



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Walla Walla District

Intercom

Serving the military and civilian members of the Walla Walla District

Vol. 31

No. 3

March 2004



**District engineers,
students celebrate
Engineer Week**

p. 4-5

FROM WHERE I SIT

Deployed District civilians exhibit soldierly traits

It is great to be back in Walla Walla after spending a few short months bouncing all over northern Iraq.

I couldn't help but notice how many things have changed since I left, and how many other things have stayed the same:

- We have new softer paper towels in the latrines. What took us so long?
- My office has never been cleaner. It took me only one day to "fix" that.
- Our budget process is still making people's heads spin.
- So is 2012 and P2.
- In spite of record fish returns, there are still demagogues out there misleading people about the environmental costs and benefits of clean, renewable hydropower.

What I noticed on my deployment was a little more profound.

I was able to spend time in a hostile fire zone, not with a military unit of 500 personnel with whom I had trained for years, but with groups of Corps civilians and contractors.

Many of these people had no military experience, and all had volunteered to be there in spite of the dangers. Some, like Nola Conway (deployed from the District's Public Affairs Office), were on their second tour in spite of the fact that they had had some close encounters with "bad guys" on their previous trip.

To say that I was proud of these folks is an

understatement. One expects bravery from professional soldiers. It is inculcated in them from the first day of Basic Combat Training and reinforced daily with a language (hooah!) and culture that exudes and rewards "macho." I was

pleasantly surprised to see that same level of bravery exhibited daily by our civilian staff working in Iraq.

By now, you have heard that our Forward Engineering Support Team from Seattle District was caught in an ambush one day. Thanks to the precautions they took and discipline they exhibited, no one was seriously injured. Any one of them could have chosen to leave and return to the comforts of the United States. Instead, they all stayed and continued the work they had been sent to do – to help the Iraqi people build Iraq into the 21st Century. After a few days, they were even able to joke about it!

I would be lying if I told you that I would have had the same brave response they did, given the seriousness of the attack. I was able to draw strength from them. Likewise, it was great hearing Julie Richardson (deployed from the District's Resource Management Office) talk one minute about how excited she was to be working there, and the next minute pooh-pooing not-so-distant blasts as "just another mortar attack." The realization that there are dangers out there made it easy to convince our civilian workforce that filling sandbags to put around our trailers was time well spent. It was good exercise for us, as well.

I hope you join me in being proud of the more than 40 District personnel who have volunteered to serve in this exciting, dangerous and nationally important mission. It is truly important for our country, and I am pleased to report first-hand that the Iraqi people are grateful.

Essayons!



Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis Jr.



Photos by Nola Conway, Gulf Region North District

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civilian employees assigned to the Gulf Region North District bag sand to fortify defenses around their compound in Mosul, Iraq.

**Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis Jr.
District Commander**

Dworshak team recovers sunken boat

by Gina Baltrusch

An early morning request for emergency help Feb. 5 sent the Dworshak Natural Resources staff rushing to Big Eddy marina to help contain a fuel spill from a sunken boat on the reservoir.

The 34-foot, wooden-hulled pleasure boat sank in place overnight at its mooring slip at the Corps-owned, Idaho State Department of Parks and Recreation-leased Dworshak State Park.

The vessel could be seen just under the water's surface, and its fuel and oil were leaking into the Dworshak reservoir.

Pete Summerton, Dworshak's environmental compliance coordinator, immediately went to the scene to evaluate the situation. He notified North Central Idaho Regional Hazardous Material

Response personnel who dispatched a team from Lewiston, Idaho, but they were an hour's drive away from the park and the fuel slick was spreading.

Dworshak State Park Manager Gary Shelley, and the boat owner requested the Corps' help to prevent the boat from sinking any further and contain the leaking fuel and oil.

"We brought two work barges – one with a hydraulic lifting arm, water pumps, and HazMat spill kits," said Paul Pence, Dworshak Natural Resources manager. "Our maintenance team's Heavy Equipment Operator Tom Cummins determined the best way to remove the boat, and then the team made it happen.

"It took about three hours to get the boat floating again. They raised the boat using the lifting arm on the barge and pumps to displace

water trapped inside the vessel. By lunchtime, it was out of the water and on a trailer."

The team deployed floating booms to contain and sop up the fuel slick floating on top of the water.

