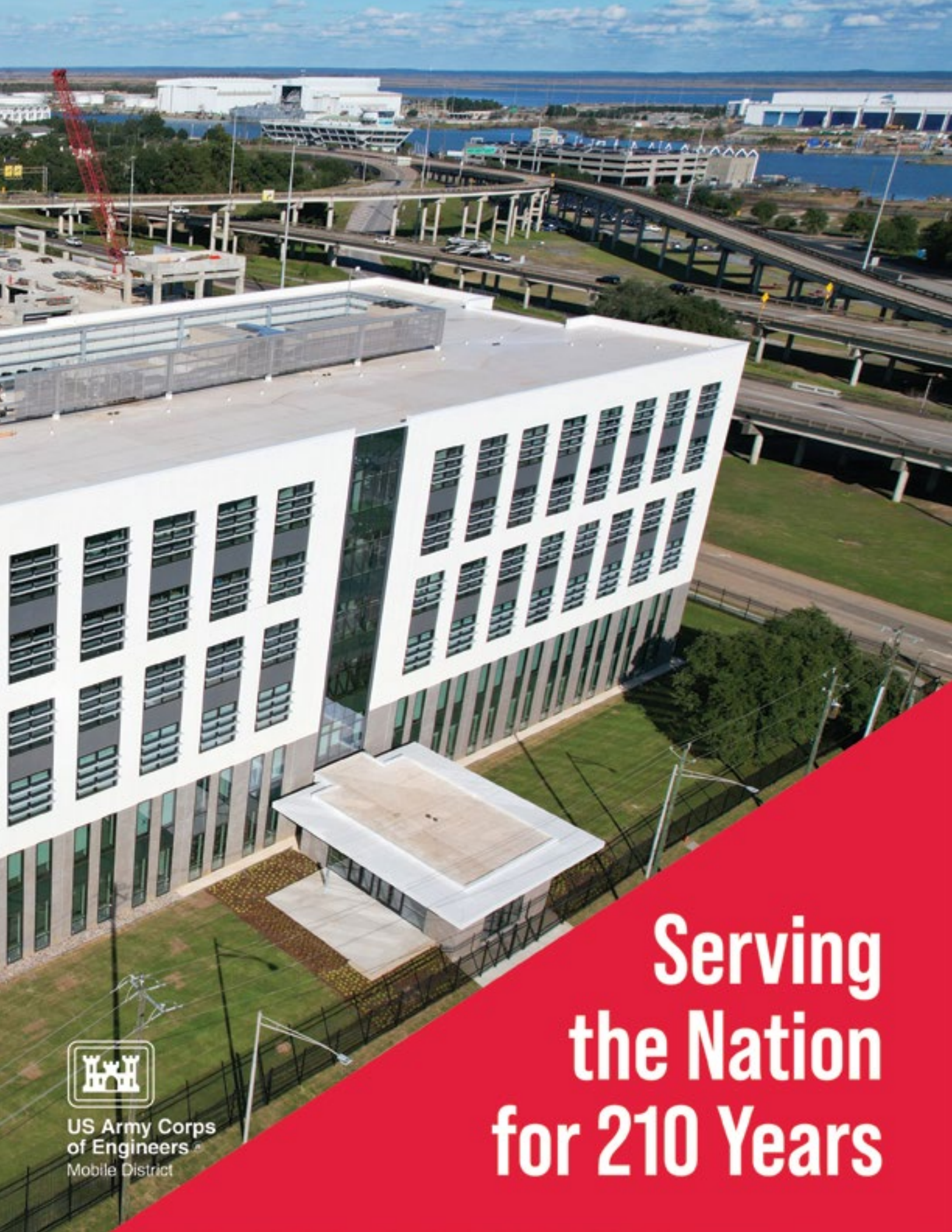


Serving the Nation for 210 Years

US Army Corps of Engineers
Mobile District

Table of Contents

The forming of the US Army Corps of Engineers began on June 14, 1775, and on June 16, 1775, more than a year before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Second Continental Congress established the regular Army, naming George Washington the Commander-in-Chief. One of Washington's first acts was to request that Congress authorize a Chief Engineer and two assistants for the new Continental Army.

Although the United States and Great Britain had signed the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814, to end the War of 1812, the treaty was not yet ratified by the United States Congress. The final land engagement of the war was fought at Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point. After a five-day siege, the wooden fort fell to British forces on February 12, 1815. With Mobile Bay open, both sides began to prepare for a general blockade of Mobile when news arrived of Congress' ratification of the Treaty of Ghent, ending hostilities. These gaps in defense certainly played into the reasoning for the Chief of Engineers Brigadier General Joseph Swift ordering Lieutenant Hipolite Dumas to the Gulf Coast on May 4, 1815… "to place the works in a permanent state of defense…(and you) will select positions on which it may be necessary to erect works for the additional security."

Mobile Point was quickly identified as crucial terrain, and it was there that the US Army Corps of Engineer's coastal defense mission would begin with the survey, design, and construction of Fort Morgan (circa 1833). Fort Morgan would be the US Army Corps of Engineers Mobile office until Captain Jeremiah M. Scarritt moved the office to the City of Mobile. Today, Fort Morgan serves as a museum that helps tell our American story.

For its first 70 years in Mobile and along the Gulf Coast, the engineers surveyed and fortified the southern coast from St. Mark's River in Florida to Lake Pontchartrain to the west. Forts were the key elements of the coastal defense system. However, complementary structures such as lighthouses and towers were also constructed. In addition to the coastal fortifications, Gulf Coast engineers also began surveys to examine the connection of inland waterways with the Tennessee-Coosa River canal study.

Following the Civil War, an engineering office was established in Mobile, Alabama. 18 years later, the Mobile District was officially established in a formal reorganization of operations at the national level.

Mobile District has consistently responded to the call from our national leaders to enhance our capabilities and capacity to meet the Nation's priorities. In civil works, our mission has continuously evolved with the passage of a series of River and Harbor Acts in 1882 and other legislation that charged us with navigation along the Gulf Coast and inland waterways, as well as later flood control and hydropower. The Nation has continued to ask more and more of its Army and the Army's engineers as it matured. These missions also include our support for other federal agencies. Mobile District is proud to have been selected to support and build many vital facilities for our federal partners, enabling them to deliver on their core missions. Mobile and Gulf Coast folklore attributes the construction of numerous roads, hospitals, ports, and customs facilities to the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Many of these facilities' official records are now lost to the ages. However, countless other remarkable projects exist, from lighthouses and tunnels to administrative facilities and dams. Many one-of-a-kind structures and their impacts are etched in our history, both in the past and the present.

Since then, the Mobile District has responded to changing defense requirements and played a vital role in the country's development. Throughout the 19th Century, the Corps of Engineers built coastal fortifications, surveyed roads and canals, eliminated navigational hazards, explored and mapped the Western frontier, and constructed buildings and monuments in the Nation's capital.

The District's boundaries were from the Escambia River westward to the East Pearl River. Montgomery District had responsibilities from the Escambia River eastward to the St. Mark's River in Florida. In 1933, the two Districts merged into one, the Mobile District. The District was also given responsibility for all military construction for the Army and the Army Air Corps in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama.

The 1930s were a period of significant activity for the Mobile District. Modernization of the Black Warrior River system began, taking the number of locks required to transit the waterway from 17 to 5. Construction of Brookley Field, the Southeast Army Air Depot, and the Mobile Air Service Command commenced during World War II. The Flood Control Act of 1936 initiated a national flood protection plan. It granted the Corps jurisdiction over federal flood control protection, investigation, and river improvements.

As busy as the 1930s were, World War II resulted in the most significant wartime mobilization effort ever for the United States. The magnitude of Mobile District's work can be judged by expenditure for construction. Between December 1941 and December 1943, nearly $1 Billion, more than $26 Billion in 2023 dollars, was expended in the District on facilities that included 32 Army airfields, an ordnance training center, two arsenals, three Army ground force depots, five harbor defense installations, nine Civil Aviation Administration airfields, two Army Air Force supply depots, one Army Air Force cantonment, six ordnance manufacturing plants, nine Army ground force cantonments and six special installations.

As the Nation's priorities shifted following World War II and the emergence of the United States as a global power, the Cold War ushered in a new age of discovery as we aimed our sights at the stars.

Whether building facilities that enabled the US Army space program to send Explorer 1 into orbit on January 31, 1958, or constructing test stands in preparation for NASA's moon mission, Mobile District's support to national priorities has helped impact the Nation's move toward the future.

In the 1960s, the Mobile District achieved numerous accomplishments, including support for the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, and the Mississippi Test Facility. But its most notable contribution was supporting the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Camille ravaged the region in August of 1969. Not since World War II and the Korean Conflict had the District been called upon to respond to its history's most serious peacetime challenge. The District responded by demonstrating its capabilities and effectiveness when called upon to function under pressure.

The 1970s saw the District welcome President Richard Nixon as it began construction on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, providing a commercial waterway link between the Tennessee and Tombigbee rivers.

In the late 1980s, SOUTHCOM requested support for several small construction projects in Latin America. These small, under $100,000 purchase orders led to increased requests for support, including requirements in Honduras, where the DoD had begun to conduct limited operations from Palmerola, now known as Soto Cano Air Base. As the US presence at Soto Cano grew, SAM became involved in constructing the current US enclave on the Honduran base.

In 1993, SAM requested permission to establish an Area Office in Colombia to better support the expanding mission. This approach evolved over time, resulting in the current model of forward construction, engineering, project management, and the presence of active-duty officers in key regional countries. Focus areas for the program, ranging from counternarcotics to climate change, have developed to match changing US priorities. However, support for US forces in the region and SOUTHCOM's Humanitarian Assistance efforts remain central to the program. In recent years, an increasing interest in improving water resource management has led to a growing program of international agreements providing technical support to partner nations.

Engineering efforts related to the turnover of the Panama Canal Authority in 2000 also contributed to the District's LATAM program's continued development by signing a contract with the Panama Canal to provide cooperation and technical assistance for the development of engineering services, environmental sustainability, operation, disaster damage reduction, and risk analysis of integrated water resources management, among other activities, to ensure the safety and security of the Panama Canal, which is vital globally in shipping.

The 1990s-2000s saw the Mobile District's Emergency Management Division respond to numerous tornadoes and provide support to many that hit the region, none more devastating than the EF4 multiple-vortex tornado that destroyed portions of

Tuscaloosa and Birmingham, Alabama, one of the costliest tornadoes on record.

Recently, the Mobile District has successfully supported the island of Puerto Rico's recovery from the devastating impact of Hurricane Maria on the island. We completed the repair of Ship Island and other barrier islands off the Gulf Coast of Mississippi after those islands were damaged following Hurricane Katrina. The District is currently in the middle of a multi-billion dollar rebuild of Tyndall Air Base, Florida, after it was devastated and nearly destroyed following the impact of Hurricane Michael.

However, it is not just our response to helping others recover from natural disasters that have a significant impact; it is also helping our partners, whether the federal government or local industry partners, complete the projects vital to them, which allows us to say genuinely, **Mobile Delivers!**

We completed the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. This $38 million project will enable NASA to achieve its mission of re-exploring the Moon shortly. The District also completed the James A. Haley Veterans Administration Bed Tower project in Tampa, Fla., which will enable the VA to continue providing excellent medical care for our Nation's veterans.

In March 2020, the District, the entire country, and the world dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic. The shutdown and closure of government facilities required the District to implement total telework at the beginning and max telework for most of the pandemic. The District also assisted state and local officials throughout Alabama in developing a plan to increase hospital bed space in case the pandemic and the need for more hospital beds worsened.

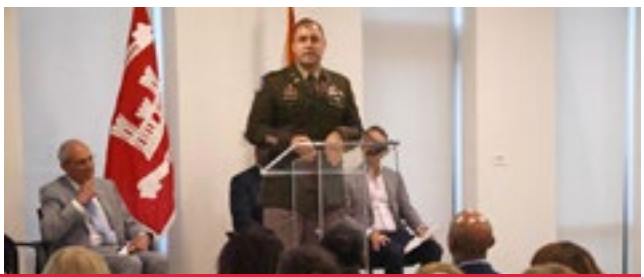
Today, the Mobile District is on schedule to complete a project that will deepen and widen the Mobile Harbor, allowing for increased shipping and transportation within the harbor. This will significantly benefit not only the City of Mobile but also the state of Alabama. Leveraging over $1.3 billion in public shore side terminals and channel investments in Alabama's only seaport to ensure economies of scale and competitive rates for the seaport's mining, manufacturing, agribusiness, and retail/distribution shippers.

The District recognizes that actual credit goes to the entire team's efforts, from the public's requirements to Congress' appropriations to the careful and deliberate direction of supported commands and agencies, to our contractors' expertise, innovation, and building prowess, and to USACE's and Mobile District's relentless drive to execute high-quality projects in a transparent and accountable matter.

As you read the history in this edition, you can hear the voices of the people who have poured their lives into building this legacy, and they can be heard echoing, "ESSAYONS! (LET US TRY!)." It is these conscientious professionals who have done their part in building a strong United States with its vibrant economic engine and an unsurpassed national defense – they have also constructed purposefully a Mobile District legacy that is uniquely American. Mobile Delivers!

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Mobile District building, June 2025
USACE Photo

Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, COL Jeremy Chapman, and Rep. Shomari Figures
USACE Photo



COL Chapman speaking at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Mobile District building
USACE Photo

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 18, 2015

HON. BRADLEY BYRNE
OF ALABAMA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

200 Years of Exemplary Service from Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mr. Speaker, on May 4, 1815, the Chief of Engineers issued orders to Lieutenant Hipolite Dumas, which began the long and proud history of engineering service to the Gulf Coast and Mobile.

Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is celebrating 200 years of exemplary service to the Southeast region, the U.S. military and the Nation.

For its first 70 years in Mobile and along the Gulf Coast, these engineers surveyed and fortified the southern coast from St. Marks River in Florida to Lake Pontchartrain to the west. Forts were the key elements of the coastal defense system, but complementary structures such as lighthouses and towers were also constructed. In addition to the coastal fortifications, Gulf Coast engineers also began surveys to look at connecting the inland waterways with the Tennessee-Coosa River canal study.

Following the Civil War, in 1870, an engineer office was opened in Mobile, Alabama. Eighteen years later the Mobile District was officially established in a formal reorganization of operations at the national level.

The nation turned toward rebuilding the economy after the Civil War and developing the nation's transportation system became a positive, tangible means of measuring progress. Major navigation surveys were conducted on Southeastern rivers such as the Coosa River, the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee Flint, the Black Warrior, Tennessee-Tombigbee, and the Alabama River between 1870 and 1879.

When Mobile District was established in 1888, the District's boundaries were from the Escambia River westward to the East Pearl River. Montgomery District had responsibilities from the Escambia River eastward to St. Marks River in Florida. In 1933 the two districts merged into one, the Mobile District. The District also was also given responsibilities for all military construction for the Army and Army Air Corps in Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama.

The 1930's were a busy time for the Mobile District. Modernization of the Black Warrior River system began, taking the number of locks required to transit the waterway from 17 to 5.

Construction of Brookley Field, the Southeast Army Air Depot and the Mobile Air Service Command during World War II began. The Flood Control Act of 1936 set into motion a national flood protection plan and gave the Corps jurisdiction over federal flood control protection investigation and river improvements.

