



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 27, No. 1

January 2004



To the colors

District pledges allegiance,
keeps home fires burning at
holiday awards ceremony

Ball highlights major events for 2004

By Col. Robert Ball
District Engineer

For the first *Crosscurrents* of the new year, I thought I would call to your attention some of the major events we know will be happening this year. As the weeks go by, you should be hearing more of the details.

USACE 2012 has arrived. As part of 2012, Corps of Engineers headquarters has reorganized to help the divisions become true regional business centers. For its part, Mississippi Valley Division has reorganized to operate under the regional business center concept – a concept geared to enable the districts to do their missions better, cheaper and faster.

We will complete the project management business process

training that we started two years ago. That will culminate in the fielding of P2, our corporate automated information systems in April. With P2 on board and everyone trained on the business process, we will be poised to take advantage of the opportunities for better service that USACE 2012 presents.

In early July, we will be deeply involved in the Grand Excursion, a regional celebration of the original excursion 150 years ago. Our folks who work on the river will be responsible for assisting thousands of vessels navigate from the southern boundary of the district to St. Paul, Minn., and back. After that event, the Mississippi River Commission’s annual low water inspection will be easy.

Lt. Gen. Bob Flowers will change command with the new chief of engineers sometime in the summer. That will impact some more than others, but there is always adjusting when new leaders come on board. And, speaking of new leaders, we will have a district change of command in late July. I will give you more details soon.

Lastly, the formation of the Gulf Regional Division in Baghdad will give some stability to our work in Iraq. There will be opportunities for service there in 120-day temporary duty, six-month temporary change-of-station and 12-month temporary change-of-station tours. With \$12 billion placement in construction for this year, there will be great things done for the people of Iraq by the Corps.

Those are the big events on the horizon. It’s going to be a fast ride, so hang on!

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US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

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Cover



Photo by Peter Versteegen

Russ Williams, project management, played tribute to the holidays, to those serving overseas duty and those who had returned at the Holiday Awards Ceremony, Dec. 12. More, pages 4-5.

Nine from district support recovery from Hurricane Isabel

By Mark Davidson

Nine volunteers from the St. Paul District deployed to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency with recovery efforts from Hurricane Isabel, October-December. The nine were: Tom Anderson, Patrick Duffney, Dave Ekstrand, Doug Kelly, Hubert Letourneau, Bob Schimming, Bill Stute, Keith Traynor and Duane Wilson. Seven of nine provided comments on their regular duties at MVP and their contributions to FEMA and the victims of Isabel. Debris removal was a major tasking for district personnel.

A national situation update on the FEMA web site provided the following recap of 2003 Atlantic Hurricane Season and Isabel. "The 2003 Atlantic hurricane season ended on Sunday, Nov. 30; and, according to forecasters, it was one of the busiest on record. The six-month season produced 14 named storms, including seven hurricanes The most damaging storm of the 2003 season was Isabel, packing 100 mph-winds when it made landfall in North Carolina. Isabel was the strongest hurricane to hit the United States since 1999. The storms during this year's hurricane season resulted in \$2.5 billion in losses, caused 62 deaths and at least 31 injuries requiring hospitalization."

A Sept. 23, 2003, FEMA situation update reported "Virginia remains the hardest hit in terms of power loss. About 950,000 customers are without power across the state."

Tom Anderson: Worked in the federal service for four years; lock operator at Lock and Dam 1, Minneapolis.

Experience with previous disasters: Environmental Protection Agency and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Time in Virginia: Nov. 13-Dec. 20, 2003. Worked in Richmond.

Main duties: Monitored debris clean-up and contractor's truckloads.

Memory: "Most of the people were glad we were there and trying to get their property cleaned up. I received some good training and worked some long



Photo by Bob Schimming

"An eight-foot wall of water hit this house," said Bob Schimming, who works at Orwell Dam in Wheaton, Minn. The residence is located in Surry County, southwest of Richmond, Va.

hours. It was also interesting going through some backyards to assess the damage trees had done to telephone poles and lines."

Patrick Duffney: With the Corps for 26 years; works as a park ranger at Pokegama recreation area, Grand Rapids, Minn., and Winnibigoshish recreation area, Deer River, Minn.

Experience with previous disasters: Several.

Time in Virginia: Nov. 17- Dec. 14, 2003. Worked in Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk and Virginia Beach.

Main duties: Debris site-assessments and site monitoring.

Memory: "The local people seemed to appreciate our efforts. I also developed good working relationships with various contractors."

Dave Ekstrand: With the Corps 27 years; has worked at logistics management and in water control.

Experience with previous disasters: Eight.

Time in Virginia: Oct. 21-Nov. 19, 2003. Worked mostly in Richmond.

Main duties: Debris removal of a site of approximately 300 homes destroyed by a eight-foot surge of water from ... the James River, about 60 miles southeast of Richmond in Surry County.

Memory: "Escorting home-owners into the disaster area with the intention of locating valuables and keepsakes."

