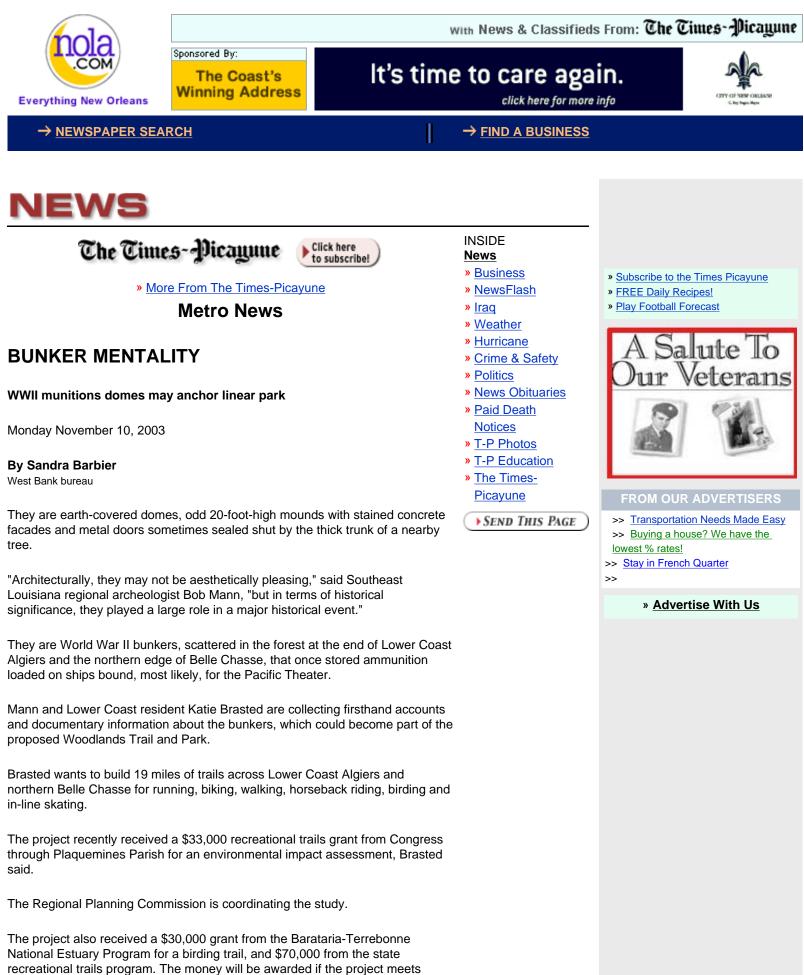
BUNKER MENTALITY



environmental impact guidelines, she said.

"I feel like we are creating a legacy for future generations, planning for smart growth and preserving some of those things people moved to the area for, preserving those things for future generations," Brasted said.

Her preservation goals include historic sites of plantations, a sugar mill and the bunkers, once part of a military installation beside the river.

The bunkers are on part of 5,000 acres in Orleans and Plaquemines parishes that once belonged to the Navy, Brasted said. Sections are now owned by the Plaquemines Parish government and school board, Tulane University, the state, the U.S. Coast Guard and others.

The bunkers stored ammunition manufactured in ordnance plants across the country, Mann said. A bullet casing found on the ground was inscribed New Haven, 1943.

"We believe the arms were transported by rail to the river, and from the river, by ship," he said.

The base name is listed in a military encyclopedia as the U.S. Naval Munitions Magazine, Brasted said.

Some of the old railroad tracks are still there in the woods. Mann and Brasted hope veterans and their relatives can tell them more about the place.

"How did you load these things? How did you unload them?" Mann said. "This is a dangerous job. What were the daily activities that went on at the site?"

While the bunkers may seem mundane, they are significant in their connection to the war.

"Fewer and fewer of these types of places are going to remain," Mann said.

Part of Mann's job as one of four state regional archeologists is to promote the preservation of such sites, which private landowners are not required to save.

Once they're shown the historical value of a site, "often people are proud to have it on their property," he said. "The ultimate goal for most regional projects is to determine if a site meets the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places."

Mann said he and Brasted believe the bunkers could qualify for the list.

Brasted has received a call from a woman who said her husband was a Marine stationed there during World War II. He worked as a sentry on horseback. "When they got off work, they would check the horses out and go riding," she said.

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Anyone with information about the bunkers and the base is asked to call Mann at (225) 587-6739 or Brasted at (504) 393-2666; send e-mail to Mann at rmann1@lsu.edu; or visit the trail Web site at www.woodlandstrail.com.

Sandra Barbier can be reached at sbarbier at timespicayune.com or (504) 826-3784.

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