As busy as the 1930's were, World War II resulted in the largest wartime mobilization effort ever for the United States. The magnitude of Mobile District's work can be judged by expenditure for construction. Between December 1941 and December 1943, nearly $1 billion was expended in the District on facilities that included 32 Army airfields, an ordnance training center, two arsenals, three Army ground force depots, five harbor defense installations, nine Civil Aviation Administration airfields, two Army Air Force supply depots, one Army Air Force cantonment, six ordnance manufacturing plants, nine Army ground force cantonments and six special installations.

In the 1950's construction of Buford Dam in Georgia was initiated, Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam was completed, Walter F. George Lock and Dam construction began and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency was established at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama in 1956.

In 1959 NASA was established at Redstone Arsenal for the Saturn Project. The construction of facilities for the Saturn project, a rocket program that was the work of the von Braun team at Redstone, was one of Mobile District's biggest projects. The District was responsible for the testing facilities at Redstone Arsenal associated with the Saturn booster, and eventually one of the major construction projects of the post Korean War period, the Mississippi Test Facility.

In the 1960's, the District continued the legacy of improving and developing the Nation's inland waterway transportation system. West Point Dam was authorized, Carters Dam on the Coosawattee River and Millers Ferry Lock and Dam on the Alabama River began. Construction of the Claiborne Lock and Dam and Robert F. Henry Lock and Dam also began in the 60's.

In the 1970's Mobile again took on new responsibilities. Construction responsibility for Cape Canaveral District was shifted to Mobile. Military construction in Florida, the Panama Canal activities and Central/South America programs were also shifted to Mobile. The 1970's also saw construction begin on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, at the time the largest Civil Works project in Corps history.

The 70's ended with Hurricane Fredric hitting Mobile on September 12, 1979. Under Public Law 84-99 the Corps was authorized to provide emergency assistance during disasters. The States of Alabama, Florida and Mississippi were all declared Federal disaster areas. Mobile District has been a national leader in emergency response actions for the Corps. Through the District's innovation the Corps developed a national-level Detachable Tactical Operations System to provide immediate support to disaster stricken areas. This was never more evident than after 9/11 when the District supported the New York City police and fire departments with these units.

The 80's saw innovation within the Corps, with Mobile District once again leading the way. Life Cycle/Project Management was first tested and then established in Mobile District. It has

now become the standard for Corps management. This decade also saw the opening of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway to navigation, creating the transportation artery from the Gulf Coast to the Nation's mid-section first envisioned in the mid 1800's. Base Realignment and Closure also began in the 80's. Mobile District has been involved in all the BRAC National Environmental Policy Act requirements for BRAC from 1988 until the present.

The closing decade of the 1900's once again revealed Mobile's innovation. In 1994 the Scanning Hydrographic Operational Airborne Lidar Survey, or SHOALS, was first tested. This innovative 3-D technology was adapted for underwater mapping. When later combined with the U.S. Navy's CHARTS system, the team became a world leader in underwater mapping. The 1990s also saw the completion of the J-6 Large Rocket Test Facility, the completion of the John J. Sparkman Center located at the U.S. Army Arsenal at Redstone, Alabama. The Sparkman Center and follow on phases, encompasses more than 1 million square feet and is one of the most modern military facilities in the world.

As the Nation entered the new century Mobile District continued its record of excellence. The Von Braun Center at Redstone Arsenal was completed in 2014 and is home to the Space and Missile Defense Command and the Missile Defense Agency. The District responded to and assisted in recovery operations when four hurricanes struck the State of Florida in 2004. In 2005, Mobile District began a comprehensive analysis and design for the Mississippi coastal counties to make them more resilient and less susceptible to risk from hurricane and storm damage following the devastating landfall of Hurricane Katrina along the Mississippi coast. From this analysis came the Mississippi Coastal Improvement Program, an innovative approach to achieving the goal of a more resilient coast.

Since 2000, Mobile has also completed four Headquarters complexes for major key commands, U.S. Central Command, U. S. Southern Command, U.S. Army Material Command and the U.S. Special Operations Command. They also were the design and construction agent for the new cantonment area and training ranges for the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) which relocated from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. They are also responsible for the construction of various facilities at Eglin Air Force Base to support the Joint Strike Fighter program.

Mobile District continues to serve a variety of programs and missions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee and Central and South America. While I know my colleagues from these States are as appreciative as I am for their work, I am especially proud to have the District Headquarters in my District and in Mobile.

It is with pride that I say, Happy Birthday to Mobile District on your two hundred years of exemplary, innovative and dedicated service. On behalf of a grateful Nation, thank you to all the civilian and military members of the Mobile District for all you have done.

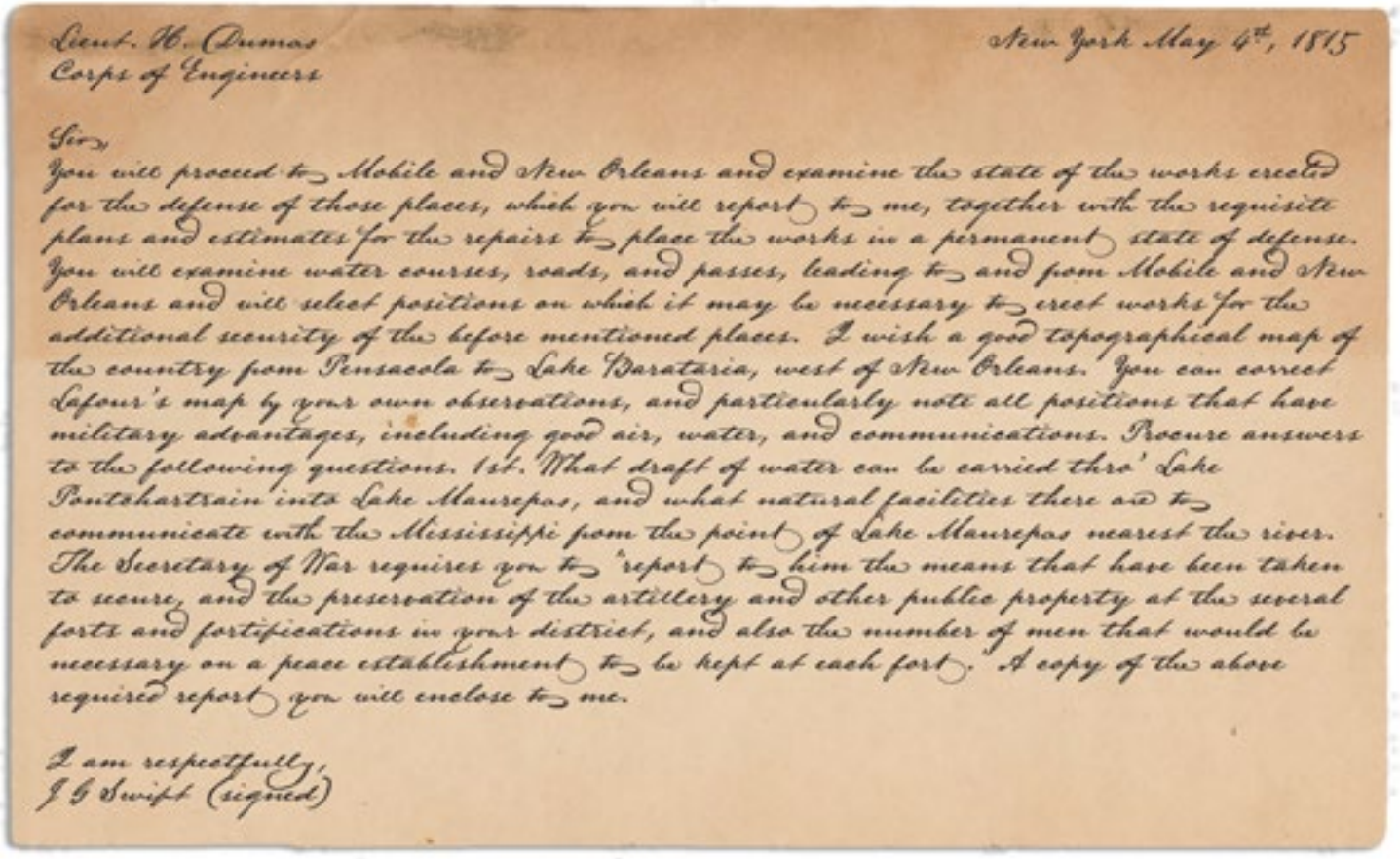
1ST LIEUTENANT HIPOLITE DUMAS, THE GULF COAST'S FIRST ENGINEER

A certificate of appointment was issued to Hipolite Dumas, a native of France, commissioning him as a 1st Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers, signed by President James Madison and Secretary of War James Monroe on January 3, 1815. The Chief of Engineers, Brigadier General Joseph G. Swift, expressed concern with harbor fortifications in correspondence with the Secretary of War on March 21, 1815. He reported that he had discussed the matter with Secretary of State James Monroe and had arranged to send officers of the Corps of Engineers to important ports from Maine to New Orleans. They were to provide complete reports on the fortifications and, where necessary, select sites for new works to protect the principal positions on the coast and the avenues leading to those sites.

The first official orders from the Chief of Engineers were sent to Lieutenant Dumas on May 4, 1815, instructing him to survey the Gulf Coast Frontier.

Lieutenant James Gadsden would succeed Dumas as Supervising Engineer on the Gulf Frontier in 1816. Dumas obtained the rank of a Captain on March 31, 1819 and resigned from military service in 1825. He died February 7, 1841.

Brigadier General Joseph G. Swift



Lieut. H. Dumas
Corps of Engineers

New York May 4th, 1815

Sir,
You will proceed to Mobile and New Orleans and examine the state of the works erected for the defense of those places, which you will report to me, together with the requisite plans and estimates for the repairs to place the works in a permanent state of defense. You will examine water courses, roads, and passes, leading to and from Mobile and New Orleans and will select positions on which it may be necessary to erect works for the additional security of the before mentioned places. I wish a good topographical map of the country from Pensacola to Lake Barataria, west of New Orleans. You can correct Lafour's map by your own observations, and particularly note all positions that have military advantages, including good air, water, and communications. Procure answers to the following questions. 1st. What draft of water can be carried thro' Lake Pontchartrain into Lake Maurepas, and what natural facilities there are to communicate with the Mississippi from the point of Lake Maurepas nearest the river. The Secretary of War requires you to "report to him the means that have been taken to secure, and the preservation of the artillery and other public property at the several forts and fortifications in your district, and also the number of men that would be necessary on a peace establishment to be kept at each fort." A copy of the above required report you will enclose to me.

I am respectfully,
J G Swift (signed)

The Early Years of the Gulf Coast Frontier

In 1816, Lieutenant James Gadsden was appointed Supervising Engineer for the Gulf Frontier. His mission was to inspect existing defense positions along the Gulf Coast and identify additional fortifications necessary to secure key locations such as New Orleans and Mobile. By May 1816, Gadsden completed his initial survey and submitted a comprehensive report on the Gulf Frontier's defenses.

Gadsden's reconnaissance spanned the Gulf of Mexico from Perdido Bay in western Florida to Sabine Pass on the Texas frontier. During this period, the Corps of Engineers underwent significant administrative changes. On April 29, 1816, Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing President Madison to hire a skilled assistant for the Corps. The president chose General Simon Bernard, a distinguished French engineer and former aide to Napoleon, known for his expertise in military engineering. Bernard's appointment, however, stirred controversy—placing a foreigner in a position equal to the Chief of Engineers created morale and command tensions within the Corps. Simultaneously, the War Department established a Board of Engineers for Fortifications tasked with evaluating U.S. coastal defenses and recommending improvements to the Secretary of War.

The defense of the Mississippi River and New Orleans took precedence over other coastal locations. Although colonial powers had built several forts throughout the Gulf region, many had fallen into disrepair, offering minimal protection. Mobile's defenses centered on Fort Charlotte—formerly Old Fort Conde—and Fort Bowyer, constructed by the British at Mobile Point. However, Fort Charlotte's effectiveness diminished as the town expanded around it, restricting its defensive reach to a single channel into Mobile Harbor. Fort Bowyer was deemed inadequate for protecting Mobile Bay's entrance, highlighting the need for a larger, more capable fortification.

Gadsden's survey praised Mobile Bay for its spaciousness, providing a safe harbor and ample anchorage for vessels of all sizes under the protection of Mobile Point. He detailed the channels and depths, noting a chain of barrier islands stretching irregularly 12 to 20 miles offshore from Mobile Point to the Sabine River. The sheltered waters between these barrier islands and the mainland, known as the Mississippi Sound, formed a vital strategic link between Mobile Point and Lake Pontchartrain's entrance.

Following Gadsden's surveys, the Corps of Engineers initiated a series of fortifications along the Gulf Coast, spanning from the mouth of Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana to the mouth of the St. Marks River in Florida. Their recommendations included establishing a comprehensive seaboard defense system and designating Pensacola Bay as a naval depot site. Complementing forts, the Corps also built lighthouses and observation towers. Key fortifications—such as Fort Gaines and Fort Morgan guarding Mobile Bay's entrance, and Fort Pickens and Fort McRee protecting Pensacola Bay—showcased the military technology and resources dedicated to fulfilling Congress's mandate. These sites became part of the Mobile District.

FORTS IN ALABAMA

Fort Gaines

Recognized by Gadsden and his team as the first modern fortification designed to defend Mobile, Fort Gaines was constructed on Dauphin Island using the latest engineering techniques of the era. Awarded a contract in 1818, construction began in 1819 but was soon interrupted by funding shortfalls as Congress requested a reassessment of the fort's necessity. Although Congress reauthorized the project in 1846, it remained unfinished by 1859 and was only completed after Confederate troops occupied the site. Unfortunately, despite completion, the Confederacy lacked sufficient resources to fully arm the fort.

Fort Morgan

Built on Mobile Point at the entrance to Mobile Bay, Fort Morgan—originally known as Fort Bowyer—was completed and garrisoned in the early 1830s. This large bastioned structure, costing over $1.2 million, featured a central citadel that distinguished it from other Gulf Coast forts. It later played a pivotal role during the Battle of Mobile Bay in the Civil War but was captured by Confederate forces early in the conflict.

The Board of Engineers for Fortifications underscored the strategic importance of newly acquired Florida in 1821, which presented fresh tactical challenges. They warned that without robust forts guarding the entrance to Mobile Bay, the city and nearby Pensacola would be vulnerable to enemy occupation. Fort Pickens and Fort McRee, situated at Pensacola Bay's entrance, were critical components of the Gulf Coast's seaboard defense system.

General Bernard emphasized the significance of rivers flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, as these waterways extended deep into the interior of the United States and could serve as invasion routes. In early 1821, Bernard expressed particular concern over the Tennessee River basin's connection to the Gulf through Mobile Bay via an artificial canal. He warned that control of this canal by an enemy could jeopardize the entire region's security.

Fort Morgan, Alabama
USACE Photo

PENSACOLA NAVY DEPOT

Seaborne Defense System and Strategic Infrastructure on the Gulf Coast

A comprehensive seaborne defense system must include several essential components: a capable Navy; fortifications; efficient land and sea communications; a well-organized regular army; and a militia. The Navy, in particular, requires adequate facilities for ship repair, rendezvous harbors, ports of refuge, and supply stations. Commanders regarded Mobile Bay as a vital port of refuge and strategic station for both merchant and naval vessels.

The forts guarding the entrance to Mobile Bay served multiple strategic functions. They protected the bay itself, safeguarded the watersheds of the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers, and defended proposed routes linking these rivers to the Tennessee River. Moreover, the forts ensured communication between Mobile Bay and Lake Pontchartrain via the channel through the barrier islands, while denying enemies any foothold from which to launch attacks against key Gulf Coast cities such as New Orleans and Pensacola.

