



**US Army Corps
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Honolulu Engineer District Celebrates “*100 Years of Exemplary Service*”

By Sarah Cox, Honolulu Engineer District Public Affairs

On April 15, 2005, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu Engineer District (HED) celebrates 100 years of exemplary service to Hawaii, the Pacific region, the U.S. military and the nation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers missions in the Pacific region have expanded exponentially since the unit’s conception in 1905 when Lt. John Slattery was designated as Honolulu District Engineer on the island of Oahu. The mission serving the Twelfth Lighthouse District was to design and construct lighthouses for navigation, acquire land for military fortifications, improve the harbors and expand the Corps’ services to other Pacific islands.

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2-2-2 100 YEARS

“The Honolulu District has been executing projects for the Nation and its Armed Forces for a century. From civil works projects – navigation, flood control and shore protection – to building and maintaining the infrastructure for our Soldiers and Airmen, the Honolulu District is proud of our service,” says Lt. Col. David E. Anderson, Commander, Honolulu Engineer District. “We have had a significant impact on the ability of our servicemen and women to fight the Global War on Terror, we have bolstered the region’s economy, and in everything we do, we protect the environment.”

In its initial 100 years, HED has supported the military in peace and in war, helped protect the island from enemies and forces of nature, protected the environment and wetlands and added to Hawaii's economic growth.

Honolulu Engineer District’s legacy includes: the creation of Sand Island; buying the Fort DeRussy area in Waikiki; enlarging Honolulu Harbor; repairing Hickam, Wheeler and Pearl Harbor air fields after the December 1941 attack; creating the Kaneohe-Kailua Dam; building Tripler Army Medical Center; constructing the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl, the Hale Koa Hotel and numerous military and federal construction projects; and providing disaster assistance and being stewards of the environment.

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3-3-3 100 YEARS

At the beginning of the 20th Century, HED constructed six deep-draft harbors on the five major Hawaiian Islands and three crucial lighthouses for navigation. Under Slattery's command, HED began transforming the swampy coral reef used as a quarantine station in Honolulu Harbor into what is now known as Sand Island. Lt. Slattery's contributions are honored today with the *Lt. John R. Slattery Bridge* which connects Sand Island with the city of Honolulu. He later purchased the 74-acre Fort DeRussy area in Waikiki for just \$2,700 an acre for use as a military fortification. At the time, the land was little more than a swampy parcel. Today the area provides a valuable green oasis in the heart of Waikiki.

Throughout the 20th century, HED supported Oahu's defense by building a multitude of coastal fortifications including Pearl Harbor, Forts Ruger, Armstrong, Weaver, Barrette and Kamehameha as well as Batteries Randolph, Williston, Hatch and Harlow.

Changes in technology and the approaching World War I changed HED's missions. Batteries and forts were supplemented with artillery fire control and submarine mine defense systems. As cars began replacing horse-drawn wagons, HED built new roads and tunnels to transport equipment and troops. The District enlarged Honolulu harbor to 1,000 feet long and 800 feet wide, a critical project since the newly-created Panama Canal had made Honolulu a major port-of-call for ships needing coal and supplies.

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4-4-4 100 YEARS

HED's role in the Pacific increased dramatically during World War II. At the height of the war, HED employed more than 26,000 people. Not only was the District creating the new airfield ferry routes and repairing the damaged air fields at Hickam, Wheeler and Pearl Harbor, but the District was also tasked with additional responsibilities outside its normal realm.

The District was suddenly responsible for determining shipping priorities in the harbor; converting sugar cane and pineapple plantations to vegetable farms; organizing the rationing program for oil and other consumer goods; camouflaging equipment and landmarks; building trenches and air raid shelters; erecting radar stations and excavating extensive underground rooms and tunnels for ammunition storage.

Before war was declared, the District had been creating a new Airfield Ferry Route System. The original route from the Philippines, Marianas, Wake Island, Midway, Hawaii to California was considered vulnerable to Japanese attack. New air ferry routes to the east and south were necessary to the war effort and the military build-up in Australia.

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5-5-5 100 YEARS

Building seven runways and support facilities on small, remote islands presented a number of challenges including material, manpower and water shortages, communication, transportation and geographical topography problems. The southern route, from California, Hawaii, Christmas, Canton, Fiji, New Caledonia to Australia and the eastern route, from Christmas, Penrhyn, Aitutaki, Tongatabu, Norfolk to Sydney, were finished by the one-year anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor—an impressive accomplishment even in war time.

When the war ended, HED had constructed 69 miles of runways and taxiways and 2,700,000 square yards of aircraft parking area.

Although the District's work load diminished after the war, the post war years were not quiet as HED continued to supply engineering troops overseas and to dispose of real estate on the islands.

The Corps was also busy with major endeavors like construction of Tripler Army Medical Center, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl and flood control and shore protection projects.

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6-6-6 100 YEARS

Tripler Army Medical Center, commonly known as the “Pink Lady,” was completed in 1948 at a cost of \$40 million. The 14-story, 1,500-bed hospital was an extensive project featuring 12 separate buildings – each constructed separately to make the Medical Center earthquake resistant. Today Tripler continues serving military members and their families from the Pacific Rim.

During the 1960’s and 1970’s, new federal policies further expanded HED’s duties. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 required the Corps to prepare environmental impact statements (EIS) on all proposed federal actions affecting the environment. The Clean Water Act of 1977 brought changes to the Corps’ regulatory mission and required the Corps to issue permits for all dredged or fill material. The Corps was now responsible for all the nation’s water and wetlands and not just the navigable waters. This began the Corps’ mission as “Stewards of the Environment”.

The 1970’s were also a time of internal change for the District. In 1973, the functions of the Pacific Ocean Division and the Honolulu Engineer District were merged to form an operating division. The Division moved from Fort Armstrong to its present location at Fort Shafter on Oahu.

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7-7-7 100 YEARS

Civil works and capital improvement programs expanded to Guam, American Samoa, Kwajalein and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Main projects on Oahu included building military housing and improving facilities at Hickam AFB, Wheeler, Schofield, Aliamanu and Fort Shafter.

In 1973 HED began construction of the Hale Koa recreational hotel at Fort DeRussy in Waikiki. The original high-rise hotel tower has 416 rooms, 15 floors and was built for \$15.7 million. The nearby Battery Randolph was transformed into the U.S. Army Museum. The second floor of the museum today houses the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pacific Regional Visitors Center.

The Corps' responsibilities were further defined in 1980 with the addition of an Emergency Management Division. HED responded swiftly in December 2002 when Pacific Ocean Division disaster recovery specialists arrived two days after Super Typhoon Pongsona devastated Guam with 184 mph winds and within two weeks more than 100 members from all eight Corps of Engineers divisions were on the ground conducting \$20 million in disaster cleanup. Just six months earlier in July 2002, HED disaster recovery specialists were providing support in the wake of Typhoon Chataan.

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8-8-8 100 YEARS

In the fall of 2004, HED sent emergency management teams and manpower to Florida, Louisiana, Alabama and South Carolina in response to the devastation by Hurricanes Ivan, Charley and Frances.

HED continues to serve a variety of missions and construction projects in a region of 12 million square miles from Hawaii to Micronesia – an area of operations spanning five time zones, the equator and the international dateline.

According to Lt. Col. Anderson, “we are ‘America’s Engineers in the Pacific,’ and we look forward to continuing to serve our nation as we begin our second century of service.”

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