Who Are Our Dirt Tanks Named After?

Yarbrough Dam
Clyde Yarbrough succeeded Fred Ares as the Superintendent of the Jornada in 1968. Yarbrough was part of “Operation Mix-up” which looked at cross-breeding cattle and tested them for drought tolerance. As one previous employee said of Clyde, “You worked with Clyde, not for him.” Clyde raised his 4 daughters on the Jornada Ranch, and is now retired, living in Lubbock, Texas.

Maxwell Tank
In 2001 hearing that Connie Maxwell’s position as an ecophysiology technician at NMSU was running out of money, the Jornada quickly hired her and she has been here ever since. She has worked on a wide diversity of projects from the historical quadrats established in 1915, to the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) project as coordinator and pilot. Maxwell Tank was named in her honor in 2002. Although Maxwell enjoys the notoriety of having a dirt tank named after her, she has yet to see her namesake.

Engholm Tank
“Wee Willie” Engholm was hired in 1933 as part of an emergency National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) crew for the Jornada and continued for several years as a technician. He eventually worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. While serving for the U.S. Marine Corps in World War II, he was killed in action on Tinian Island in the Pacific.

CCC Tank
During the depression in 1933 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) sent 200 workers to the Jornada and set their camp at Stuart Well. For three years they worked on the Jornada building new tanks, one well, fences, roads, telephone lines, rodent control, planting, brush clearing, and water holes, just to name a few. Pictured here is the fourth Resolution Unit of the CCC.

La Plante Tank
Valerie La Plante has been working with the Jornada Experimental Range for 23 years. She began as a secretary and then branched off as an Information Technology Specialist 11 years ago. She has been an invaluable addition to the Jornada, adding a touch of class on the Jornada’s website, computer issues, historical data, and graphics for posters, just to name a few. She is thrilled to have a dirt tank named after her, but has yet to see her namesake.

Valentine Tank
“Val” Valentine was hired as part of the NIRA crew in 1933. After leaving the Jornada, he continued on as a professor of range management and wildlife at New Mexico State University (NMSU).

Clements Tank
Ted Clements has been managing ranches for 37 years and served in the Navy for 5 years (November 1961 to March 1966). This is why the Jornada Experimental Range was pleased to hire Ted as the Maintenance Director in 2004. He can fix anything. And as Clements says, “If it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right the first time.” This meticulousness branches into all facets of his work, as shown with his innovation of “Clements Tank” while grading the road on a southern border of the Range. He was constructing a water diversion bar along the road, and he reasoned if you’re going to divert water, you may as well put something there to hold it. Way to go Ted!

Thatcher Tank
David Thatcher’s first summer working on the Jornada was as a student employee in 1988. In 1996 he started working full time as an NMSU employee and became a federal employee in 1998. As of 2011, he is the Supervisory Range Technician, overseeing everything that happens on the range. He retains all of his previous duties as a range technician and now also has the ability to, and in his own words, “make my employees mad at me.” His amiable manner, his ability to do any job or task on the range, and his hands-on team ethic ensures all jobs are done properly and with some humor. He manages the historical and contemporary rain and climate gauges. He is the only person maintaining the stations and the data. He is also a trained pilot and flies the Jornada’s Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) for various ongoing studies.

Ares Tank
Fred Ares was born in 1899 and raised on a cattle ranch in Carlsbad, New Mexico. When Fred was 23 years old he took a job as a forest ranger for the U.S. Forest Service in Luna, New Mexico, looking for an easier way of life. He was moved to the Jornada in 1931 as a researcher and manager of the Range. He researched ways to better distribute cattle and conducted multiple forage inventories. Ares helped set the precedent for the studies and continued inventories going on today. Fred retired in 1968.