Tennessee-Coosa River Canal

A major survey of the Gulf frontier assessed the feasibility of linking the Tennessee River with the Gulf Coast through an inland canal. In 1827, Congress authorized a detailed survey to explore this possibility. However, the project faced a significant obstacle: the proposed canal route crossed Cherokee Nation lands, which remained under Native American control until the mid-1830s.

The final survey concluded that a canal approximately 100 miles long—from the head of steamboat navigation on the Hiwassee River to the head of navigation on the Coosa River—would effectively connect the Tennessee and Coosa Valleys. Although this canal would be of great national importance, its construction would require substantial effort and resources.

General Simon Bernard cautioned that the canal's costs would be prohibitive. Instead, he proposed building a railroad along a different route to connect the Tennessee Valley with the Gulf of Mexico. His suggested line would run from Cotton Gin Port on the Tombigbee River to Waterloo on the Tennessee River, providing the shortest communication link between the mouth of the Missouri River and the Gulf. Notably, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, completed over 150 years later, closely follows Bernard's proposed railroad path.

1858 Drawing of Pensacola Navy Yard
University of West Florida Photo

While the canal project was ultimately deemed too ambitious and abandoned at the time, the concept was revived during the post–Civil War era amid widespread improvements to rivers and harbors.

Mobile Harbor Improvements

In 1829, Captain William H. Chase, Supervising Engineer for Gulf fortifications, conducted a survey of Mobile Bay and Lake Pontchartrain to identify optimal sites for lighthouses and navigation buoys. Work was underway at Pass au Heron to deepen the channel, enabling larger vessels to navigate into Lake Pontchartrain. These efforts aimed to improve inland navigation through the Mississippi Sound, facilitating commerce between New Orleans and other key Gulf ports.

Despite these efforts, Mobile's harbor remained shallow, with depths measuring only 5.5 feet at Choctaw Pass and 8 feet at Dog River Bar. Such shallow waters prevented larger vessels from reaching the city's wharves, placing Mobile at a significant economic disadvantage compared to New Orleans, which benefited from deeper, more navigable waters.

In response, Alabama legislators petitioned Congress for federal assistance. The Corps of Engineers launched a project to enhance navigation by creating an unobstructed channel 10 feet deep and 200 feet wide, extending from Mobile to the Gulf of Mexico. However, funding for this project was repeatedly interrupted by the competing demands of constructing forts at Mobile Point and Santa Rosa Island. Contract disputes and adverse weather further delayed progress.

As a result, substantial improvements to Mobile Harbor were stalled, and meaningful advancements in navigation would not resume until after the Civil War.

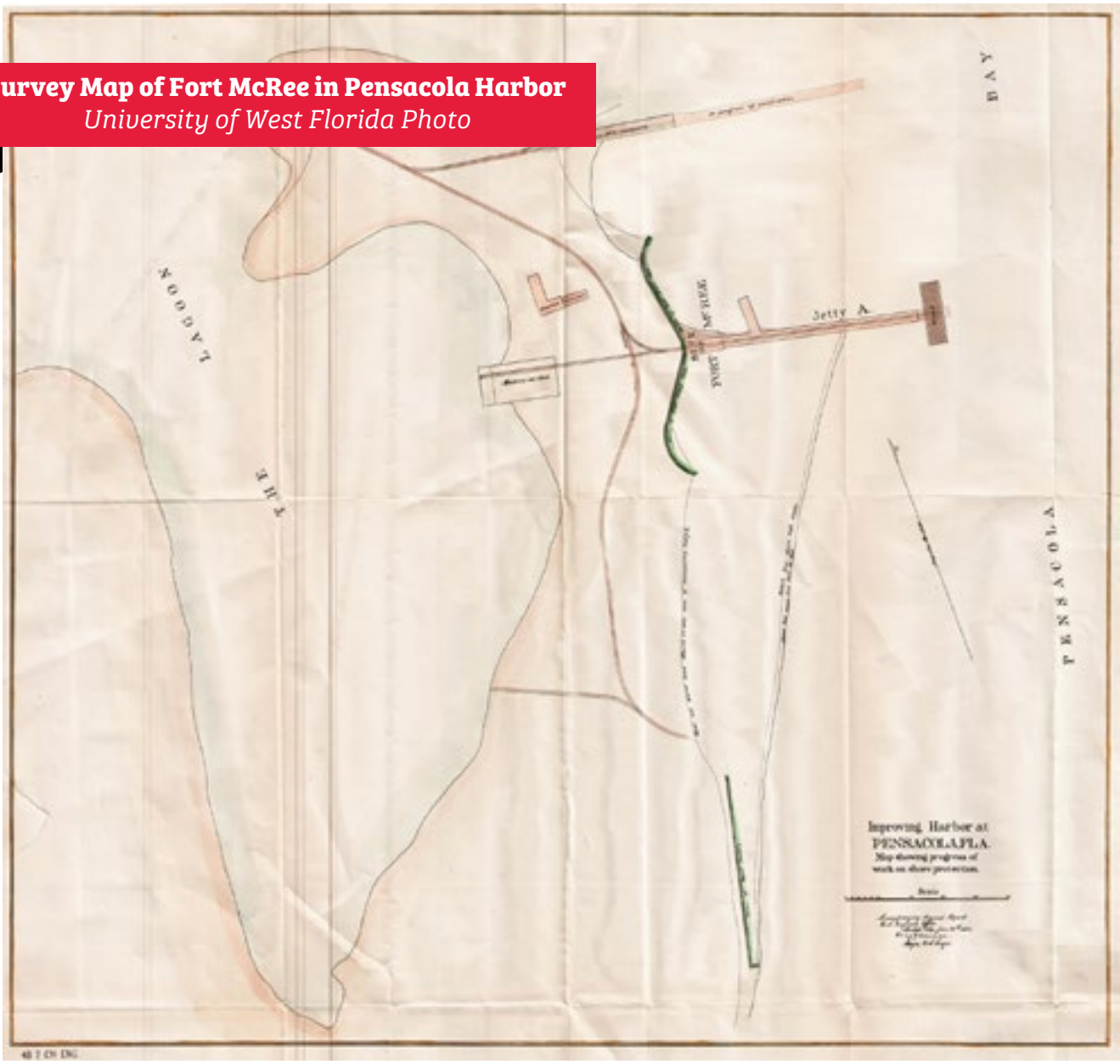
1820 Early Survey Map of Mobile Bay
University of West Florida Photo

THE PENSACOLA-MOBILE CANAL

In 1817, the Board of Engineers for Fortifications conducted a reconnaissance of the Gulf Frontier and identified Pensacola's strategic importance. They proposed establishing a water connection between Pensacola and the Mississippi River, recognizing New Orleans as the primary supply depot for the entire Gulf region. A key part of this connection was to utilize the Mississippi Sound, which stretches from the Rigolets to Mobile Bay. The Board viewed the sound as a natural canal and recommended enhancing it with a man-made canal to improve navigation and communication.

The estimated cost of constructing the Mobile-Pensacola Canal ranged from $1.2 million for the most economical route to $2.2 million for the most efficient route. Although the canal was never built as originally envisioned, the proposal stands as one of the earliest plans for an inland waterway linking Florida's panhandle to the Mississippi River. This vision was eventually realized in the twentieth century with the completion of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

- The Early Surveys
- Fort Massachusetts

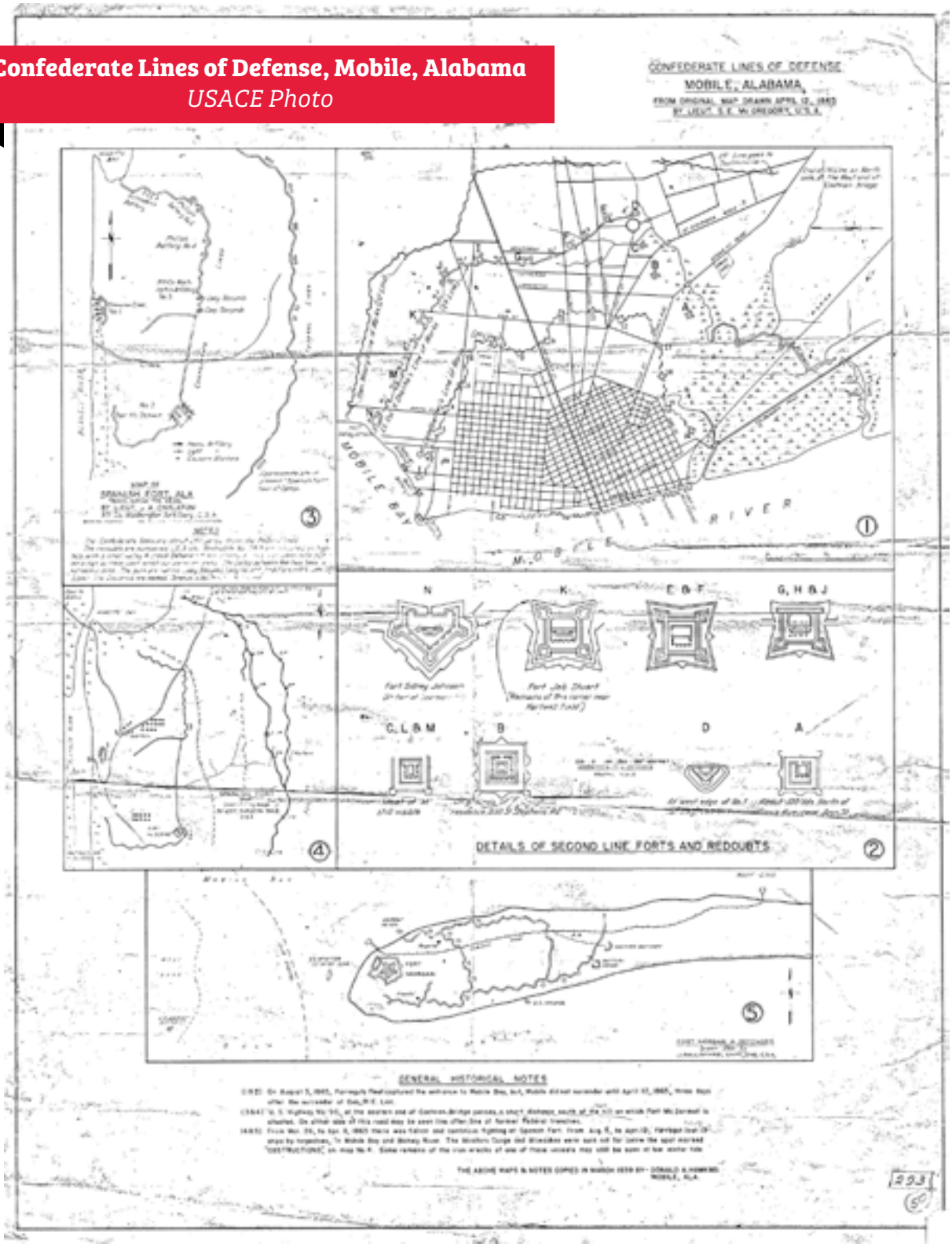


Survey Map of Fort McRee in Pensacola Harbor
University of West Florida Photo

1860-1869 THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War and the Gulf Frontier

The Civil War marked the first major disruption to operations along the Gulf Frontier since work began in 1815. By the end of 1861, only a handful of Army Engineers remained active in the region. Many senior engineering officers stationed on the Gulf Frontier pledged allegiance to the Confederacy. Throughout the war, Confederate forces focused on defending key seacoast forts against advancing Federal troops, while the Union sought to blockade Southern ports and restrict Confederate supply lines.



Confederate Lines of Defense, Mobile, Alabama
USACE Photo

Battle of Mobile Bay

When Admiral David Farragut launched his campaign against Mobile's coastal defenses, Fort Powell played a crucial role. This modest but strategically positioned earthwork at Grant's Pass protected the eastern entrance to the Mississippi Sound. Any vessel attempting to approach Fort Morgan from the sound was vulnerable to crossfire from both Fort Powell and Fort Gaines.

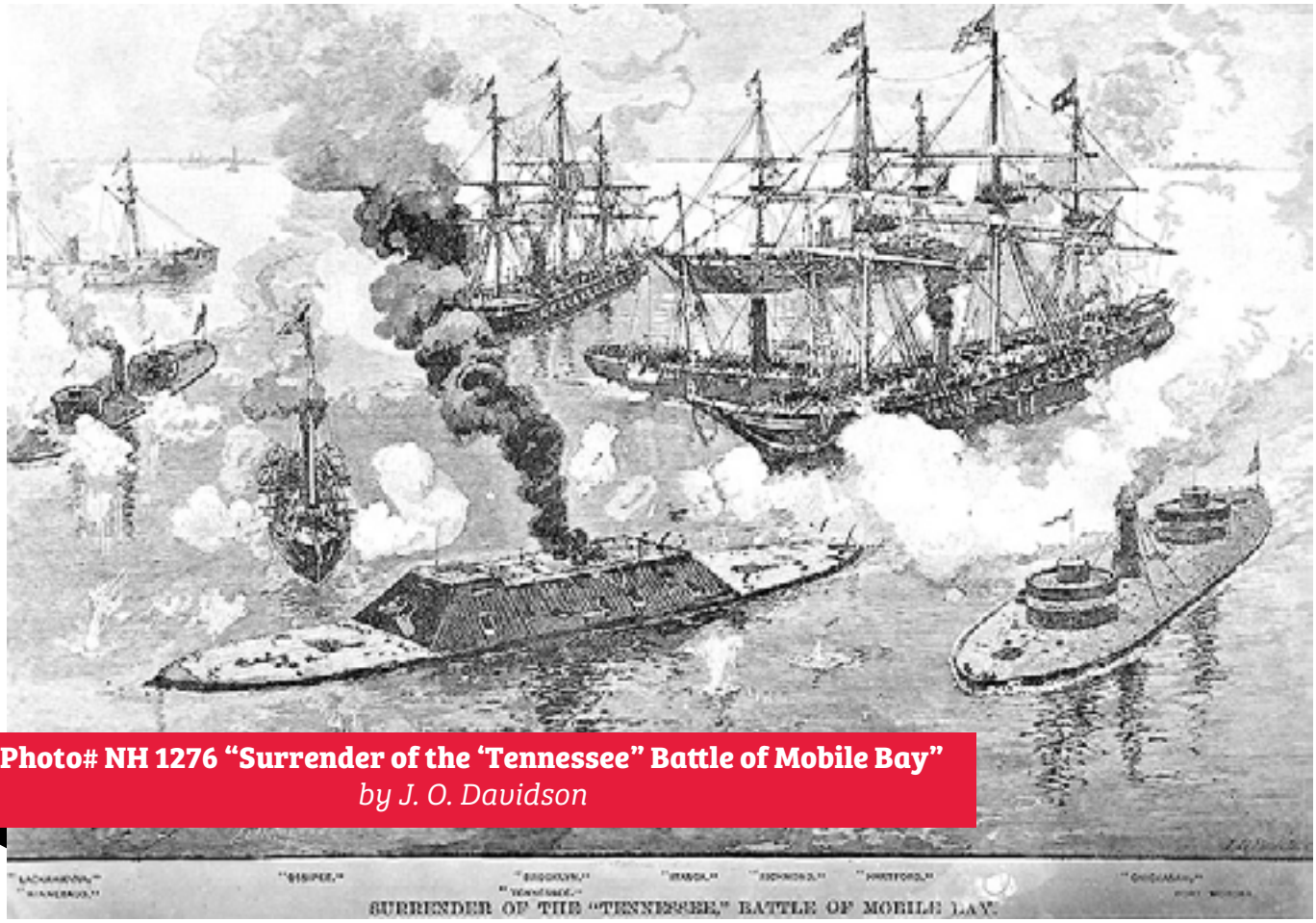
To neutralize this crossfire, Union forces needed to capture Fort Gaines via a land assault. The Union planned to besiege Forts Morgan and Gaines simultaneously but faced significant obstacles, including challenging terrain and insufficient troop strength. Farragut devised an innovative tactic: he lashed smaller wooden vessels to the port sides of larger ironclad warships. This formation shielded the smaller boats from heavy Confederate fire and allowed them to serve as tugs if the ironclads were damaged. On the morning of August 5, 1864, Farragut began his assault. In a brief but intense engagement, Union ships successfully passed Fort Morgan's defenses and entered Mobile Bay. Within three hours, Confederate naval resistance had collapsed.