"The combination of quickly deploying the containment booms and winds blowing shoreward kept the fuel slick in the marina area," Mike Deitrick, Dworshak's park manager. "The Idaho HazMat team arrived from Lewiston to recover the rest of the fuel and oil we had contained."

The boat owner, Julie Chenoweth of Orofino, Idaho, reimbursed the Corps for the costs of the equipment and labor involved in her boat's recovery and the petroleum contamination clean-up job – about \$3,000, Pence added.



Photos by Mario Guzman, Dworshak Natural Resources

Dworshak Natural Resources members evaluate the scene, left, then raise the sunken boat, above, and recover spilled petroleum products from the reservoir at the Corps-owned, Idaho State Department of Parks and Recreation-leased Dworshak State Park.

On the Cover...

Whitney Brooks, a DeSales Catholic School sophomore, watches her bridge collapse Feb. 26 as District engineers test its load-bearing limits. Students at three Walla Walla-area schools signed up for the District's bridge-building contest to mark National Engineer Week.



Gina Baltrusch

Intercom



The INTERCOM is an unofficial publication authorized by the provisions of Army Regulation 360-1. It is published by the Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It has a distribution of 1,500 copies. It is digitally printed by the Document Automation and Production Service. Contents of the INTERCOM are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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They make 'em, we break 'em

District supports National Engineer Week at area schools

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

To celebrate National Engineer Week, Feb. 22-28, engineers of the District headquarters invited students from Walla Walla-area schools to explore their potential engineering skills with a structural-design contest.

Students from Walla Walla Valley Academy in College Place, and Garrison Middle School and DeSales Catholic School in Walla Walla, Wash., took up the challenge to build the strongest, yet lightest-weighting bridges they could design. The only materials students were allowed to use for construction were cardboard, drinking straws, toothpicks, string, standard paper and paper glue.

Engineering Division staffers visited the schools to perform load tests on the bridges, inserting them into load-testing devices – ultimately, breaking them – to determine their load limits.

Scoring was based on the resulting strength coefficient — a number calculated by dividing the maximum weight the bridge supported by the weight of the bridge. The bridge with the highest strength coefficient won.

“Our engineers talk to the students

about their bridges during the testing. The kids are really thinking – analyzing weak points, determining where a break will occur before it even happens and figuring out how they could have built it better,” said Bob Hollenbeck, Structural Design Section chief. “You can almost see the light bulbs turning on inside their heads.”

“It’s fun to see the kids’ reactions to how well their bridges hold up,” added Kevin Crum, a project manager, “The bridge contest serves as a learning experience for all of us. We get unique insight from the kids, which may be different than an engineer approach, about how to tackle the bridge challenge.”

Engineer Week activities can have a lasting impact on some students, said Hollenbeck.

“Teachers have often told me that the contest provides a venue to excel and develop self-esteem for kids who may not ordinarily stand out in the usual status- and popularity-building activities, like sports,” said Hollenbeck. “Through programs like the bridge contest, we reach out to and hope to inspire students who will become our engineers of the future.”



Christie Wollmuth and Danielle Briggs, a Walla Walla District project manager



Above, several students exercised some creativity on their bridges with miniature traffic signs and painted lane dividers. Left, once put through the load-testing apparatus, all bridges – decorative or otherwise – were added to the recycle barrel.



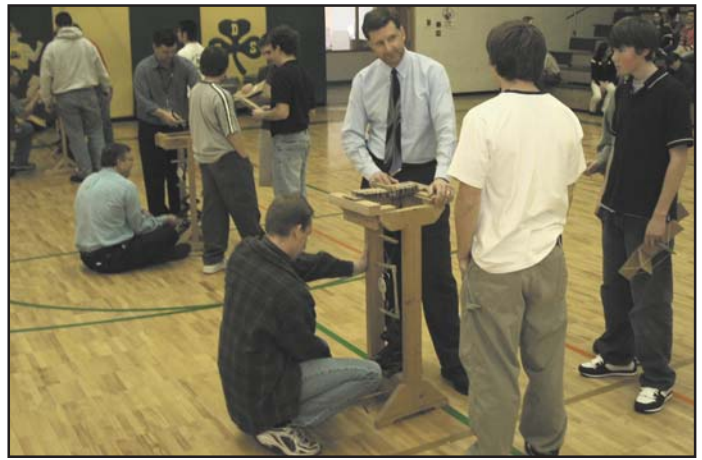
Danielle Stephens, a civil engineer-in-training, and Edwin Kim, a help students measure their bridges' load capacity.