Hurricane Isabel, continued Page 6



Photo by Teri Alberico

Holiday awards ceremony packages patriotism and fun

Patriotism and fun accompanied awards presentations at the St. Paul District Holiday Awards Ceremony at The Prom Center in Oakdale, Minn., Dec. 12. Col. Robert Ball, district engineer (center in "Dirt Daddy" shirt), led Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara (left to right); Aaron Dunlop, design branch; Tom Crump, executive assistant; and Marsha Mose, chief of design branch, in a rap music skit. ("Dirt Daddy" photo by Shannon Bauer.)

Dave Valen (top photo) sits on a throne used by Saddam Hussein in a palace in Baghdad, Iraq. Valen was in Iraq working on quality assurance for electrical systems and power plants, June 25 through early December, under a Corps of Engineers agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development. He and others who returned from Iraq and Afghanistan received recognition for their service.

Top right, Mike DeRusha, Lock and Dam 1, registers with Marcia McCloskey, real estate division. In photo at right, the leadership development program class of 2004 performs a skit. Members (left to right) are Paul Machajewski, Bryan Peterson, Corrine Hodapp, Keith Graham and Terry Zien. Participants not pictured are Patricia Berczyk, Aaron Dunlop, Kristen Fairbanks, Gayle Maule, Susan Robinson and Murele Ware.

Receiving recognition for service in Iraq, Afghanistan or Turkey were: Teri Alberico, Bruce Boldon, Mark Koenig, Mark Krenelka, Darrell Morey, Jim Peak, Dave Raasch, Don Speulda, Dave Valen and Bill Vennemann.



Photo by Peter Verstegen



Photo by Peter Verstegen

Federal workers' guide to political participation

By Ed Bankson
Office of Counsel

Now that election season is upon us, it is incumbent on all federal employees to know and abide by the rules for political activity. Below is a list of activities you may engage in if you wish and a list of activities prohibited by law.

Corps employees *may*:

- be candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections;
- register and vote as they choose;
- assist in voter registration drives;
- express opinions about candidates and issues;
- contribute money to political organizations;
- attend political fund-raising functions;
- attend and be active at political rallies and meetings;
- join and be an active member of a political party or club;

- sign nominating petitions;
- campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, municipal ordinances;
- campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections;
- make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections;
- distribute campaign literature in partisan elections; and
- hold office in political clubs or parties.

Politics, continued Page 8

Hurricane Isabel, continued from Page 3

Doug Kelly: With the Corps for 12 years; works in maintenance at Baldhill Dam, Valley City, N.D.

Experience with previous disasters: Yes.

Time in Virginia: Nov. 16-Dec. 14, 2003, in Hampton.

Main duties: Received initial training in debris removal operations and private property assessment. Then, started working with contacts from the state of Virginia and the City of Hampton to inspect private property and determine which homes should be removed. Assessed about 50 homes a day; 30 had to be removed.

Memory: "I helped to expedite decisions between the state of Virginia and the City of Hampton regarding a home-owners' property. The home-owners were very pleased at the speed of the solution and the prevention of further damages."

Robert Schimming: Worked with the Corps 22 years. Is a permanent maintenance worker at Orwell Dam, Wheaton, Minn.

Experience with previous disasters: Debris mission in Grand Forks, N.D., in 1997.

Time in Virginia. Started duty Oct 19-Nov. 16. Worked in Richmond and Fredericksburg.

Main duties: Assigned to the Richmond area for the first week or so, then oversaw contractor operations in the Fredericksburg area and five other counties.

"I was tasked with working directly with the Virginia department of transportation or VDOT. VDOT was the main contact for overseeing the many contractors involved in this mission. I drove to where the contractors were loading and cutting up debris, and I spent a fair amount of time at the disposal area.

"On this mission the contractor was paid by the cubic yard hauled, so most all the disposal sites had a lift or platform ... to view cubic yards in each load. Prior to any loads hauled, the trucks were measured and given a cubic yard rating. There was also a number assigned to truck loads hauled and the percentage of load hauled. This information was then calculated and the total yards hauled were totaled, and the contractors were paid accordingly."

Main memory: "I was at a disposal site after I first arrived in the northern area. I noticed one of the trucks had a large cubic yard rating on the side. I asked to re-measure it. The load was largely overrated. We re-measured 15 trucks and all but one were overrated. The VDOT supervisor recalculated the actual cubic yards hauled back to the very first load by these trucks, which totaled nearly \$30,000 in repayment. Needless to say, I was not the most popular person with the contractor."

Duane Wilson: Worked with the Corps since 1978 with the exception of three years; works in maintenance at Lac Qui Parle dam, Watson, Minn.

Experience with previous disasters: Yes

Time in Virginia: Nov. 16-Dec. 14, 2003 in Portsmouth and Hampton.

Main duties: Worked for FEMA the first two weeks to check for residential or roadside safety hazards.

Then, worked on private property assessments with Doug Kelly, state and city officials.

Memory: "I felt good in helping these people that had experienced this disaster and had lost a lot."