Following this breakthrough, Confederate forces abandoned Fort Powell on August 5. Fort Gaines surrendered to Union forces on August 8. However, Fort Morgan presented a far tougher challenge: it was larger, more heavily fortified, and better garrisoned. Union troops landed on Mobile Point from Bon Secour Bay, east of the fort, where they encountered rugged terrain and fierce resistance.

Heavy fighting commenced on August 22, and by August 23, a white flag flew over Fort Morgan, signaling its surrender.

Aftermath

With the forts secured, Union forces shifted focus to capturing the city of Mobile itself. However, events elsewhere in the Southern campaign delayed the attack until early 1865. Mobile remained under siege as General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. The formal surrender of Mobile followed shortly thereafter, marking the end of Confederate resistance in the region.



Photo# NH 1276 "Surrender of the 'Tennessee" Battle of Mobile Bay"
by J. O. Davidson

1870-1879 FIRST CORPS DISTRICT OFFICE IN THE CITY OF MOBILE

Post–Civil War Engineering and Development in the Gulf Coast Region

Following the Civil War, engineers assumed new responsibilities along the Gulf Coast as part of the nation's broader efforts to rebuild and modernize. In 1888, General Orders formally established the Mobile District, marking a reorganization of national Corps of Engineers operations. While Mobile had served only sporadically as an engineering base between 1815 and 1870, engineers began working in the city on a regular basis after 1870. Before this, most projects on the Gulf Frontier were managed from New Orleans and Pensacola, but the opening of an engineering office in Mobile reflected the growing importance of the region.

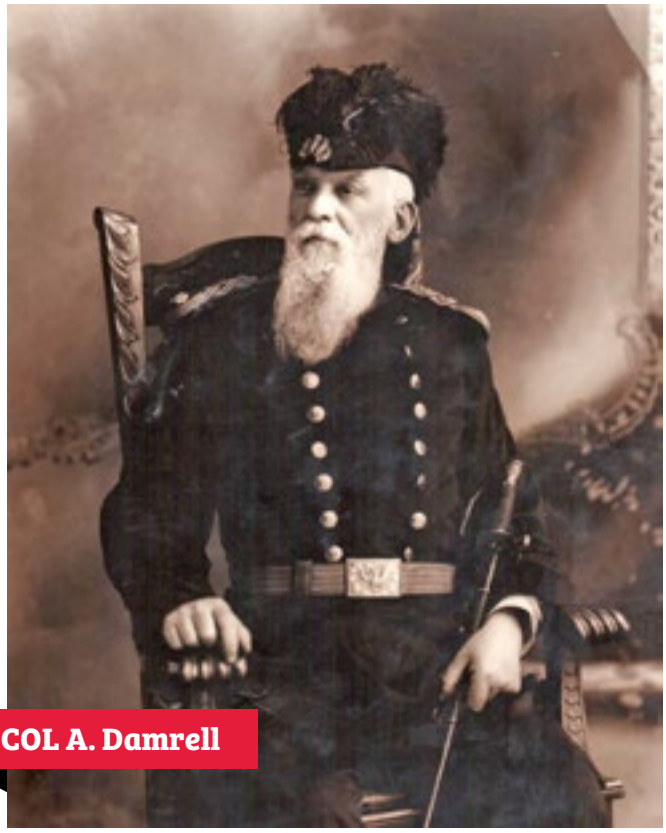
The Eastern River Basins

In the postwar period, the United States prioritized rebuilding its economy, with developing the transportation system seen as a vital measure of progress. Expanding commerce and strengthening the nation's industrial capacity spurred the passage of the Annual Rivers and Harbors Legislation. Recognizing that such large-scale projects required significant funding, the federal government assumed responsibility for financing and managing river and harbor improvements.

The Corps of Engineers became the primary agency tasked with conducting examinations and surveys, evaluating project feasibility, and overseeing the design, construction, and maintenance of internal improvements. The Annual Rivers and Harbors bills typically authorized systematic examinations and surveys that followed a consistent process: engineers gathered fundamental data during preliminary studies, assessed the feasibility and costs of proposed projects, and compiled detailed reports. These reports were submitted to the Chief of Engineers, who incorporated the findings into the Annual Report to Congress, then forwarded to the Secretary of War.

KEY MILESTONES IN THIS PERIOD INCLUDE:

- **1870** The first major survey of the Coosa River
- **1871** Surveys of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River system, including Apalachicola Bay
- **1872** A final serious evaluation of connecting the Tennessee River to the Gulf of Mexico via the Coosa River
- **1874** Assessment of the Black Warrior River for improvement potential
- **1874** Conducting the Tennessee-Tombigbee survey
- **1875** Initial surveys to improve the Alabama River started
- **1879** Completion of a major Coosa River survey, recommending 31 locks
- **1878** Initiation of improvements on Pensacola and Pascagoula Harbors began
- **1879** First surveys are conducted on the Pearl River

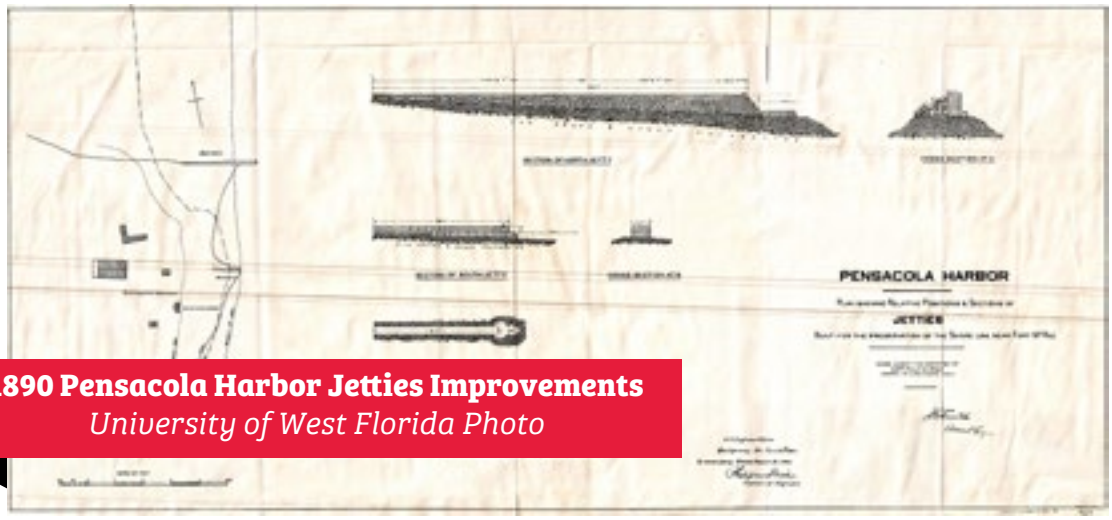


COL A. Damrell

Harbor and Bay Improvements in the Florida Panhandle and Mississippi Coast

In addition to river basin surveys, engineers focused on improving navigation and commerce in the bays and harbors of Florida's Panhandle, facilitating connections between these ports and New Orleans. Pensacola Bay and Harbor received particular attention due to their longstanding strategic importance in controlling West Indies trade and serving as a military defense point since the Spanish Colonial era.

Congress appropriated funds in 1878 for harbor improvements, including surveys and estimates for wreck removal. Engineers also undertook limited enhancements at Mississippi ports such as Pascagoula, Biloxi, and Gulfport. The first surveys of the Pearl River were conducted in 1879, marking another step toward expanding navigation and commerce in the region.



1890 Pensacola Harbor Jetties Improvements
University of West Florida Photo

EXPANSION OF NAVIGATION AND COASTAL DEFENSE IN THE GULF REGION

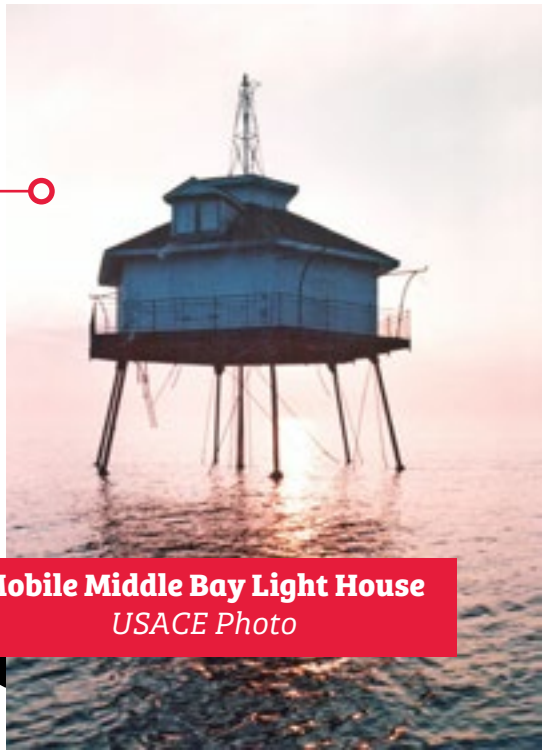
1884 **Responsibility for improvements on the Pearl River system shifted from the New Orleans District to the Mobile District, reflecting Mobile's growing regional importance.**

1885 ***The Mobile Middle Bay Lighthouse was constructed as a replica of Maryland's Hooper's Strait Lighthouse. It was restored by the Middle Bay Light Centennial Commission in 1994, stabilized again in 1993, and underwent another restoration in 2010 at a cost of $270,000.***

1880s **The Black Warrior River was authorized for navigation improvements, including the construction of 17 locks to enhance river traffic and commerce.**

1888 **Construction of Black Warrior River Lock No. 1 began, with five additional dams completed by 1896, significantly advancing navigation on the river.**

1885 **The Endicott Board was created and tasked with evaluating and recommending upgrades to the United States' coastal defense systems, influencing fortification strategies across the Gulf Coast and beyond.**



Mobile Middle Bay Light House
USACE Photo

MOBILE DISTRICT EVOLVES

Evolution of the Mobile District and Corps of Engineers Organization (Pre-1888 to Early 20th Century)
During the early years, no formal Corps of Engineers districts existed. The engineer in charge of Gulf of Mexico projects was often assigned tasks far from the area that would later become the Mobile District. Prior to 1888—the year the Southeast Division was established—military responsibilities focused solely on coastal defenses. Civilian projects were mainly harbor improvements, channel clearing, and dredging. Although river and harbor work expanded significantly after the Civil War, military projects remained minimal until the onset of the Spanish-American War.

In 1888, the Corps of Engineers underwent a major reorganization. The nation was divided into Corps Divisions, each led by a Division Engineer. These divisions were further subdivided into Districts with District Engineers reporting to their respective Division Engineers, who in turn reported to the Chief of Engineers. The Mobile District was placed within the Southeast Division, initially split into the Montgomery District and the Mobile District. The Montgomery District's jurisdiction extended from the Escambia River eastward to St. Marks, Florida, while the Mobile District's territory stretched from the Escambia River westward to the East Pearl River. This organizational structure remained in place until the two districts merged in 1933. Afterward, the Mobile District's boundaries and responsibilities saw little change until World War II.

Following the merger, the Corps was assigned responsibility for all Army and Army Air Corps military construction. Consequently, the Mobile District absorbed military projects previously managed by the New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Nashville Districts, becoming one of the largest and most active engineering organizations worldwide. This expansion continued as the military responsibilities of the Jacksonville District were reassigned to Mobile, and the Canaveral District was phased out.

The Civil District boundaries, established at the 1933 merger, have remained consistent since. They are largely defined by river systems, encompassing the region from the St. Marks River in Florida to the East Pearl River in Mississippi. This includes numerous rivers, tributaries, harbors, and an extensive coastline with standard responsibilities such as channel maintenance, harbor improvements, and beach erosion control. The district stretches inland to cover northwest Florida, western Georgia, Alabama, and roughly two-thirds of Mississippi.

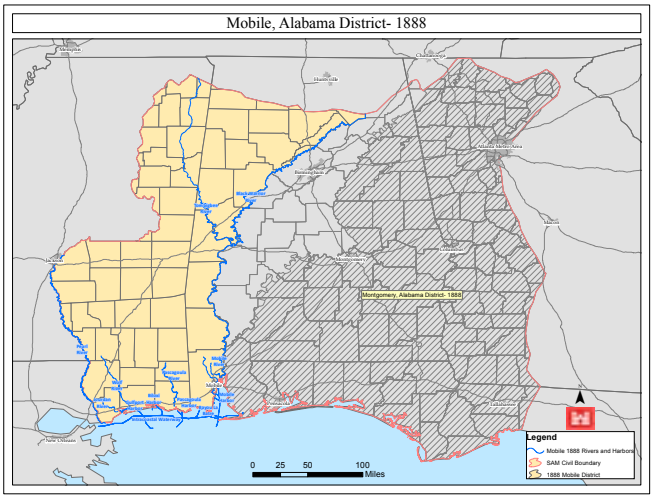
1888 Mobile and Montgomery Districts are formally established

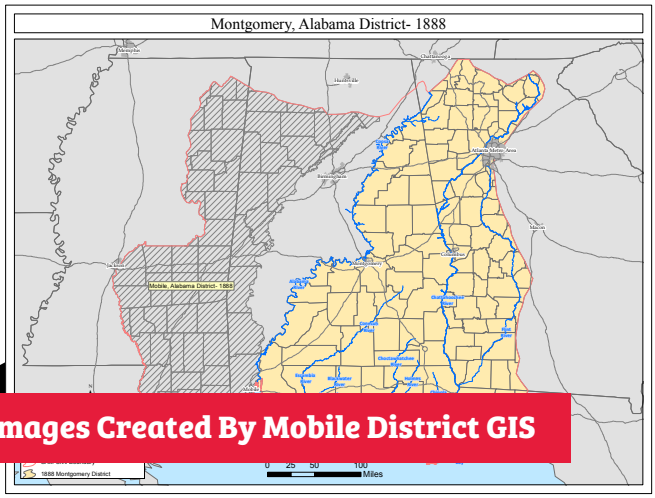
After 1880, specific areas began to be identified as districts, aligning with the Corps' 1888 reorganization. The Chief of Engineers created the divisions and districts, placing Mobile in the Southwest Division under Colonel Cyrus B. Comstock's supervision. Major Andrew N. Damrell was appointed District Engineer in Mobile, and Captain Philip M. Price was assigned as District Engineer of Montgomery, also under Comstock.

Division responsibilities were based on river watersheds to facilitate efficient management of projects within geographically defined regions. Districts were subdivisions of divisions, handling projects on a smaller scale. This watershed-based district system for civil works remains largely unchanged since 1888.

