TONYA WATTENBURG KOMAS
CIM Program, Chico, California

by Maria Orem

Tonya Wattenburg Komas knows firsthand that concrete tells a story. For the past few years, Komas has been working on a project researching historic concrete bunkers in Normandy, France.

As director of the concrete industry management (CIM) program at California State University, Chico, she heads teams of students who evaluate World War II bunkers at Pointe Du Hoc. On the most recent trip, Komas took five CIM students to the site. They spent 10 days using state-of-the-art equipment to test the durability of the concrete. She is planning another trip in the fall.

"This historic concrete investigation project is very near and dear to my heart, both personally and professionally," she said. "Pointe Du Hoc is the most significant site of WWII; it allowed D-Day to happen. It is a wonderland of research."

"For the concrete industry to get behind something like this site is something that would draw people to hear about concrete. It's a great chance for all of us to talk about the durability of concrete," she added.

Komas has been featured on the History Channel program *Life After People*. She has written articles about the project and its significance, and she conducted a presentation at the World of Concrete this past February.

Komas has extensive experience in building design and preservation, directs academic and professional research in concrete investigation, repair and preservation, and has developed computer graphic methodologies for use in many areas of the building professions. She holds a doctorate degree in architecture from Texas A&M University, a master's degree in historic preservation from Columbia

University, New York, a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from the University of California, Davis, and a certificate in historic preservation from Texas A&M University. She also is a corresponding fellow of the Center for Heritage Conservation, College of Architecture, Texas A&M University.

Komas knows her way around concrete and takes great pride in the CIM program, which she directs and where she teaches several of the courses. There are 60 CIM majors at CSU Chico, the first class of seven graduated in May 2009. Chico is one of five locations where the CIM program is offered. Since 1996, when the program was founded, more than 200 people have graduated. (For more information, visit **www.concretedegree.com.**)

"The program focuses on many aspects of concrete and is attractive to a wide range of people," she explained. "We have many areas and a lot of room for people with broad backgrounds and interests. You can do whatever you want to do."

Komas teaches decorative concrete courses and has developed a curriculum that other CIM programs around the country plan to use. She is writing the first CIM textbook on decorative concrete with Clark Branum, LM Scofield Company. She also teaches some of the basic concrete classes, but her two favorites are repair and decorative concrete. Komas is chairwoman of the evaluation committee for the International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI) and has been nominated for a position on the ICRI board of directors.

"I have never enjoyed teaching more than I have with the CIM program," she said. "The students are committed; they like getting in a lab and getting dirty. We are industry-current. Professors and the industry are collaborating in the first-of-its-kind industry-academic partnership so our students come out already as a part of the industry. It's so fulfilling to be teaching in a practical, real program. The sky is the limit on technology and material development. Our students are being positioned to be at the forefront of that."

Among her many projects is research on a concrete sealer for roads/new generation of technology.