



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Far East District

# EAST GATE EDITION

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## New employment initiative targets Far East Region military spouses

By Antwaun J. Parrish  
FED Public Affairs

**S**ervicemembers are expected to move several times throughout their military career, with their family members accompanying them to duty stations all across the world. Being able to provide job opportunities and career resources for servicemembers' spouses has become a priority in the Far East Region.

The Military Spouse Hiring Initiative is a new program that will allow military spouses to meet one-on-one with a local human resources (HR) representative to review their qualifications and receive feedback and career guidance.

Stephanie Nishimori, a Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) HR assistant, leads this program and as a military spouse herself, understands the importance of this initiative.

"Military spouses and their families don't always come to Korea or the Far East Region as a whole because many of them are concerned about job opportunities," said Stephanie. "So what we are trying to do is expedite hiring processes for spouse hiring and for Korea to be the assign-

ment of choice. We are working to provide our spouses with enough opportunities to get work that they're qualified for and that they enjoy doing to keep them happy while they're overseas."

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**Penny Ferguson (left), a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District (FED) workforce management specialist, speaks with a colleague at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, Aug. 21. (Photo by Antwaun J. Parrish)**



*District's August Castle Call is held at Camp Humphreys, Aug. 23. (Photos by O Sang-song)*



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# New employment initiative targets Far East Region military spouses

*Continued from Page 1*

Nishimori went on to state that most families are assigned here for two years, which is a long time to be out of work and can cause stress among the family unit.

Prior to introducing this initiative, the military spouse non-competitive hiring process was and still is a system that allows spouses to be prioritized for jobs based on spousal preference. However, the new initiative streamlines the process and ensures that spouses have the proper qualifications for potential jobs opportunities.

“It’s very much the same program, except now, spouses are able to come in and talk with any of us and get some feedback on their resume,” said Nishimori. “We are actually sending the resumes to the HR specialists that have available positions.”

Nishimori went on to state that the HR office can actually appoint a spouse to a hiring manager if they think they’re a good fit for a position.

“The ultimate idea is to get spouses hired faster,” said Nishimori.

According to Nishimori, in the CPAC office alone they have hired 16 military spouses within the last year which she said is a significant number in an office of 40 personnel.

As a military spouse, Nishimori stated that she enjoys being the lead for this program and assisting others to find employment. She shared that it wasn’t a fast process for her when arriving to Korea, and she’d like to prevent others from being delayed with securing a job. Nishimori also stated that there’s a negative perception among the spouses in regards to finding a job while being abroad.

“Being able to be on the forefront and let spouses know that I have been there and I understand is an important aspect of this program,” said Nishimori. “Let’s work through this together.”

Nishimori stated that it’s important to note, when spouses are appointed through this program it is a temporary term appointment up to 18 months, but they are not losing military spouse preference.

“They are able to keep applying to a permanent position,” said Nishimori. “It also gives them the opportunity to work with the hiring manager to potentially secure a permanent position.”

Penny Ferguson, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District (FED) workforce management specialist, has been a military spouse since 2010. She has been able to secure employment in most places where her

husband has served.

Prior to working at the FED, Ferguson was located at Fort Campbell, Kentucky and decided to use the leave without pay option prior to her family relocating to Korea. This option allows her computation time for retirement to stay within the government system.

“It helps tremendously,” said Ferguson. “As long as you are picked up in six months you still keep your service comp (computation) dates.”

Although Ferguson was hired as already being a government employee, she stated that she’s excited about the new hiring initiative and wants to learn more.

“When you’re moving duty stations from CONUS (continental United States) to OCONUS (outside the continental United States), and vice versa, it’s hard to really find out what is available,” said Ferguson. “Knowing that when you get here, you can reach out to CPAC is great.”

Military spouses who are interested in employment and would like more information about this program can make an appointment or walk-in directly to the CPAC office located at Camp Humphreys.

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# USACE FED contract specialist retires after 40 years of service; reflects on career highlights

By Antwaun J. Parrish  
FED Public Affairs

**Y**i Tong-hui, a contract specialist, has been an employee with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District, for the past 27 years but has decided to retire after a total of 40 years of service with the U.S. and Republic of Korea government.

