The U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers in the District of Columbia

Overview

U.S. Army Engineers have had a hand in the development of Washington, D.C., from the first city plan of Pierre L'Enfant to the construction of the National Mall, the District's historic core. Since its beginning, the Corps has been involved in the design, construction, and maintenance of Engineers in the District of Columbia.

In the early 20th century, the City was under the control of the District of Columbia Department of Public Works. The Engineer Corps, under the direction of Chief Engineer Charles H. Maines, was responsible for the design and construction of federal buildings in the city.

By the 1930s, the Corps was actively engaged in the construction of the new National Mall, including the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the United States Capitol.

During World War II, the Corps played a key role in the construction of military facilities in the District, including the National War College and the Washington Navy Yard.

After the war, the Corps continued to play an important role in the development of the District, designing and building many of the city's major public buildings, including the Harry S. Truman Building and the Treasury Building.

Today, the Corps continues to play a critical role in the District of Columbia, working on projects such as the revitalization of the Anacostia River and the construction of the National September 11 Memorial.

For More Information: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Office of History
7701 Telegraph Road
Arlington, VA 22203
www.usace.army.mil/History
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Over the years, the Corps has expanded its range of missions that even affected the White House a half-mile distant. The Corps has also been involved in the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, and other public works projects.

In 1816 Col. Walker K. Armistead built Fort Washington on the Bladensburg Road and extended a ring of 68 forts and 93 batteries in and around Washington. The five-sided War Department building beginning to take on its final form in 1906.

Another of the Corps of Engineers’ earliest missions is civil works. A mere sixteen months passed between contract award and completion of the building. The corps was involved in the construction and completion of the building.

The Army Engineers played an intermittent role in government construction. In 1882, Meigs designed and constructed the Pension Building (today’s National Building Museum). The Army Engineers played a key role in the construction of the U.S. Capitol, but World War I delayed the dedication until 1922.

Fortifications & Military Construction

The five-sided War Department building began to take on its final form in 1906. In 1816 Col. Walker K. Armistead built Fort Washington on the Bladensburg Road and extended a ring of 68 forts and 93 batteries in and around Washington.

In 1840 the Army Engineers were involved in constructing public works in the United States. The corps was involved in the construction of the Washington Aqueduct and the McMillan Fountain, Reservoir, and Pumping Station.

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Transportation & Infrastructure

The Washington Aqueduct Division was chartered in 1840. In 1867 Congress formally assigned the superintendence of the aqueduct to the Corps of Engineers. The Army Engineers played a key role in the construction of the Washington Aqueduct and the McMillan Fountain, Reservoir, and Pumping Station.

The roadway that runs from that park to the Potomac is also noteworthy for its ingenious hidden placement of the machinery to lift the center draw spans so as not to detract from the Arlington Memorial Bridge and its pedestrian walkway.

Civil Works

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Government Buildings

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Memorial to Women of the Civil War in the form of a head sculpture created by 18-year-old Sally T. Flanigan of the OPBG as construction manager. His work included the construction of the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

West Point cadets attending the unveiling of Ulysses S. Grant’s statue in 1897.

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