along way

STORY BY DENA O'DELL AND DAN COLLINS
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PHOENIX — Taylor Brown, a student trainee with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, discovered career opportunities early on in construction engineering as the daughter of an electrician.

Additionally, several members of her family on her mother's side also work in construction, she said, which piqued her interest in the field.

"I decided to get a degree and work in the field of construction engineering because I saw the career opportunities from my family working in the construction field," Brown said. "They got to work on unique projects and travel throughout their time in construction."

Now a senior at Arizona State University, Brown will graduate in May with a degree in construction engineering. Once she graduates, she will become a full-time Department of the Army intern with the Corps' LA District.

"The construction engineering degree program at Arizona State University stood out to me," she said. "I like how I get to learn about civil engineering and construction management practices."

For the last several months, Brown has been working with the LA District's International and Interagency Branch in Arizona, as well as with other project managers in the district's Construction Division.

Her big break with the Corps came in 2022, when Brown attended an American Indian Science and Engineering Society Conference in Phoenix.

AISES is a national organization that supports and represents Native Americans in the



Courtesy photo

Taylor Brown, student trainee with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, holds up her trophy she won as a member of the Arizona State University Concrete Solutions team during the Associated Schools of Construction Regions 6 and 7 Student Competition and Construction Management Conference Feb. 7-10 near Reno, Nevada. Brown will graduate from the university in May with a degree in concrete engineering. She plans to remain with the Corps' LA District as a Department of the Army intern.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields. Brown has been a member of AISES since high school, she recalled, when her sister convinced her to attend a few of the organization's meetings.

At the conference, Brown was offered an internship with the Corps, after speaking with John Drake, chief of the IIS for the LA District, and Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, South Pacific Division commander.

Brown said she chose the Corps because it had its own construction division and the agency had worked on projects close to her home.

"There were projects the Corps did close to home — Navajo Nation — and their involvement with AISES that sparked my interest in

[‘ENGINEER’ continued on Page 9](#)

Taylor Brown, student trainee with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, front row, second from left, along with her teammates, holds up her trophy she won as a member of the Arizona State University Concrete Solutions team during the Associated Schools of Construction Regions 6 and 7 Student Competition and Construction Management Conference Feb. 7-10 near Reno, Nevada.



Courtesy photo



In this file photo, workers use shovels to clear snow from a stop log to ensure a good seal between it and the next log.

Safety Tip: Working in cold weather

BY LA DISTRICT SAFETY OFFICE

For many people, working or playing in cold weather can be a positive experience. You may feel invigorated by the bracing air and feel like doing your work with more physical energy than usual. When it comes to leisure, cold weather offers many enjoyable activities whether it's skiing, skating, snowmobiling or ice fishing.

Unfortunately, all the enjoyable aspects of working or playing out in cold weather can turn negative if you are not dressed warmly or dryly enough.

Over exposure to cold and dampness can cause your body temperature to lower. This condition is called hypothermia. You may have it when you start to shiver and experience chills, or find yourself unable to think or speak clearly. You may lose your coordination and quite possibly your consciousness.

You could also get frostbite which is when your body tissue freezes. Frostbite happens most frequently to your extremities like your feet and toes, fingers, face and nose. Symptoms include numbness and a white and waxy appearance to your skin.

There are many things you can do to dress properly for the cold:

- Dress in layers so you can remove or put on clothing according to the temperature.
- Always wear a warm hat on your head—this is the part of the body

that loses heat the fastest. There are also liners you can wear to keep your head warm under a hard hat or other kinds of protective head gear.

- Consider wearing a knitted face mask to deflect cold and wind chill.
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots with several layers of socks, preferably cotton ones under wool. They enable your feet to breathe. When your socks or boot liners become wet, remove and replace them.
- Always wear warm gloves or mitts. Some gloves have liners which, if wet, should be removed and replaced.

In addition to dressing properly for cold conditions, it's important to eat regularly when you are out in the cold, especially foods high in carbohydrates and fats. Your body requires an enormous number of calories to shiver and keep warm. Avoid alcohol, contrary to the popular image of the St. Bernard dog delivering brandy to warm a frozen victim.

Try to keep moving while in the cold; don't be still. This helps to keep your body temperature up and circulation moving.

If you think you are experiencing symptoms of hypothermia or frostbite, get to a shelter right away and seek medical help.