The two districts within today's Mobile District territory in 1888 were:

- **Montgomery District:** Included the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa and Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river basins. Smaller rivers like the Choctawhatchee, Chipola, Conecuh, and Escambia were included, along with improvements to Pensacola, St. Andrews, St. Joseph's Bays, Carrabelle Harbor, and sections of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Its jurisdiction extended from the Fenholloway River in the eastern Florida Panhandle to Perdido Bay in the west, and inland nearly 350 miles into northwest Georgia.
- **Mobile District:** Covered the Tombigbee and Black Warrior rivers in Alabama and the Leaf and Pearl rivers in Mississippi. Coastal operations included improvements to ports in the Mississippi Sound such as Pascagoula, Biloxi, and Gulfport. Its territory spanned from Mobile Bay in the east to the Pearl River on the Mississippi-Louisiana border, extending north through much of western Alabama and eastern Mississippi, approaching the Tennessee state line.





Images Created By Mobile District GIS

KEY PROJECTS AND AUTHORIZATIONS (LATE 19TH TO EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

1899 **Improvements Begin on Gulfport Harbor:** Efforts to enhance navigation and port facilities at Gulfport commenced.

1899 **Aquatic Plant Control Authorized by Congress:** The Mobile District was tasked with controlling aquatic plants obstructing commerce in navigable waters of the Gulf Coast, spanning Florida to Texas. The Corps was empowered to use mechanical, chemical, or other methods for eradication.

1958 **Program Expansion:** Congress broadened the aquatic plant control program. Mobile District remained responsible for navigable waters, tributaries, connecting channels, and related waters within its jurisdiction. Water hyacinth was identified as the primary invasive species targeted. Periodic funding ensured that aquatic plant control has continued as a routine task for key navigable channels in the district.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GULF INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY

1900s **Taft Board was created**

1909 **President Roosevelt Advocates for National Inland Waterway System**

The construction of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) stands as a monumental civil engineering achievement in the early 20th century. Interest in creating a protected coastal waterway date back to the early 1800s, with the first formal recommendation made during a survey conducted by General Simon Bernard in 1829. However, due to limited congressional support, no funds were appropriated at that time. The question of establishing an inland waterway was revived during the Reconstruction era, as New Orleans remained the dominant Gulf port handling produce from America's heartland. The longstanding national focus on canals and inland waterways was rooted in the urgent need to connect agricultural regions with markets. Engineers in Mobile and New Orleans were tasked with assessing the feasibility of a 9-foot-deep and 100-foot-wide navigable waterway, with Captain Andrew N. Damrell overseeing the Mobile segment.

The year 1909 was pivotal for the GIWW. President Theodore Roosevelt successfully persuaded Congress to fund surveys aimed at developing a national inland waterway system stretching from Maine to Texas. However, congressional authorization did not guarantee immediate or sufficient funding.

The strongest momentum behind the GIWW's development came from a determined group of Texas businessmen who sought to link the Texas and Louisiana Gulf coasts with the Mississippi River and, by extension, the nation's interior. Their efforts culminated in legislation during the 1920s that funded construction of an inland waterway from New Orleans to Galveston, later extending from Galveston to Corpus Christi.

Gulf Intracoastal Water Way
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District

Though the 1909 authorization and the Rivers and Harbors appropriations of 1910 formally initiated the GIWW projects in the Mobile and Montgomery Districts, the work proceeded unevenly. Sections within the two districts were completed at different times and not fully during the interwar years.

By 1937, the GIWW had become a reality, with a 345-mile-long canal facilitating safer and more efficient coastal navigation. Its strategic importance was underscored during World War II when the waterway played a critical role in transporting oil from Texas and Louisiana fields. The presence of enemy submarines in the Gulf of Mexico threatened surface shipping routes, making the protected inland channel indispensable.

Responding to wartime demands for increased oil transport, Congress authorized a uniform channel expansion to a depth of 12 feet and a width of 125 feet. Construction on this upgrade began in December 1942 and was completed by September 1943, at a cost of approximately $5.8 million for the Mobile District's portion.

Beyond its military and commercial value, the GIWW became an asset for tourism, benefiting from the region's mild year-round climate. The waterway's appeal to sports fishermen, pleasure boaters, and yachters added a significant economic dimension to the channel's importance within the Mobile District.

Barge Traveling the GIWW

WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

1913 **Extensive Survey of the Coosa River for Hydropower Potential**

1927 **The Great Mississippi River Flood Sparks National Flood Control Awareness**

1915 **Completion of Black Warrior River Projects**

1928 **Flood Control Act Initiates Investigation of Tributary Reservoirs**

1929 **Air Corps Tactical School Relocates to Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama**

The early decades of the twentieth century marked a significant expansion of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' responsibilities, particularly in water resources development and flood control. This growth was largely driven by a series of catastrophic floods that heightened national awareness of the urgent need for comprehensive flood management.

In 1913, the Corps conducted the most extensive survey to date of the Coosa River, assessing the feasibility of constructing reservoirs on tributaries for hydroelectric power generation. This effort reflected the growing recognition of multipurpose river management to support navigation, flood control, and energy production.

The catastrophic flood of 1927, known as the "Great Flood," devastated communities along the Mississippi River, causing immense environmental and economic damage. This disaster was a turning point in national water policy, as flood control transitioned from a patchwork of state efforts to a unified federal priority. In response, Congress established the Mississippi River Commission and authorized the Secretary of War to oversee the construction of dams on navigable rivers.

By 1915, key improvement projects on the Black Warrior River were completed, contributing to enhanced navigation and water management in the region. In 1929, the Air Corps Tactical School was relocated from Langley Field, Virginia, to Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama, highlighting the growing military significance of the Gulf Coast region.

Following the flood of 1927, the Flood Control Act of 1928 mandated extensive investigations into the potential use of tributary reservoirs for flood control. This led to the production of over 300 detailed reports—known as '308 reports'—which evaluated integrated plans for navigation improvement, flood control, irrigation, and power generation on selected waterways. The construction and management of reservoirs quickly became one of the Corps' most significant—and later, most controversial—responsibilities, as debates intensified over the environmental and economic impacts of large-scale water infrastructure projects.

Mississippi River Flooding in 1927 also known as The Great Flood cause wide spread devastation
USACE Photos

EXPANSION OF CORPS RESPONSIBILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

In 1930, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was formally entrusted with shore protection and beach erosion control, marking a significant expansion of its civil works mission. The same year, Congress authorized federal assistance for shore protection efforts, establishing the Beach Erosion Board under the Chief of Engineers. This board oversaw cooperative studies and ensured that reports on river mouth improvements considered impacts on adjacent shorelines. By the 1940s, increasing numbers of local governments nationwide sought federal support for recreational beach development. The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1948 responded by requiring local interests to contribute 66 percent of project costs, emphasizing cooperative funding.

In 1933, the Montgomery District merged with the Mobile District, solidifying the district boundaries that largely remain today. Three years later, the Flood Control Act of 1936 set a national framework for flood protection, naming the Corps as the primary federal agency responsible for flood control investigations and river improvements. This legislation empowered the Corps to lead a comprehensive flood protection program and spurred numerous reservoir projects for flood mitigation, navigation, and hydropower.

The Flood Control Act of 1944 further expanded the Corps' mandate, formally establishing its governing policies for flood control, hydropower development, and channel maintenance. It also recognized the recreational potential of reservoirs, a responsibility that has become particularly important in the Mobile District. Congressional mandates in 1946 directed the Corps to address shoreline erosion, and the 1958 Flood Control Act broadened the Corps' authority to encompass integrated water resource management. Infrastructure modernization began on the Black Warrior River system in the mid-1930s, with its original 17 locks eventually replaced by just five modern locks by 1980, streamlining navigation and improving efficiency. The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, a major civil works project, was completed through the Mobile District in 1938, enhancing protected inland navigation along the Gulf Coast.

Construction of Brookley Field in 1939 marked an important military development. As the site of the Southeast Army Air Depot and later the Mobile Air Service Command during World War II, Brookley Field played a key role in supporting the war effort. In the 1960s, the airfield was transferred to the city of Mobile, marking a shift toward civilian use.

1930 **Corps of Engineers Assigned Shore Protection Duties**

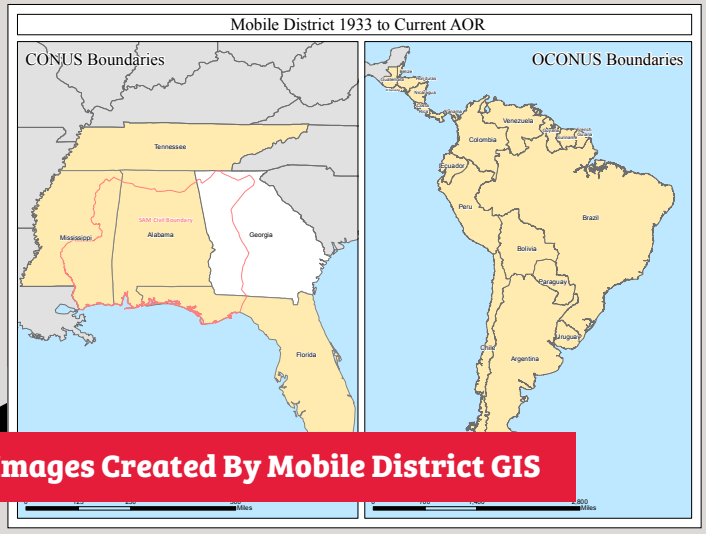
1933 **Montgomery District Merged with Mobile District; District Boundaries Stabilized**

1936 **Flood Control Act Designates Corps as Lead Federal Flood Protection Agency**

1930s **Mid-1930s to 1980: Modernization of Black Warrior River Locks**

1938 **Completion of Gulf Intracoastal Waterway through Mobile District**

1939 **Construction Begins at Brookley Field, Southeast Air Depot Site**



Images Created By Mobile District GIS

MOBILIZING FOR VICTORY: THE MOBILE DISTRICT'S PIVOTAL ROLE DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE POSTWAR ERA

During World War II, the Mobile District found itself at the heart of one of the most intense mobilization efforts in American history. The warm climate of the South made it an ideal location for military training bases, and as the nation prepared for war, the demand for new airfields soared. Initially, the Quartermaster General's office handled military construction, but by 1940, responsibility for building Army airfields shifted to the Corps of Engineers. Just a year later, following the United States' entry into the war, the Corps assumed full control over all military construction projects.

Between late 1941 and 1943, the Mobile District oversaw nearly a billion dollars' worth of construction. This massive effort included building 32 Army airfields, multiple ordnance training centers and arsenals, ground force depots, harbor defense installations, and civil aviation airfields. The District also managed the creation of ordnance manufacturing plants, Army cantonments, and several special facilities such as bombing ranges and the War Dog Training Center. One unique aspect of this period was the rapid construction of prisoner-of-war camps designed to relieve overcrowding in British camps. Alabama alone hosted several such camps, including those at Aliceville, Opelika, Fort McClellan, and Fort Rucker. These camps were operational through the war but quickly closed afterward.

The war effort also spurred infrastructure improvements like widening the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to allow larger vessels carrying essential supplies. Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, was established in 1941 as a critical center for ordnance and missile development. The Mobile District's influence extended far beyond traditional engineering projects as it played a pivotal role in supporting the nation's military-industrial complex.

Following the war, the Corps of Engineers' responsibilities expanded. The Flood Control Act of 1944 shifted the focus from navigation improvements to comprehensive flood control, setting the stage for a nationwide water management program. Construction began on important projects like Allatoona Dam in 1945, while navigation projects on the Alabama and Coosa Rivers were authorized. In 1946, Congress gave the green light to the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, an ambitious navigation project designed to open new commercial routes.

Redstone Arsenal's role grew rapidly during this postwar era. In 1948, the Ordnance Rocket Center was established there, marking the beginning of the District's connection to the emerging field of missile technology. Just two years later, Wernher von Braun and his team of renowned rocket scientists relocated from Fort Bliss, Texas, to Huntsville, bringing with them advanced guided missile research that would place Redstone and the Mobile District at the forefront of the nation's defense innovation. Until 1967, Redstone was managed within the Mobile District before becoming its own separate Engineer Division.

This period marked a remarkable transformation for the Mobile District — from a regional engineering office focused on waterways and harbors to a vital hub of military construction, scientific innovation, and national defense.

Early clearing of Constructions began at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi
USACE Photo

Housing Improvements at Keesler Field 1948
USACE Photo

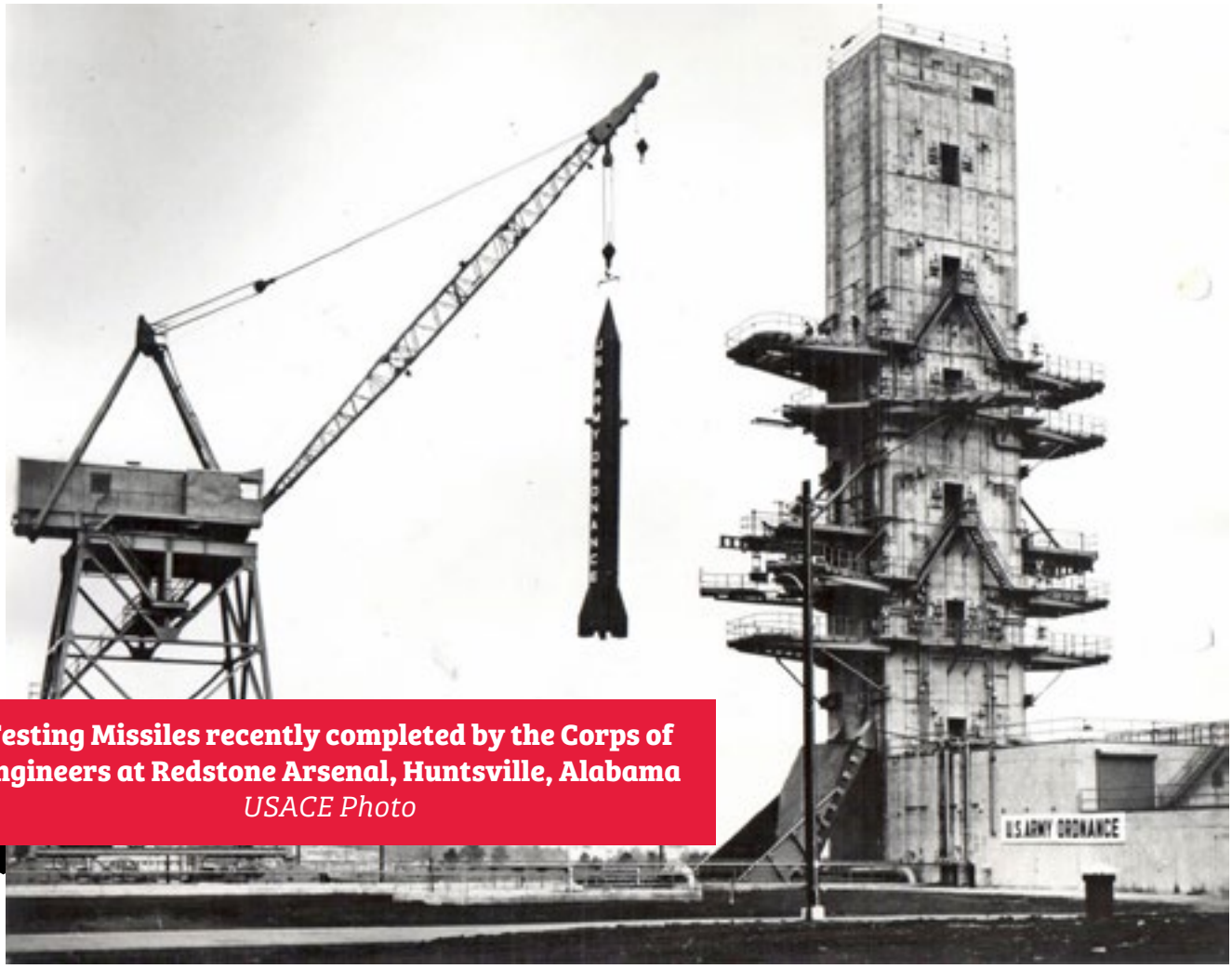
FROM DAMS TO ROCKETS: MOBILE DISTRICT'S MID-20TH CENTURY TRANSFORMATION

In 1950, the Federal Disaster Act established the authority of the federal government to assist citizens with disaster relief, marking an important step in national emergency response. Around the same time, significant construction projects were underway in the Mobile District, including the initiation of Buford Dam, which was completed by the late 1950s. The Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam was essentially finished by the mid-1950s, followed by the start of construction on the Walter F. George Lock and Dam in 1955. By 1956, site selection was underway for the Jones Bluff and Millers Ferry multipurpose improvements, highlighting the district's ongoing commitment to large-scale water resource projects.