Two 10th-graders at DeSales Catholic School, share a laugh as Kevin Crum, a hydraulic engineer, crushes Wollmuth's bridge as it reaches its load limit.



Hydraulic engineer,



Engineering Division Chief Mike Bart helps DeSales students test the strength of their bridges during Engineer Week activities.



Above, Mark Lindgren, Hydrology and Hydraulics Branch chief, monitors the gauge that measures the amount of force applied to a student's bridge as District engineers test its load capacity. Left, DeSales Catholic School students weigh their bridges prior to testing so they will be able to calculate strength coefficients.

Welders test automated technology on cavitation job

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

Contractors hired to repair turbine cavitation damage on three units at Lower Granite Dam brought out new tools to try on the job.

Workers from Construction Aire Corp. of Bellingham, Wash., wanted to see if the track-mounted, automated technology of a portable milling machine and automatic welder would have useful application on the curved surfaces of the turbine parts in comparison to hand-held welding devices.

Results of their experiment were mixed, on-site company officials and District quality assurance inspectors said.

“The milling machine’s Z-axis, or depth, had to be adjusted by hand,” noted Johnathan Harrel, a District quality assurance inspector from Construction Division. “It did a nice, clean job of removing cavitation damage, but because of the curved surface of the turbine blades, its depth had to be frequently adjusted.”

The automatic welder proved to be the more promising of the two devices.

“The welder lays down precise beads of new steel into a resurfacing site,” said Paul Lemley, on-site working supervisor for Construction Aire Corp, pointing out the smooth, perfectly aligned, slightly overlapping lines of melted stainless steel where the welder had been used. “It’s easy to train workers to use this welder. With a little practice, even folks who have never used it before can get great results.”

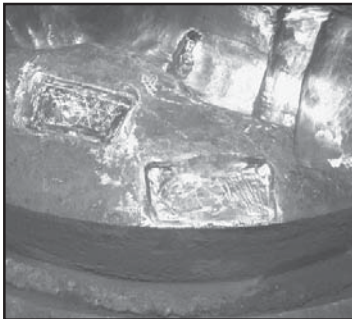
The welder has potential for improving job quality, noted Harrell.

“From a QA point of view, the welder’s results are very nice. The precision output of the welder reduces the number of imperfections in the repair site,” said Harrell. “Hand-held welding jobs have a greater human error factor – if you breathe too hard or barely move, it can create voids between the beads of new steel being welded into a repair site.”

Contractors plan to use the machines on all three of the turbines that they are scheduled to remove cavitation from and resurface at the dam.



The track-mounted, automated welder applies smooth, even lines of new stainless steel.



Right, turbulent water rushing through the scrollcase causes cavitation damage to the turbine’s metal parts. Above, welders cut out areas of cavitation and prepare them for new steel to be welded into the repair sites.



Kyle Kenoyer, welder, operates the portable milling machine to remove metal damaged by cavitation on one of the three turbines being repaired at Lower Granite Dam.

President approves retroactive pay raise

From an Office of Personnel Management release

President George W. Bush signed an executive order March 3 to implement a retroactive pay increase for federal employees averaging 4.1 percent above the 2003 rates.

This pay adjustment is effective as of the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2004 (January 11 for most employees) and supersedes the 2.0 percent overall average increase approved by the President on December 30, 2003.

Of the 4.1 percent average increase, 2.7 percent is allocated as an across-the-board increase to the rates of basic pay for the statutory pay systems, including the General Schedule (GS). An additional 1.4 percent of payroll is allocated to increases in locality rates of pay.

The overall 2004 pay increase ranges from about 3.89 percent (in the Kansas City locality pay area) to about 5.35 percent (in the San Francisco locality pay area) over the 2003 rates.

"The 4.1 percent total increase is really an average number," noted Ray Quinn, Walla Walla District human resources chief. "The actual increase for our area – the Rest of United States table – is 3.9 percent. So, if employees used the 4.1 percent math to figure out their new salary, they should look at the table to find our area's real pay rates."

The new 2004 salary tables are posted on the OPM website at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/payrates/index.asp>.

District helps honor Normandy veterans

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

More than 50 people gathered at the Walla Walla District headquarters

Feb. 22 to honor World War II veterans Angelo Landoni and Elmer Duff for their service to the nation with the French-authorized Jubilee of Liberty medal.