Yi initially started working as a procurement specialist in 1979, after getting married and finding out some of the benefits for working with the government.

"I found out that government service offers Saturdays off unlike other companies," said Yi. "So after my honeymoon I began my first job with the U.S. government."

The highlights of Yi's career covers the areas from Yongsan to Pyeong-

taek. She went on to describe a few of her career highlights with the FED.

"Initially I was the only contract specialist and I had a heavy workload due to fraud recovery," said Yi. "As a construction contract specialist I was in charge of all of Yongsan area. My contracts built the Yongsan Theater, USFK headquarters, Child Development Center and the elementary school. When I was walking around Yongsan and sometimes we would have mandatory training inside theater, I felt very good. It made me proud of my job to say that this is my project."

Camp Humphreys was once a small military installation, but now has grown from 1210 acres to 3528 acres due to the land development and utility infrastructure development (LDUI)

plan. Yi was assigned to this project, which she stated, lasted more than 10 years.

"When the project started with site orientation it was all countryside," said Yi. "From time to time, I would come down to Pyeongtaek to look at my project's progress. I am really happy with what we have accomplished and continue to accomplish every day."

Yi became a bit emotional when talking about retirement as she wants to continue to work, however, her husband is ill and she wants to be there to take care of him.

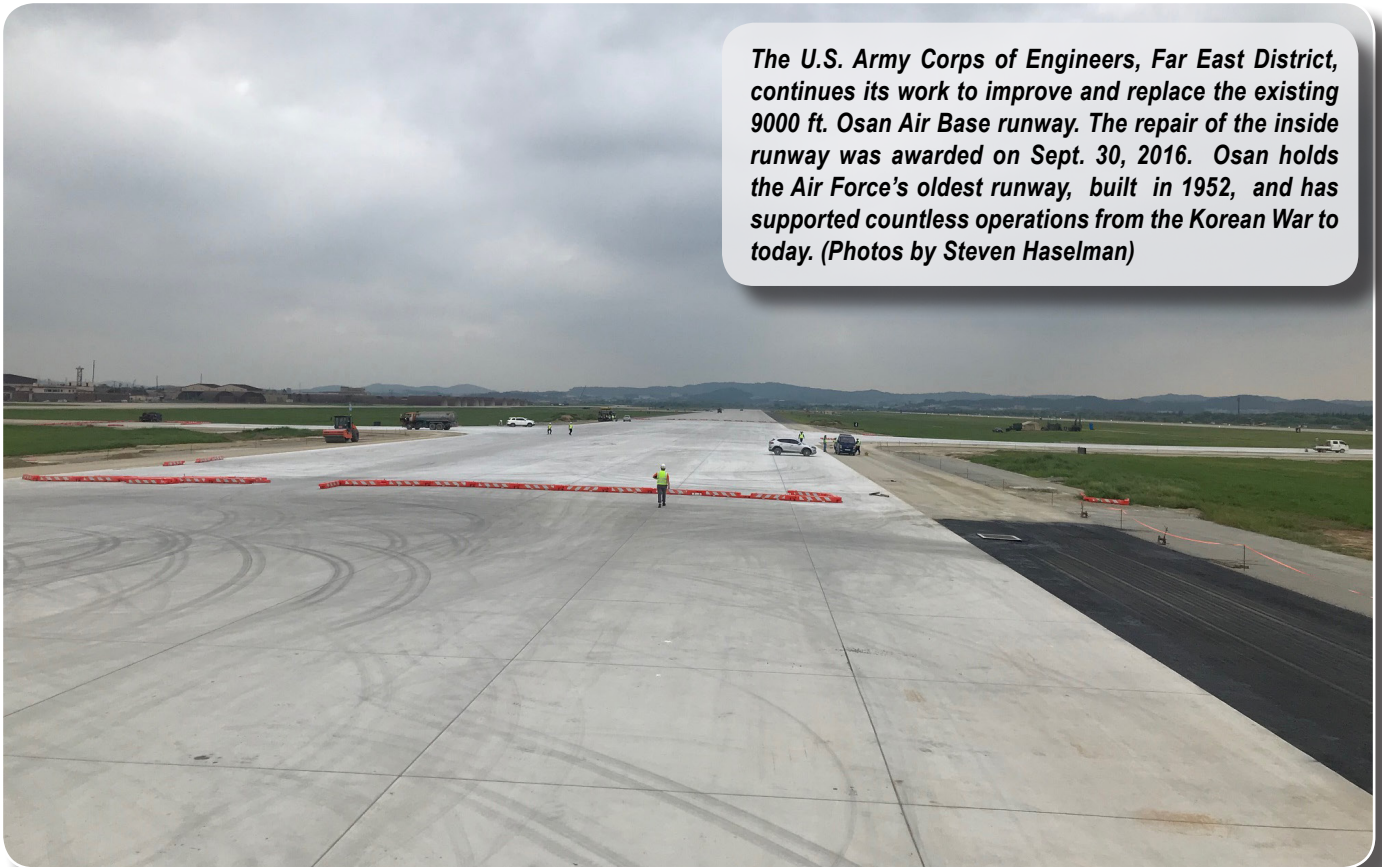
"I really enjoy and love FED," said Yi. "We are an engineering organization but it is very human focused. I always feel like a corps of engineers' member."