When you work or play in the cold, it is a good idea to have a companion. What if you were to become injured or over-exposed to the cold and couldn't seek help yourself?

[‘ENGINEER’ continued from Page 8](#)

the organization," she said. "I do like working for the Corps because I get to work on various projects. I have met people, who love what they are doing."

In addition to her work for the La District and her upcoming college graduation, Brown also participates on a Concrete Solutions team for the university.

She, along with her teammates, recently took first place in the Concrete Solutions competition, sponsored by Sundt Construction, at the Associated Schools of Construction Re-

gions 6 and 7 Student Competition and Construction Management Conference Feb. 7-10 near Reno, Nevada.

"We were given about 12 hours to completed deliverables, such as scheduling, take-offs, estimating, site logistics, safety plans, quality plans and more," Brown said. "The next day we presented our work to Sundt, followed by a question-and-answer session."

"Our team did great during the competition. It was the whole teams' first time at Reno, and we got first place. Our team assigned tasks to each member, so we knew what was expected of

us during the competition ... I did the concrete scheduling and labor projection for the team."

As Brown looks forward to her upcoming graduation and continued work with the Corps, she said she hopes to use her construction engineering degree to better her community.

"I hope I get to work on projects with Native American communities while I'm with the Corps, such as the Navajo Nation Watershed Study," she said. "I've met people, who have been with the Corps their whole careers. I like the Corps because of the opportunities it has offered to me."



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, right, talks with a Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care Systems nurse, foreground left, during a tour of the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center Feb. 2 in Midtown Phoenix. The Corps' LA District, in partnership with the Phoenix VA Health Care System, are collaborating on six projects at the medical center.

SPD commander visits Phoenix VA medical center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROBERT DEDEAUX
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PHOENIX — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District is partnering with the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care System to oversee construction of six projects, totaling more than \$35 million.

Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, the Corps' South Pacific Division commander — who oversees four districts within the division, including the Los Angeles District — met with VA partners and the LA District's project manager during a site visit at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center Feb. 2 in Midtown Phoenix.

During her visit, Gant was briefed about projects the team is collaborating on at the center, including renovations to the Inpatient Ward 2C area; dietetics kitchen; expanding emergency backup power to the VA's HVAC system and for heating and cooling systems of the outpatient clinics and administration areas; renovations to the VA Infusion Center and the second floor Inpatient Radiology Department; and expanding the existing parking garage by 389 parking spaces.

"These projects will deliver bold solutions to serve and strengthen Arizona's veteran community," Gant said. "This is just another example of how the Corps and the Department of Veterans Affairs are partnering to support our nation's veterans and warfighters."

Construction of the first project — remodeling of Inpatient Ward 2C — is scheduled to begin this summer.

The project will result in 18 single-patient rooms, clinician space, and the integration of building and medical systems over an 11,488-square-foot area.

"From an engineering and construction standpoint, the LA District took great consideration into the layout and design of these projects with VA staff and patients' needs in mind," said John Drake, chief of the LA District's International and Interagency Services, the program that oversees VA minor projects for the district.

"We value our partnership with the Phoenix VA and are looking forward to starting the first project," he added. "The Inpatient Ward



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, left, discusses the positive impact of project completion with Joyce Rudders, acting deputy associate director of Patient Care Services, Phoenix VA Medical Health Care System, during a tour of the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical center Feb.2 in Midtown Phoenix.

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2C remodeling project will assist so many Arizona veterans."

During the tour, Gant also met with Bryan Mathews, director of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, and Elijah Ditter, associate director of resources for the health care system.

"We are looking forward to partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," Ditter said. "The Corps brings extensive engineering and project management experience and will support multiple construction projects across the main campus to better serve our growing veteran population."

Nationally, the Corps is supporting 16 major medical facilities for the Department of Veterans Affairs, totaling an estimated \$7 billion. The Los Angeles District is part of the South Pacific Division, which oversees the largest VA design and construction program across the Corps. The Corps' partnership with the VA in the region includes 13 major projects and an investment of more than \$4.36 billion in updating and upgrading facilities throughout the Pacific Southwest.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, left, and John Drake, chief of the Corps' Los Angeles District International and Interagency Services, discuss current and future VA medical center projects during a tour of the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical center Feb. 2 in Midtown Phoenix.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, right center, meets with Phoenix VA Health Care System Director Bryan Mathews, left center, during a project site visit Feb. 2 at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center in Midtown Phoenix. John Drake, LA District chief of International and Interagency Services, far right, and Elijah Ditter, Phoenix VA associate director of resources, far left, also were among the senior leaders discussing the future projects.