Boy Scouts from Walla Walla Troop 305 started the 4 p.m.

ceremony by posting the nation's flag and leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Duff and Landoni, both Walla

Walla residents, stood solemnly as Rep. George R. Nethercutt Jr., R-Wash., and District Commander Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis Jr. presented them with medals and certificates.

During their remarks, both mentioned the loss of comrades during the Normandy Invasion and Operation Overlord. They told the audience how proud they were to have served with the U.S. forces that liberated France.

"These men served our nation during one of the most difficult and historic battles of World War II," Kertis noted. "They're heroes."

The Jubilee of Liberty medal was minted in France at the direction of the Regional Council of lower Normandy and the Governor of Normandy for presentation to U.S. veterans of Operation Overlord who returned to Normandy for the 50th anniversary ceremonies in June 1994.

The gold medal features engraving of the torch from the Statue of Liberty on one side and a map of Normandy and the D-Day invasion beaches and flags of the Allied nations on the reverse side.



Angelo Landoni chats with District Commander Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis Jr. after the ceremony.

There were five beach designations during the invasion: Gold and Sword beaches, which were attacked by the English; Juno beach, attacked by the Canadians; and Omaha and Utah beaches, which U.S. forces attacked.

Following the 50th anniversary ceremonies, officials noted that there were hundreds more Americans who had served during the Normandy Invasion and were yet to be honored.

The Normandy government no longer had funding available to provide additional medals for these men and women. However, officials there authorized the medal to be minted in the U.S. and presented to Normandy veterans in an appropriate manner.



Rep. George R. Nethercutt Jr., R-Wash., congratulates Normandy veteran Elmer Duff.

Corps of Discovery ventures into classrooms

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

Two hundred years ago, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark launched a 3,700-mile military expedition across the United States' newly acquired Louisiana Purchase. They made their way west to the Pacific Ocean at the mouth of the Columbia River and back to St. Louis, Mo., in just over two years.

As part of the national "Corps of Discovery" commemoration to honor the Lewis and Clark expedition, Walla Walla District acquired five Discovery Boxes. Each box holds a treasure of artifacts – some real, others reproductions – of tools, maps, uniforms and other objects related to the 1804-1806 mission.

Natural resource specialists and park rangers use the boxes' contents to capture the imaginations of audiences at schools, fairs, Scout meetings, civic clubs and museums throughout the District.

"You can tell people something, and they may remember 10 percent of it. But, if they get to feel what you're telling them about through hands-on artifacts or trying on the uniforms, it becomes an experience more than just a lesson," said Phil Bengé.

"I love the way kids' eyes light up when a student puts on one of the uniform coats or the way they spend so much time taking in all the detailed engraving on the Peace Medal," said Pasquale Anolfo, a park ranger at McNary Lock and Dam, who took the interpretive program to Echo Elementary School's fourth-grade class on Feb. 24. "You can see they're really learning."

The Discovery Box includes lesson plans using stories from the expedition. The lessons relate those stories to modern Army values. District rangers tailor their presentations to the age of their audiences and the time



Alandra Marcum, a fourth-grader at Echo Elementary School, examines a bear claw, one of the exhibits from the Lewis and Clark Discovery Box.

allowed, said Bengé.

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' efforts to honor the expedition emphasize the Army's role in that historical trek," said Bengé. "The Lewis and Clark expedition – an Army expedition – was looking for the fabled Northwest Passage. Their trek followed the waterways, many of which the Corps manages.

"The Corps' direct management responsibilities cover about 60 percent of the expedition route," Bengé continued. "Even in areas where the Corps doesn't have direct water responsibilities, we still have indirect management responsibilities, like regulatory roles."

The National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, leads the Lewis & Clark Trail commemoration, focusing on historical high points of the mission with signature events supported by other federal agencies and community groups along the route. One signature event will occur in Walla Walla District during Summer 2006, marking the good relations explorers developed with the Nez Perce tribe near what is now the Lewiston-Clarkston area.



Above, Pasquale Anolfo, a Walla Walla District park ranger from McNary Dam, shares Lewis and Clark-era artifacts and information with fourth-grade students at Echo Elementary School in Oregon. Right, Esau Ibarra, runs his fingers back and forth over a beaver pelt – one of the animals noted in the Lewis and Clark journals.