Meanwhile, the rapid technological advances at Redstone Arsenal symbolized the era's revolutionary changes in missile technology. Established as the Army Ballistic Missile Agency in 1956, Redstone became a hub of missile research and development, driven largely by the expertise of German scientists such as Wernher von Braun, who had defected to the United States after World War II. This period marked the dawn of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) era and significant progress in defense capabilities.

In 1957, the first successful American anti-ICBM missile was fired as part of the Nike-Zeus program, which was headquartered at Redstone. The program aimed to develop the world's first true anti-missile system, and by 1958, the Secretary of Defense had placed the Army in charge of most air defense missiles. Over the next few years, this vision became a reality, with the Nike-Zeus system establishing a new frontier in missile defense.

The year 1959 saw another milestone when NASA was established at Redstone Arsenal to manage the Saturn Project, a major rocket program spearheaded by von Braun and his team. The Saturn Super Booster rocket was larger than anything the Army or

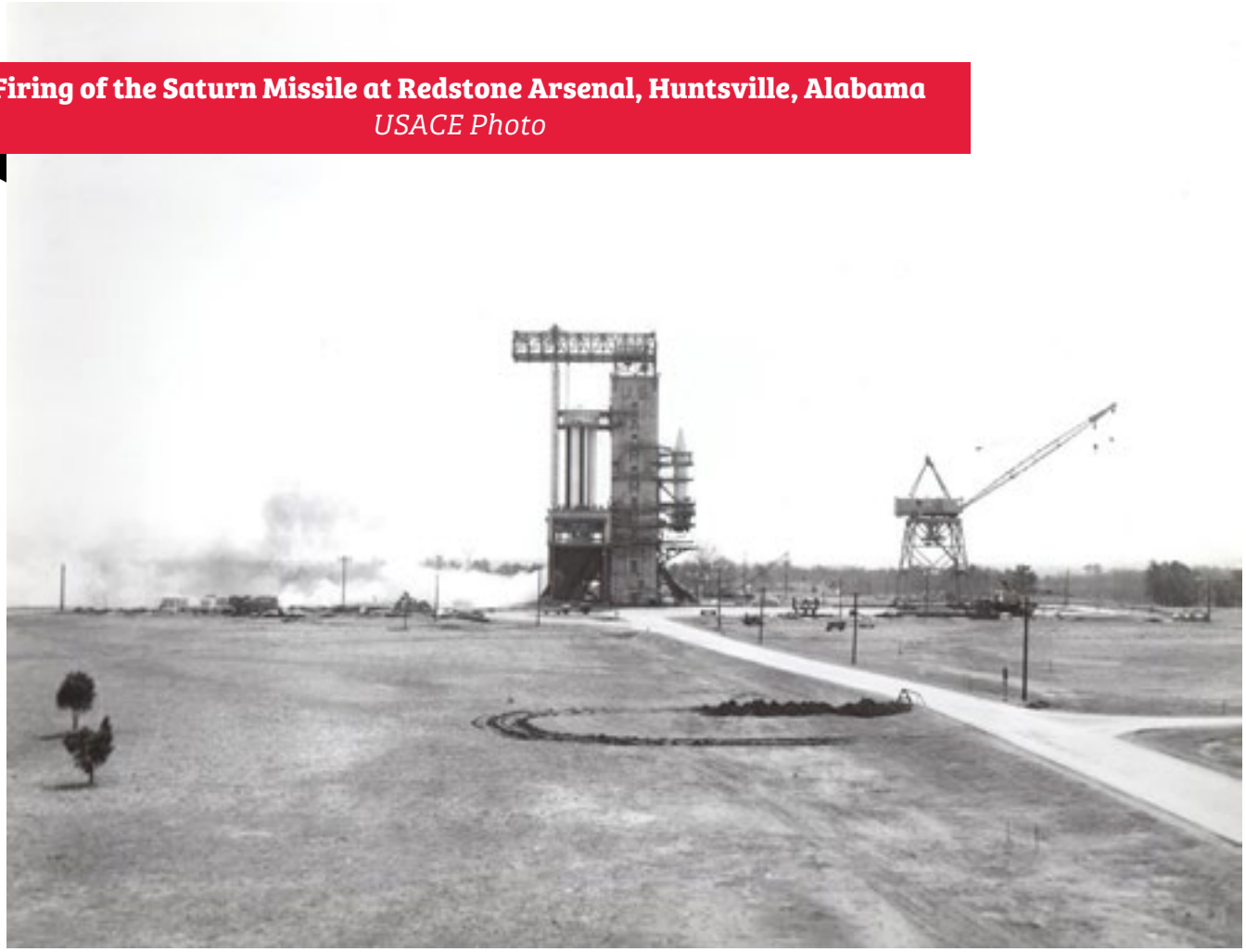


Testing Missiles recently completed by the Corps of Engineers at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama
USACE Photo

Air Force could use, so responsibility for the project shifted to NASA. Consequently, the Army Ballistic Missile Agency's Operations Division was transferred to NASA, marking the beginning of Mobile District's involvement in the civilian space program.

NASA set up the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center at Redstone, the largest NASA facility of its kind. The Mobile District was entrusted with constructing and maintaining key testing facilities for the Saturn booster and later played a major role in the development of the Mississippi Test Facility (MTF), one of the largest post-Korean War construction projects. This partnership between the Corps of Engineers and NASA cemented Mobile District's importance in both military and space exploration advancements.

Firing of the Saturn Missile at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama
USACE Photo



MOBILE DISTRICT'S EXPANSION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN THE 1960S

During the early 1960s, the Mobile District played a crucial role in supporting the nation's space program. In 1961, the district was tasked with constructing the Mississippi Test Facility for NASA, a key site chosen to support the assembly and testing of rocket boosters. Located about 40 miles northeast of the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, this sprawling facility spanned 217 square miles along the East Pearl River, straddling Mississippi and Louisiana. Alongside this, NASA's major sites for astronaut training and launches were established in Houston, Texas, and Cape Canaveral, Florida, respectively, marking a major era of aerospace development.

In 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act was passed, which assigned the Corps of Engineers the responsibility for cultural resource management. This law required the identification and preservation of cultural resources during construction projects to protect the nation's historical heritage — a responsibility that became an important regulatory function for the Mobile District.

A significant organizational change occurred in 1967 when the Huntsville Division was created within the Mobile District to support the deployment of the Nike-X ballistic missile defense system. This reorganization was driven by the expansion of missile defense projects, with many personnel transitioning from Mobile's special defense projects branch to form the core of the new division.

The year 1969 tested the district's emergency response capabilities when Hurricane Camille, one of the most powerful storms ever to hit the North American coastline, struck the Mississippi Gulf Coast. With winds estimated at 200 miles per hour and nearly a billion dollars in damages, the storm devastated coastal communities. The Mobile District led recovery operations, providing vital assistance in one of the nation's worst natural disasters.

Also in 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted, profoundly impacting the Corps' operations. NEPA required environmental impact statements (EIS) for any project potentially affecting the environment. This new requirement added complexity to the Mobile District's ongoing projects, especially the construction of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, necessitating rigorous environmental assessments and protections.

Throughout the decade, the Mobile District continued its extensive civil works programs, overseeing major construction projects including the authorization of West Point Dam in 1962, the commencement of Carters Dam on the Coosawattee River and Millers Ferry in 1963, the Claiborne Lock and Dam in 1965, and the Robert F. Henry Lock and Dam in 1966. These efforts reflected the district's ongoing commitment to flood control, navigation, and regional development.

The Saturn V aboard the barge "Little Lake" on the Pearl River, south of NASA Mississippi Test Facility
USACE Photo

MOBILE DISTRICT'S EXPANDED RESPONSIBILITIES AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In 1970, the Mobile District's scope of responsibility broadened significantly with the transfer of construction oversight for the Cape Canaveral District to its office. Additionally, Mobile assumed military construction duties for the Jacksonville District, which included support for the Panama Canal and Central America. Since June 1970, Mobile District provided vital planning, technical, and disaster assistance across Central America. Their efforts ranged from constructing water wells and designing roads to soil testing. The district also played a crucial role in disaster relief following earthquakes, building bridges to connect key segments of the Pan-American Highway, improving potable water sources, developing water distribution systems, and establishing sewage treatment facilities.

One of the most ambitious projects of the decade was the initiation of construction on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in 1971. This 253-mile corridor was the largest civil works project in North America at the time and carried both complex engineering and political challenges. The project's formal dedication in Mobile featured President Nixon as the keynote speaker, underscoring its national significance. Construction began on the Gainesville Lock and Dam in late 1972, marking the first tangible step in creating this vital inland waterway. By the time it opened to navigation in 1985, the project had cost over $1.5 billion, making it the largest civil works project in Corps history.

President Richard M. Nixon with dignitaries commemorating the start of Construction on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway May 26, 1971
USACE Photo

Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway
USACE Photo

In 1972, the Federal Water Pollution Act saw major amendments, with Sections 301, 402, and 404 becoming particularly important for the Corps of Engineers as they expanded environmental regulatory oversight.

In 1973, West Point Lake was designated as a national recreation project by the Corps of Engineers. While recreation had been incorporated into water resource projects since the 1944 legislation, it was not until the 1960s that recreation development became widespread in comprehensive river basin plans. West Point Lake served as a demonstration project where the Federal Government fully funded recreational facilities, reflecting its importance to the dense urban populations within a 50-mile radius. Today, the lake attracts approximately 7 million visitors annually, highlighting the Corps' role in enhancing public recreational opportunities.

Disaster response remained a core function of the Mobile District during the 1970s. On September 12, 1979, Hurricane Frederic struck the district, causing extensive damage throughout the region. Authorized under Public Law 84-99, the Corps provided emergency assistance, responding swiftly to requests from the governors of Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi, who sought federal disaster declarations. Thanks to early warning systems and evacuation efforts, loss of life was minimized, though environmental and property damage was severe, especially in the Florida panhandle.

Throughout the decade, Mobile District's emergency operations continued to be vital. Partnering with FEMA, the Corps provided critical support to state and local governments during disasters, focusing on life and property protection, damage assessment, and the repair of public infrastructure such as roads, utilities, and buildings. This enduring commitment underscored the Corps' evolving role as a key player in national emergency management and disaster recovery.

Eye of a Hurricane
USACE Photo

Recreating at West Point Lake, Georgia
USACE Photo

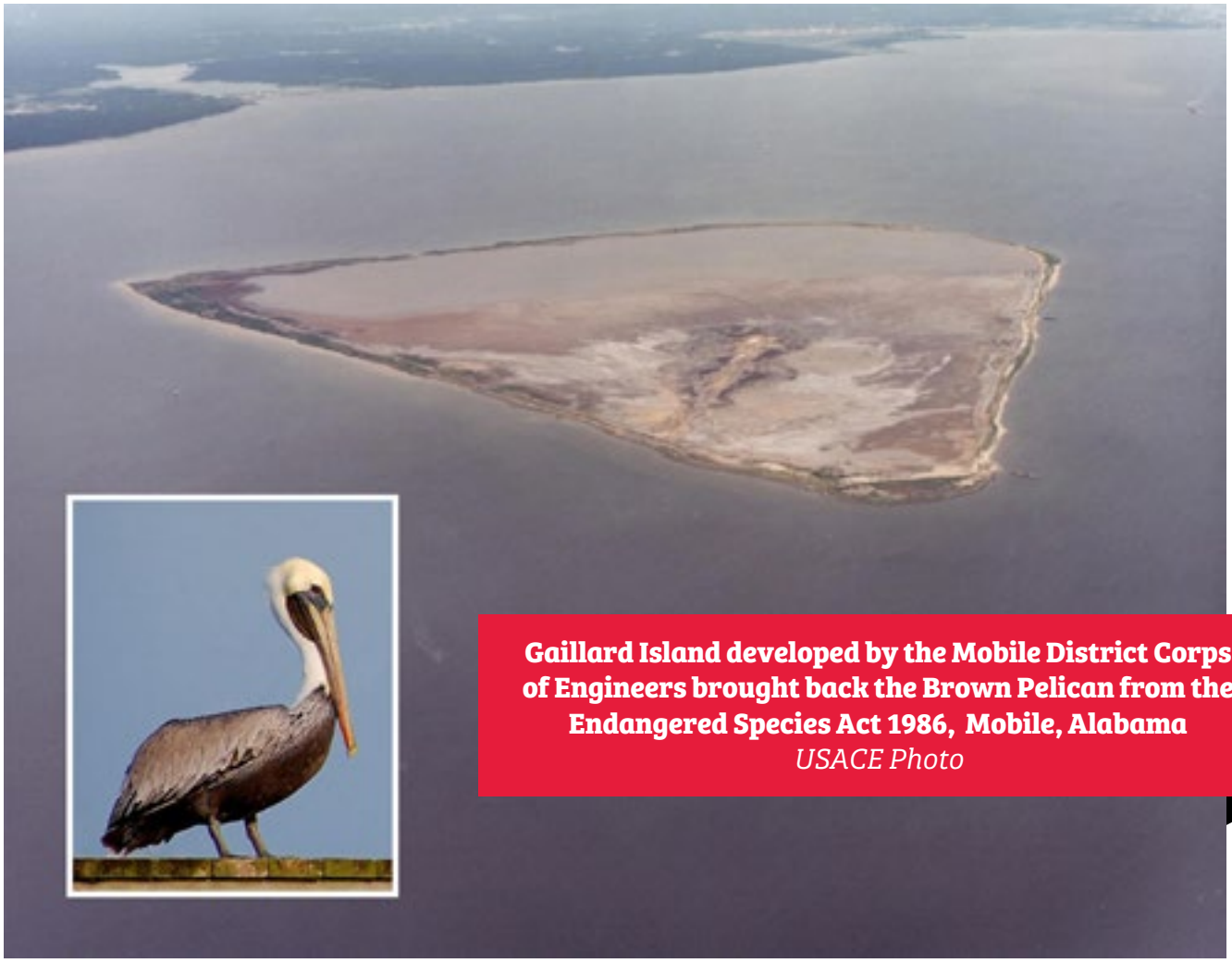
BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSERVING WILDLIFE

During the 1980s, the Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers played a pivotal role in several landmark projects and initiatives that shaped the region's infrastructure, environment, and military landscape.

In 1981, the District assumed responsibility for rehabilitating the Shuttle Payload Integration Facility at Cape Canaveral, marking a significant contribution to the nation's space program. Just a few years later, in 1985, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway officially opened to navigation, providing a critical transportation route and boosting regional commerce.