*Yi Tong-hui, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District contract specialist, retires after almost 40 years of government service. (FED file photo)*



***The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District, continues its work to improve and replace the existing 9000 ft. Osan Air Base runway. The repair of the inside runway was awarded on Sept. 30, 2016. Osan holds the Air Force's oldest runway, built in 1952, and has supported countless operations from the Korean War to today. (Photos by Steven Haselman)***





# UNION SPOTLIGHT

By An Kyu-nyang  
FED Engineering

**P**yeongtaek, which is FED's new home, is also my hometown. My birthplace, Paengseong-eup Geunnaeri, is just 1 kilometer away from our office. This is where I was born. When I was young I could always see airplanes and numerous parachutes that fell from the sky. At night, lights circled the sky.

To me Pyeongtaek is a familiar name. Pyeongtaek was given its name for its numerous flat plains, 100 meter altitude and its ponds. Before the Asan Seawall was built, water from the

ocean used to flow into the Anseong River, and boats came into Dunpo and Gunmun Bridge.

After the seawall was built we could no longer see the boats, but Pyeongtaek was free from flood damage and there is always enough water to raise agriculture during droughts. Pyeongtaek is famous for growing quality rice. Pears and other fruits are also known agricultural products of Pyeongtaek. Since 2000, Pyeongtaek is slowly trying to end its agricultural focused era and make its big change.

**F**ED 새로운 보금자리 평택 이 곳은 내가 태어난 고향이자 내가 태어난 집과 약 1킬로 정도 떨어져 있다. 평성읍 근내리. 이곳이 내가 태어난 곳이고 어린시절 하늘엔 비행기가 날아다녔고 수시로 낙하산이 떨어졌다. 밤이되면 하늘을 비추는 불빛이 빙글 빙글 계속 돌아갔었다.

평택이란 이름이 웬지 친근하게 느껴진다. 해발고도 100m 이하의 확트인 평지가 많고 연못이 많아 평택이란 이름이 지어졌다고 한다. 지금은 아산만 방조제

가 건설되어 바닷물이 들어오지 못하지만 어릴때만해도 안성천에 바닷물이 들어왔었다. 둔포와 군문교에는 바닷배들이 들어왔다고 한다.

아산만 건설로 이런 배들은 더이상 볼 수 없지만, 평택은 더 이상 수해를 입지 않고 극심한 가뭄에도 농업용수가 부족하지 않게 되었다. 넓은 평야와 풍부한 농수로 평택쌀은 맛이 좋아 전국적으로 유명하다. 평택배 등 과일도 또한 유명하다. 이제는 농업이 주된 시대를 마무리하기 위해 2000년대의 평택은 큰 변

화를 시도하고 있다. 주한미군 기지의 확장, 삼성전자, 엘지전자 등 거대한 조직들이 평택을 변화시키고 있으며 평택항을 중심으로 물류 중심지가 되어가고 있다. 도심은 새로운 아파트로 변신 중이다. 아직은 교통도 생활기반도 다소 부족한 편이나, FED가 새롭게 뿌리를 내려야 할 내 고향 평택은 멀지 않은 미래에 서울 못지 않은 도심으로 발전할 것으로 기대한다.





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