Bits and Pieces

District updates contract with Local 1441



Photo by Shannon Bauer

The St. Paul District updated the labor contract with the American Federation of Government Employees Local 1441 for those employed at the Mississippi River Project and the Western Flood Control Project sites. Left to right are: Tom Oksness, Dean Otterson, Bob Stone, Ben Wopat, Carl Brommerich, Col. Robert Ball and Linda Krueger. The signing took place at the holiday awards ceremony, Dec. 12, 2003.

By Dan Yang

Births

Laird Draves, contracting division, and his wife, Lisa, celebrated the birth of a daughter, Gretchen Noel, Dec. 22. Gretchen arrived at six pounds, 14 ounces.

Jeff Stanek, geotech engineer, and his wife, Anji, celebrated the birth of a son, Josef William, Dec. 31. Josef arrived at eight pounds, two ounces. Josef joins big sister Katrina, 3.

Welcome

Work-study student **Eric Norton** will assist at the Stevens Point field office. He will assist in processing permit applications and entering data into the RAMS system. He is currently a sophomore at the Univ. of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, Wis., majoring in watershed management with a minor in geographic information systems.

Work-study student **Angela Anderson** will assist in the contracting division at the St. Paul

District office. She is currently a senior at Harding High School, St. Paul, Minn. She has a 2-year-old son named Justin. Next fall, she plans to attend Century College, White Bear Lake, Minn., to study interior design.

Intern **Kathy Green** will assist in the engineering branch through the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at the St. Paul District office. She will provide clerical support. Green is a licensed practical nurse in her home state of Indiana and has a 5-year-old son named Reis.

James Roloff was recently hired as a senior contracting officer at the St. Paul District office. He retired last November from the Air Force after 16 years in the contracting field and four years in public affairs.

He has had past assignments in England, Turkey, California, Maryland, Texas and Alabama. In his last position, he worked at the Air Force Logistics Management Agency, where he wrote a handbook for contingency contracting officers. The project

Bits and Pieces, continued Page 8

Obituaries

James W. Kane, age 81, of Oakdale, Minn., died Jan. 15. He was an Army Corps of Engineers retiree.

Richard (Si) W. Leonard, member of the St. Paul District Hall of Fame, passed away Dec. 4, 2003. He was born Nov. 29, 1914. He worked at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 32 years, much of it in the St. Paul District. He received the Army's Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service and recognition for the success of Operation Foresight for the 1969 flood on Upper Mississippi River.

Wanted: Your news!

PAO seeks information about special events in you life (e.g., births, deaths, marriages, engagements). If you would like to share these items, please contact Public Affairs at 651-290-5202, -5108 or 5201 or send an e-mail to: cemvp-pa@mvp02.usace.army.mil.

Wopat deciphers maze of retirement benefits for employee

“Construction-Operations has an employee who is interested in retiring soon,” said Jan Pream, who nominated Ben Wopat for November Employee of the Month. “The employee felt the system to figure out entitlements was very complicated, so he volunteered to assist the employee with figuring out entitlements.” He both worked with the employee on entitlements for the federal benefits and on the employee’s Social Security and other personal retirement issues.

“This shows that he is utilizing the training and skills he has received in participating in the Consideration for Others program,” wrote Pream.

Because of the knowledge Wopat has gained about retirement issues, several other construction-operations division employees have asked for related advice.

“In providing this support to our employees, he has gone the extra mile above and beyond the call of duty,” she said.



Photo by David Kayser

Jan Pream, left, nominated Ben Wopat, assistant chief of construction-operations, for November Employee of the Month.

Bits and Pieces, continued from Page 7 was based on interviews with contracting officers who supported Operation Enduring Freedom.

As a former contingency contracting officer, he has experience in Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Balkans. He is currently enrolled in a graduate program in procurement and contract management through a distance education program at the University of Maryland.

Mike Melin was recently hired on a temporary appointment as a contract specialist in contracting division. This past year, he did a similar temporary contract specialist assignment with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Ft. Snelling, Minn. He has undergraduate degrees in business administration and economics from the Univ. of Minnesota, Duluth. He is a past program director for the Defense Logistics Agency’s procurement technical assistance center in Minnesota that assisted small businesses throughout the state in getting federal civilian and defense contracts. He has more than 20 years of procurement and contracting experience in private industry.

Ellen Scheppeke was recently hired as an office automation clerk at the Eau Galle Lake field office, Spring Valley, Wis. She will be updating files and annual park passes, along with welcoming visitors to the park. She has an associate degree as an administrative assistant from Chippewa Valley Technical College, Eau Claire, Wis. She served 12 years in the Air Force.

Politics, continued from Page 6

Corps employees **may not**:

- use official authority or influence to interfere with an election;
- solicit or discourage political activity of anyone with business before their agency;
- solicit or receive political contributions (may be done in certain limited situations by federal labor or other employee organizations);
- be candidates for public office in partisan elections;

- engage in political activity while:
 - on duty;
 - in a government office;
 - wearing an official uniform; or
 - using a government vehicle;
- wear partisan political buttons on duty.

Should you have any questions on what you, as a federal employee, may or may not do in connection with political activity see or call an ethics counselor in office of counsel. Ed Bankston, 651-290-5500; Steve Adamski, 651-290-5498; or Ivette Garrett, 651-290-5499.