One of the most notable environmental accomplishments during this era was the creation of Gaillard Island. Originally designed as a disposal site for 30 million cubic yards of dredged material from Mobile Bay's shipping channel project, the island became much more than a man-made landform. Spanning approximately 1,300 acres and shaped as a triangle rising six to eight feet above sea level, Gaillard Island was paired with a newly established salt marsh to offset potential wetland losses. Over time, it evolved into a nationally recognized bird sanctuary. Remarkably, Gaillard Island became the first nesting site in Alabama for the brown pelican, a species once on the brink of extinction under the Endangered Species Act, showcasing the district's commitment to environmental stewardship.

The late 1980s also saw transformative organizational changes within the Corps. Although project management was a familiar concept in private construction, the Corps initially resisted it. However, in 1988, the South Atlantic Division launched a pilot program to introduce Life Cycle/Project Management within the Mobile District. This innovative approach emphasized team-based collaboration, with Project Managers assembling interdisciplinary specialists to actively participate through every project phase. Early test projects included the Oliver Lock and Dam, the J-6



Gaillard Island developed by the Mobile District Corps of Engineers brought back the Brown Pelican from the Endangered Species Act 1986, Mobile, Alabama
USACE Photo

Rocket Test Center in Tennessee, and the Solid Rocket Assembly Project at Cape Canaveral. The success of these trials led Corps Headquarters to formalize Life Cycle/Project Management as a Corps-wide standard by the end of 1988.

In the same year, Congress passed the first Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC), designed to address the political difficulties historically associated with closing military bases. The BRAC Act established a commission to oversee base closures and realignments, insulating the process from political pressures. Since then, the Mobile District has been deeply involved in all BRAC-related National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) proceedings. Over multiple BRAC rounds through the 1990s and into the 2000s, hundreds of military installations were closed or realigned, with the Mobile District playing a crucial role in assessing and managing the environmental impacts of these changes as the Army's NEPA agent.

Together, these projects and initiatives illustrate a decade of growth, innovation, and environmental responsibility. From rehabilitating vital facilities and opening key waterways to pioneering new management techniques and fostering wildlife recovery, the Mobile District made lasting contributions that continue to influence the region and the Corps of Engineers today.

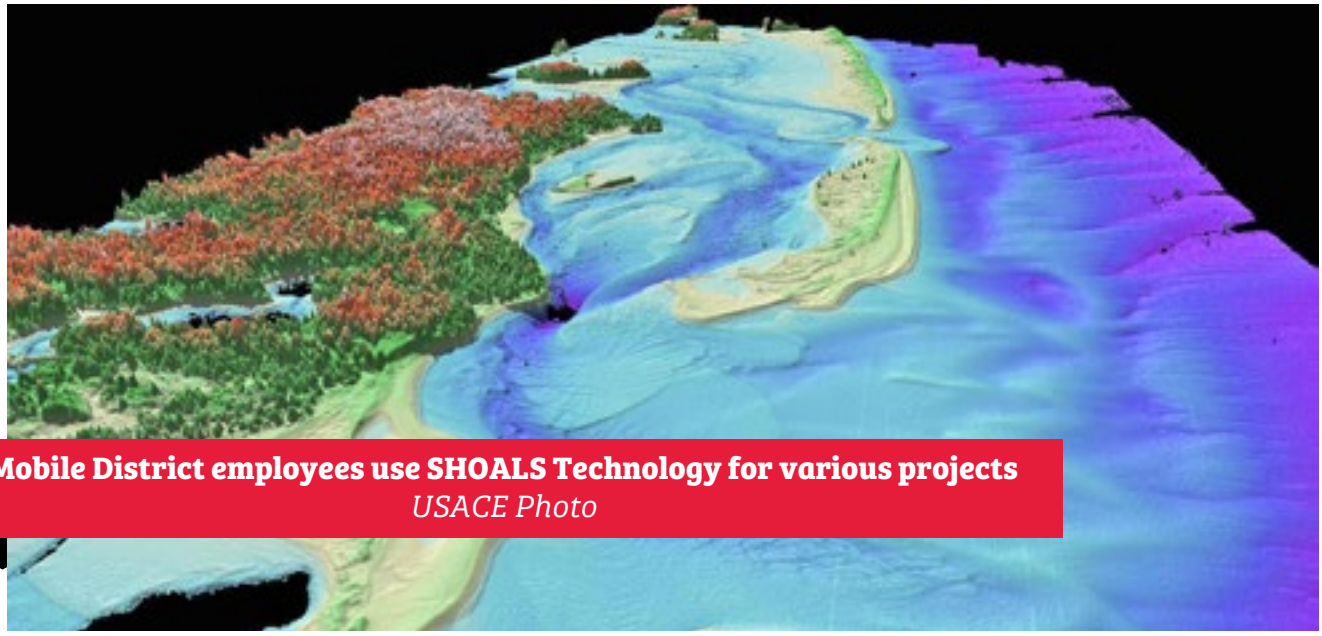
WATER WARS, INNOVATION, AND RECOVERY

The 1990s presented the Mobile District with a range of significant challenges and accomplishments, from environmental disputes and disaster recovery to technological breakthroughs and major construction projects.

In 1990, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process entered a new phase with Congress announcing its plans to implement BRAC in five stages. The Mobile District was entrusted with leading the preparation of Environmental Impact Studies for both the Army and Air Force installations affected by the BRAC rounds, a testament to its expertise and expanding role in military infrastructure realignments.

That same year, the District found itself at the center of a long-running dispute known as the "tri-state water war." Alabama filed suit against the Corps of Engineers over water allocation in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin—a conflict involving Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. The dispute, rooted in competing demands from Atlanta's growing population, Florida's ecological concerns, and Alabama's municipal, industrial, and power needs, has been a defining regional environmental and political issue for over two decades.

In 1992, the Mobile District also played a supporting role in disaster recovery after Hurricane Andrew devastated southern Florida, causing $20 billion in damages and destroying Homestead Air Force



Mobile District employees use SHOALS Technology for various projects
USACE Photo

Base. The South Atlantic Division reorganized its emergency management approach, with the Mobile District taking responsibility for debris removal—showing adaptability in crisis response.

Infrastructure development continued with the replacement of the last lock and dam on the Black Warrior River—the William Bacon Oliver Lock and Dam—in 1991, followed by the completion of the J-6 Large Rocket Test Facility in 1993.

Technological innovation took center stage in 1994 with the first testing of SHOALS (Scanning Hydrographic Operational Airborne Lidar Survey) technology. This cutting-edge GIS-based program integrated 3-D underwater mapping with lidar bathymetry, allowing precise measurements of water depths by timing pulses of light reflected from the sea bottom. SHOALS evolved into a valuable tool for multiple agencies, including the U.S. Geological Survey and FEMA. By 2000, SHOALS technology advanced further through a partnership with the U.S. Navy to create CHARTS (Compact Hydrographic Airborne Rapid Total Survey), dramatically increasing data acquisition speed and breadth.

Finally, in 1997, the District completed construction of the John J. Sparkman Center at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. This massive consolidation project combined scattered commands into a state-of-the-art corporate headquarters spanning over one million square feet, transforming 80 acres into one of the most modern military complexes globally.

Together, these achievements highlight a decade marked by environmental stewardship, disaster recovery, technological advancement, and major infrastructure projects that solidified the Mobile District's role as a leader in both military and civil engineering arenas.

Sparkman Complex, Huntsville, Alabama
USACE Photo

FROM TACTICAL INNOVATION TO DISASTER RESPONSE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The dawn of the 21st century saw the Mobile District positioned at the forefront of tactical support, disaster response, and critical national security missions.

In 1996, the Deputy Chief of Engineers allocated $6.5 million to establish a national-level U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Emergency Operations Center (UOC) within the Mobile District. This investment equipped the District with state-of-the-art communications and vehicles, enabling it to become one of only two nationwide tactical support centers for the Deployable Tactical Operations System (DTOS). Over the next two years, Mobile's Emergency Management Office developed one of the most advanced mobile communications centers in the nation.

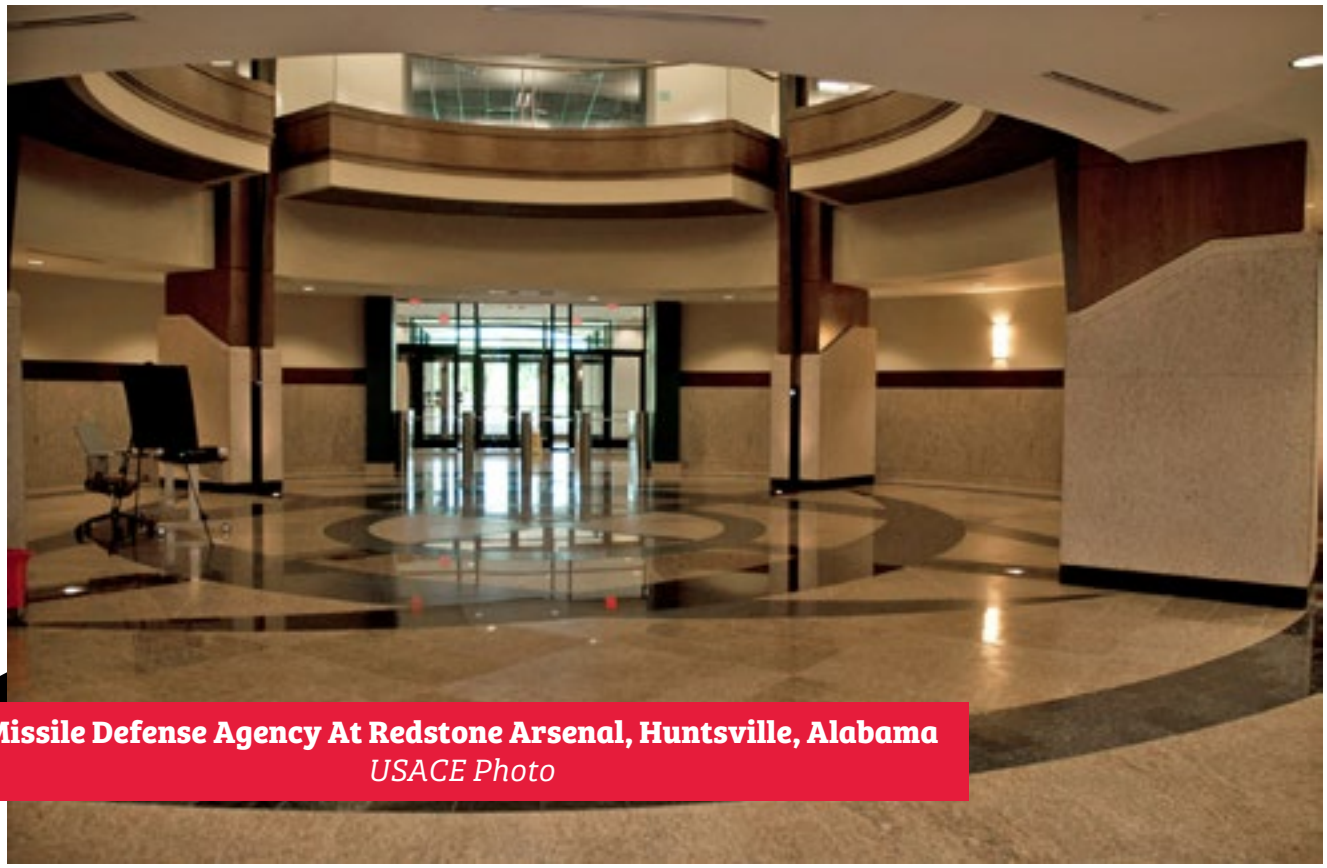
This readiness proved crucial on September 11, 2001, when terrorist attacks struck the Pentagon, the World Trade Center, and an airliner in Pennsylvania. The Mobile District's DTOS unit was quickly deployed to New York City to assist in rescue and cleanup operations. At the peak of their deployment, 50 personnel operated sophisticated tactical and command vehicles around the World Trade Center site, remaining on location until early October.

PREPAREDNESS RESPONSE RECOVERY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
MOBILE DISTRICT

Mobile District DTOS personnel responded to Terrorist Attacks in New York City in 2001
USACE Photo

Mobile District DTOS
USACE Photo

An Aerial View and the Rotunda of the Von Braun Complex home to the members of the Space and Missile Defense Command, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama
USACE Photo



Missile Defense Agency At Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama
USACE Photo

In 2003, as the United States led a coalition invasion of Iraq, the Mobile District also achieved a major milestone by completing the first phase of the Wernher Von Braun Complex at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. This complex became a headquarters for the Space and Missile Defense Command and the Missile Defense Agency as part of the BRAC realignment. The massive facility was completed in four phases, with the final phase finished in 2014.

The District faced further challenges in the realm of natural disasters. In 2004 alone, Florida was struck by four hurricanes. The following year, Hurricane Katrina inflicted historic damage on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and New Orleans. Katrina's devastating winds and storm surge destroyed entire cities, breached levees, and flooded 80 percent of New Orleans, causing approximately $81 billion in damages—nearly triple the cost of Hurricane Andrew.

In response, Congress authorized the Mississippi Coastal Improvement Program (MsCIP) in December 2005. This initiative tasked the Corps with developing comprehensive plans to improve hurricane and storm damage reduction, prevent saltwater intrusion, preserve ecosystems, and combat erosion along the Mississippi coast. MsCIP emphasized a holistic "top down" approach, aiming to create a more resilient coastline less vulnerable to future storms.

Additionally, in 2006, the Mobile District's Engineering Infrastructure and Intelligence Reachback Center (EI2RC) had become a critical asset supporting deployed engineers worldwide. Established to harness the expertise of non-deployed engineers, EI2RC handled over 1,000 requests by 2006, assisting personnel from all military branches, FEMA, and the State Department. EI2RC's support has been vital for overseas combat operations, natural disaster relief efforts including Hurricane Katrina, and civil-military deployments globally.

MsCIP Comprehensive Plan Elements Mobile District
USACE Drawing

ADVANCING MILITARY READINESS, DISASTER RESPONSE, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Throughout the early 2010s, the Mobile District maintained a critical role in enhancing U.S. military infrastructure, disaster recovery, and maritime commerce. Major projects included the construction of four "4-star" military headquarters for CENTCOM, SOUTHCOM, AMC, and Special Operations Command South, as well as the development of the expansive 7th Special Forces Cantonment Area at Eglin Air Force Base—facilitating joint operations and advanced training for over 2,200 personnel.

The District's swift response to devastating Alabama tornadoes demonstrated its vital role in emergency support, mobilizing 250 Corps personnel for power restoration, infrastructure assessment, debris removal, and temporary housing.

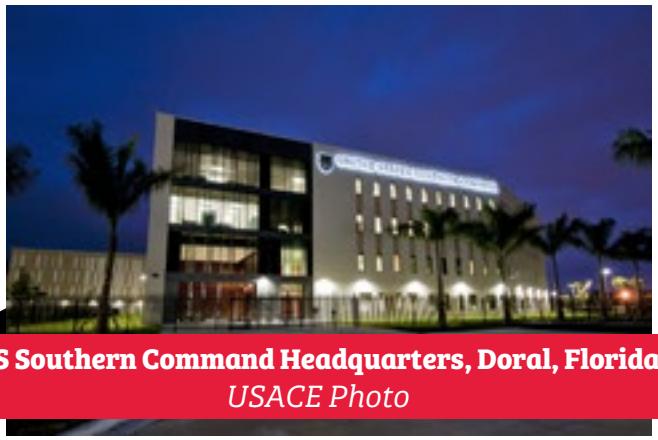
Supporting the Joint Strike Fighter program, Mobile District delivered state-of-the-art facilities for F-35 training at Eglin AFB, overcoming engineering challenges posed by the aircraft's unique operational requirements. Infrastructure enhancements also included the Mobile Harbor Turning Basin and ship channel dredging, bolstering the Port of Mobile's capacity to meet growing industrial demands.