Virtual training SHARPens focus for district

STORY BY JOHN REESE
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The first two virtual sessions for 2023 mandatory Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention, or SHARP, training for the Los Angeles District were held Feb. 21-24, streaming to individuals for an engaging online experience.

SHARP training was facilitated by Denise Guidry, the South Pacific Division's sexual assault response coordinator, or SARC.

"I've been involved in the SHARP program since its introduction to the Army," Guidry said. "I believe being relevant for your audience is key. I take feedback from training extremely seriously and incorporate it into our conversation."

SHARP annual refresher training reinforces the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes required across the Army, ensuring that all personnel understand and can apply the fundamentals of prevention and response, she said.

A session for Soldiers and civilian employees was held in the morning, followed by another for supervisors, including a few senior district officers.

"It's always great to have the command team lead from the front!" she said. "All participants have a voice, and it was great supervisors — both Soldiers and civilians at different supervisory levels — had the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences."

Guidry noted it's also great when other SHARP subject-matter experts are online and participate in the discussions, such as those with Equal Employment Opportunity, Office of Counsel and Human Resources.

Although SHARP incident numbers are up, Guidry notes an ongoing trend of Soldiers and civilians reporting cases.

"In my personal opinion, I'm optimistic it's partially because of more awareness of SHARP and how to address these behaviors, and more personnel are empowered to report sexual harassment and sexual assault."

District personnel who missed the first sessions will have the opportunity to take the mandatory training. Due to the serious nature of SHARP awareness, participants must be in

class on time to receive credit and are expected to engage in discussion. The next SHARP webinars will be open 30 minutes prior to training start time. To receive credit for the SHARP annual training you must be able to view the presentation and access the audio. Please call no later than 15 minutes before training if you need assistance. The refresher training opportunities are:

March 7

- Employees: 9 to 10:30 a.m. and 1 to 2:30 p.m.

March 8

- Supervisors: 9 to 10:30 a.m.
- Employees: 1 to 2:30 p.m.

March 9

- Employees: 9 to 10:30 a.m.
- Supervisors: 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Be sure to check with your supervisors or contact your training coordinator/admin for training details.

Click the links below to find us on social media!



DEOMI releases 2023 Women's History Month poster

DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

In observance of 2023 Women's History Month, the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute proudly announces the availability of original artwork available for download from DEOMI's website, www.defenseculture.mil.

WHM is a celebration of women's contributions to history, culture and society and has been observed annually in the month of March in the United States since 1987.

This year's theme, "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories," recognizes women who have devoted their lives in telling stories through all forms of media and which have given a voice to those from all walks of life.

The 2023 Department of Defense's WHM poster depicts the outline of a woman's face looking towards the explosion of opportunities available to women who tell the stories. Her hand holds the pen that pours out possibilities into a colorful tapestry of talent. The display describes the many ways women can use their powerful storytelling prowess to propagate truth and reflect our changing society.

DEOMI recognizes the women, past and present, who have been active in all forms of media: print, radio, TV, stage, screen, blogs, podcasts, news, and social media. In addition to this release, DEOMI has updated its resource base that lists several people, events, milestones, and quotes related to WHM. The resource base is available on DEOMI's website under the WHM tab.



Women in Leadership panel



In celebration of National Engineers Week, which was Feb. 19-25, the Society of Women Engineers, Orange County, hosted a virtual "Women in Leadership Panel" Feb. 24 via Zoom. Panelists included Col. Julie Balten, commander of the LA District; Pam Lovasz, chief of the LA District's Engineering Division; and Olufunke Ojuri, chief of the LA District's Design Branch, Engineering Division. Dena O'Dell, chief of the LA District's Public Affairs Office, and Morgan Zandonella, SWE president, moderated the panel discussion.

Photo by Dena O'Dell

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT CAN LEAVE
ITS MARK ON ANYONE.**



**BE HANDS ON, TO KEEP HANDS OFF.
REPORT INCIDENTS.**