By 2015, Mobile District expanded its mission scope, including specialized medical facility support under the MEDCOM program—addressing construction-related infection control, patient safety, and operational continuity. The District also served as construction agent for the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), delivering premier SOF education facilities at MacDill AFB.

In its international role, Mobile District led Interagency and International Services (IIS) across Central and South America, managing hundreds of projects from humanitarian assistance to military and civil works, with forward teams stationed in multiple countries. This work included disaster relief efforts, freshwater infrastructure, and capacity building in partnership with organizations such as USAID and Save the Children.

Finally, the District undertook critical updates to the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin Water Control Manual to ensure sustainable water management, balancing flood control, water quality, stakeholder needs, and ecosystem protection across the basin.

US Central Command Headquarters, Tampa, Florida
USACE Photo



US Southern Command Headquarters, Doral, Florida
USACE Photo

In 2011, 65 percent of the State of Alabama was impacted by devastating tornadoes
USACE Photo

Artist Rendering of the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

Joint Strike Fighter, also known as the F-35, exits the fresh water rinse facility at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida
USACE Photo

RESTORING STRENGTH: MOBILE DISTRICT'S CRITICAL MISSIONS FOLLOWING HURRICANES MARIA AND MICHAEL

In 2017, the Mobile District once again demonstrated its vital role in disaster recovery and environmental restoration following one of the deadliest hurricanes in U.S. history. When Hurricane Maria, a devastating Category 5 storm, struck Puerto Rico, it left the island territory in ruins, with nearly 3,000 lives lost. In the hurricane's aftermath, the Mobile District assumed leadership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' response efforts in Puerto Rico, stepping in as the Jacksonville District was still engaged with recovery operations from Hurricane Irma. The District quickly mobilized to carry out a range of critical missions under FEMA's direction. These included Operation Blue Roof, which provided temporary tarps to protect damaged homes, a comprehensive assessment of more than 1,100 school buildings to evaluate safety and usability, and the installation of new power grids and microgrids aimed at restoring electricity to the island's residents. Additionally, Mobile District engineers tackled high-stakes infrastructure repairs such as stabilizing the Guajataca Dam and restoring local generators vital to maintaining essential services.

Alongside its emergency response work, the Mobile District made significant strides in coastal restoration. The completion of the Mississippi Coastal Improvement Program's Ship Island Restoration Project in December 2020 marked a milestone in habitat preservation and coastal resilience. This multi-phase effort sought to repair and reinforce Ship Island, a vital barrier island along the Mississippi Sound that had suffered repeated damage from hurricanes over decades. Notably, the project involved closing the longstanding Camille Cut breach—originally caused by Hurricane Camille in 1969 and reopened by Hurricane Katrina in 2005—while raising and widening the island to better withstand future storms. The planting of dune vegetation and strategic sand placement further strengthened the island's natural defenses. The success of this restoration laid the foundation for the evolution of the Coastal Resiliency Program, under which Mobile District has become a recognized leader in regional sediment management and the incorporation of nature-based engineering solutions.

Aerial photograph of Ship Island after completion of the Ship Island Restoration Project, Mississippi
USACE Photo

The following year, in 2018, the Mobile District was once again called upon to manage a critical recovery effort after Hurricane Michael tore through the Florida Panhandle as a Category 5 hurricane—the strongest October hurricane to ever strike the contiguous United States. Tyndall Air Force Base, a strategically important installation, bore the brunt of the storm's destructive power. The base suffered near-total devastation, with approximately 172 buildings demolished. In response, the Department of Defense entrusted the Mobile District with the monumental task of rebuilding Tyndall AFB into a state-of-the-art "base of the future." This $3 billion effort includes 44 major construction projects designed to support the Air Force's key missions, including hangars tailored specifically for the F-35A Lightning II aircraft. In 2022, a $532 million contract was awarded to deliver 11 critical flightline-support facilities, marking a significant step forward in the rebuild. The project is slated to begin delivering major facilities by 2025, with full completion expected between 2026 and 2027. Through this endeavor, the Mobile District is playing a pivotal role in ensuring that Tyndall AFB remains a cornerstone of U.S. military readiness well into the future.

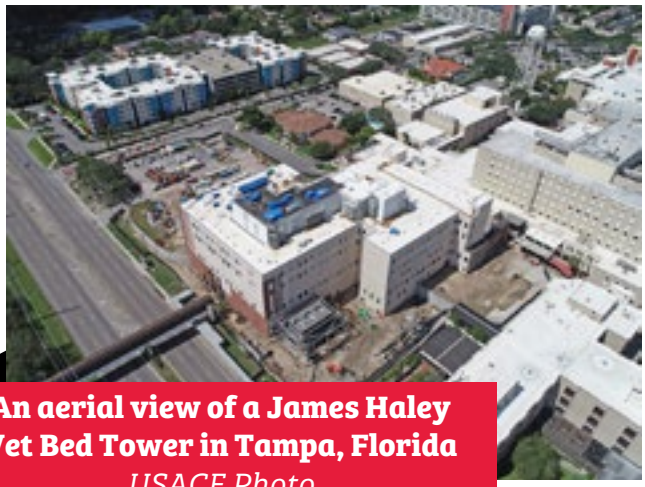
The Tyndall rebuild is to start delivering major facilities in 2025, and the complete closeout of the base is projected to be done between 2026 and 2027.

The aftermath of Hurricane Michael at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida
USACE Photos

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Atlantic Division commander Brigadier Gen. Daniel Hibner, members of the Mobile District team and Tyndall Air Force base leadership tour the site of the new lodging facility at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, Nov. 14, 2022
USACE Photo

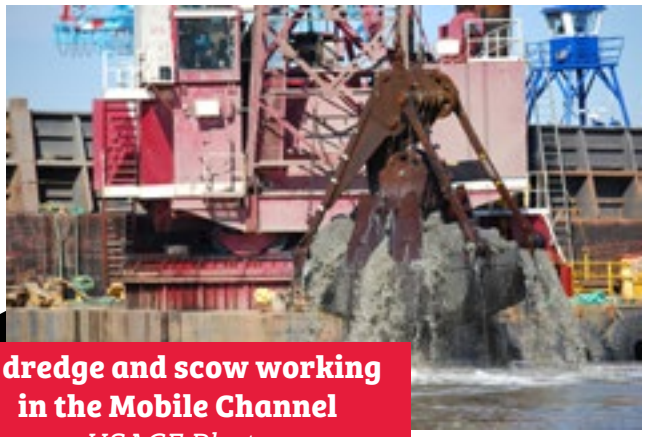
ADVANCING INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARTNERSHIPS: MOBILE DISTRICT'S KEY PROJECTS FROM 2018 TO 2021

In 2018, the Mobile District began construction on the James A. Haley Veteran's Administration Bed Tower in Tampa, Florida, a significant $148.6 million project adding 245,000 square feet of new space and renovating an additional 5,000 square feet. This facility expansion includes 96 medical-surgical single-patient rooms and 40 intensive care beds, alongside amenities such as a new cafeteria, outdoor dining area, retail store, and support offices. Marking a milestone for the Corps, this was the first major design-build project managed by USACE for the VA under approved Congressional legislation. The partnership between USACE and the VA exemplifies a shared commitment to delivering enhanced care for veterans. The Bed Tower's ribbon-cutting ceremony in January 2023 celebrated the project as one of the first VA Mega Projects led by USACE and the nation's only design-build VA Mega Project.



An aerial view of a James Haley Vet Bed Tower in Tampa, Florida
USACE Photo

In 2019, the Mobile District advanced the Mobile Harbor Project, a critical initiative to deepen and widen the Mobile Harbor Channel. Following a request from the Alabama State Port Authority in 2014, the Corps launched a four-year General Reevaluation Report study beginning in late 2015, costing $7.8 million and cost-shared with ASPA. The study evaluated raising the channel dimensions to their authorized sizes—55 feet deep and 550 feet wide—up from the existing 45 feet deep and 400 feet wide. The study's recommendations were approved in 2019, and construction contracts for Phase 1 and Phase 3 were awarded in late 2020 and early 2021, respectively, with work slated to begin in summer 2021. The project is planned in six phases with a target completion date in March 2025, positioning the port to better serve the Southeast's expanding manufacturing sectors.



A dredge and scow working in the Mobile Channel
USACE Photo

Also in 2019, Mobile District completed a $38 million facility at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. The new building houses key offices, including Human Exploration Development and Operations, the Science and Technology Office, and the NASA Engineering and Safety Center. Designed with a focus on energy and water efficiency, this structure earned the distinction of being the ninth Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified

An aerial view of a dredge working in the Mobile Harbor Turning Channel
USACE Photo

Rendering of the Dauphin Island Causeway Restoration using dredged material from the Mobile Harbor Deepening and Widening Project
USACE Photo

building on the Marshall campus, reflecting Mobile District's commitment to sustainable, cutting-edge engineering solutions.

Continuing its international collaborations, in 2021, Mobile District formalized a contract with the Panama Canal Authority to provide consulting and technical advisory services for their Water Projects Program. This partnership aims to optimize water resource management to benefit both the Canal and the surrounding population. Under the agreement—initiated in 2019—USACE supports the Panama Canal with engineering services, environmental sustainability efforts, disaster mitigation strategies, and integrated water resources management. This long-standing cooperation highlights Mobile District's role as a trusted partner in addressing complex water infrastructure challenges beyond U.S. borders.

NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama
USACE Photo

A NEW ERA BEGINS: USACE MOBILE DISTRICT OPENS NEW HEADQUARTERS IN DOWNTOWN MOBILE

On June 30, 2025, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District ushered in a new era with the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for its brand-new headquarters facility in downtown Mobile, Alabama. The opening of the 190,000-square-foot building represents a major milestone in the District's more than 210-year history and its long-standing partnership with the City of Mobile.

Strategically located in the heart of the city, the new headquarters replaces the former building at 109 St. Joseph Street, which had housed the District for decades. The modern facility was designed not only to meet the current needs of nearly 800 employees but also to accommodate anticipated workforce growth and evolving mission requirements well into the future.

The state-of-the-art structure features advanced technological infrastructure, energy-efficient design elements, collaborative workspaces, and enhanced security systems — all aligned with federal sustainability and resilience standards. These enhancements reflect the District's increasing scope and complexity of operations, which span military construction, water resource management, disaster response, and international engineering missions.

More than just a physical upgrade, the new building symbolizes the District's continued commitment to excellence, innovation, and public service. It reinforces Mobile District's identity as a forward-thinking, mission-ready organization deeply rooted in the Gulf Coast region and dedicated to national and international service.

Additionally, the construction of the new headquarters was made possible through a collaborative effort with the City of Mobile and other regional stakeholders, showcasing the strong public-private partnerships that have long been a hallmark of Mobile District's success. The location in downtown Mobile also serves to further integrate the Corps' presence with the civic and economic fabric of the city, reaffirming its historic and strategic importance in the region.

As the District continues to evolve to meet new challenges in civil works, military programs, environmental restoration, and emergency response, the new headquarters stands as a beacon of its readiness for the future — a facility designed not only to house engineers and professionals but to empower them in fulfilling a mission of national and global significance.

New Mobile District Headquarters in Mobile, Alabama
USACE Photo

MOBILE DISTRICT ENGINEERS

LT HIPOLITE DUMAS 1815
LT JAMES GADSDEN 1816
Board of Engineers for Fortifications 1816-1861
Engineers were assigned to various Forts and the Navy Yard under the Board of Fortifications along the Gulf Coast Frontier until 1861 when the Civil War began. After the Reconstruction period of the Civil War, Federal operations resumed in the Gulf and an Engineer Office was opened in Mobile in 1870.
MAJ C. B. REESE..... 1870-1870
CPT A. N. DAMRELL..... 1870-1870
COL J. H. SIMPSON 1870-1872
LTC WILLIAM F. RAYNOLDS 1873-1873
CAPT A. N. DAMRELL 1873-1895
LT E.E.WINSLOW..... 1895-1895*
MAJ W. T. ROSELL..... 1895-1901
CAPT SPENCER COSBY 1901-1903
MAJ W. E. CRAIGHILL 1903-1906
CAPT J. B. CAVANAUGH 1906-1906*
MAJ W. E. CRAIGHILL 1906-1906*
MAJ HENRY JERVEY..... 1906-1910
LTC C. A. FLAGLER..... 1910-1913
CPT R.T. WARD..... 1913-1913
LTC C. KELLER 1913-1916
MAJ W. L. GUTHRIE 1916-1916
MAJ F.C. BOGGS..... 1916-1916*
LTC EDWARD H. SCHULTZ 1916-1916*
MAJ W. L. GUTHRIE 1916-1917
CPT C. L. STURDEVANT 1917-1917
MR G. K. LITTLE 1917-1918
MR. F. H. REED 1918-1919
MAJ R. S. THOMAS 1919-1920
MAJ EARL NORTH 1920-1924
MAJ T. H. EMERSON..... 1924-1928
LTC W.D.A. ANDERSON 1928-1932
COL R. S. THOMAS..... 1932-1935
CPT F. Z. PIRKEY..... 1935-1936
COL RICHARD PARK 1936-1940
LTC WILLIS E. TEALE 1940-1941
LTC L. D. WORSHAM..... 1941-1942
LTC DOSWELL GULLATT..... 1942-1943
LTC H. I. COLLINS..... 1943-1945
COL MARK M. BOATNER JR..... 1945-1947
COL J. J. TWITTY 1947-1949
COL W. K. WILSON, JR..... 1949-1952
COL HARRY L. FOX 1952-1954
COL HAROLD E. BISBORT..... 1954-1958
COL ROBERT W. LOVE..... 1958-1961
COL DANIEL A. RAYMOND 1961-1964
COL ROBERT C. MARSHALL 1964-1967
COL ROBERT E. SNETZER..... 1967-1970
BG HARRY A. GRIFFITH 1970-1973
COL DRAKE WILSON 1973-1976
COL CHARLIE L. BLALOCK 1976-1979
COL ROBERT H. RYAN 1979-1982
COL PATRICK J. KELLY..... 1982-1985
COL C. HILTON DUNN..... 1985-1987
COL LARRY S. BONINE 1987-1990
COL MICHAEL F. THUSS 1990-1992
COL ROBERT H. GRIFFIN 1992-1995
COL WILLIAM S. VOGEL..... 1995-1998
COL J. DAVID NORWOOD 1998-2001
COL ROBERT B. KEYSER 2001-2004
COL PETER F. TAYLOR, JR..... 2004-2007
COL BYRON G. JORNS 2007-2010
COL STEVEN J. ROEMHILDT 2010-2013
COL JON J. CHYTKA 2013-2016
COL JAMES DELAPP 2016-2018
COL SEBASTIEN P. JOLY..... 2018-2021
COL JEREMY J. CHAPMAN 2021-2025
COL KELCEY R. SHAW 2025-

**Temporary*

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MOBILE SPECIAL 210th ANNIVERSARY EDITION is an unofficial publication authorized under AR 360-1 and designed via desktop publishing. It is distributed electronically by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Public Affairs Office.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District
Public Affairs Office
100 Canal St. • Mobile, AL 36602


U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MOBILE DISTRICT
1815