

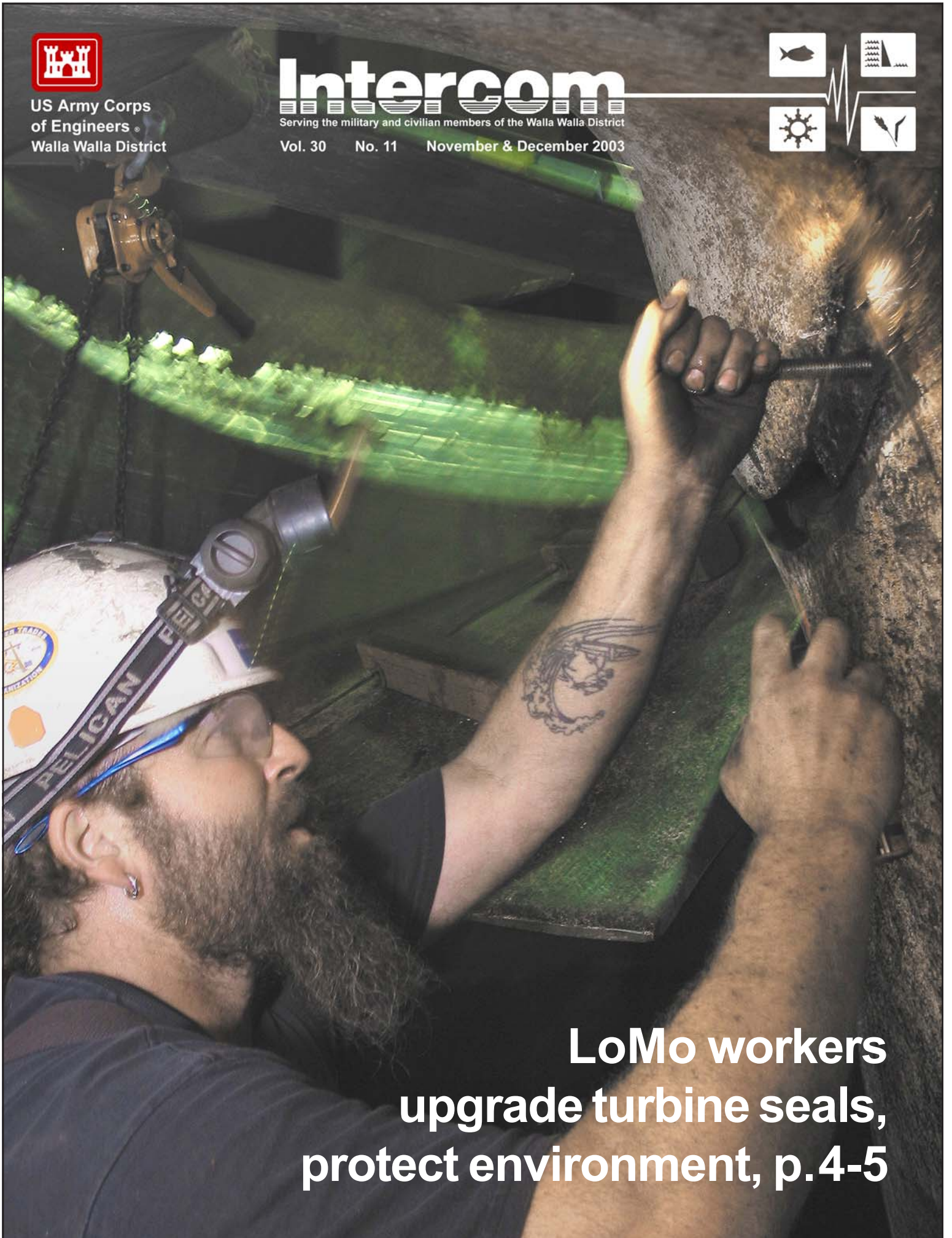


US Army Corps
of Engineers
Walla Walla District

Intercom

Serving the military and civilian members of the Walla Walla District

Vol. 30 No. 11 November & December 2003



**LoMo workers
upgrade turbine seals,
protect environment, p.4-5**

FROM WHERE I SIT

Winds of change: P2, GWOT, 2012, A-76 and all that

It has been said that the only thing constant in life is change.

Gone are the days (if they ever existed) when one can start in the workplace fresh out of college and see little or no change throughout the course of their career. The



Maj. Harry L. Cunningham

truth of the matter is that the winds of change are all about us. If you are somewhat concerned or confused about all the new initiatives, programs, requirements and/or proposed restructuring of your workplace, you have a right to be.

A few of these changes immediately come to mind (I'm sure you could name more): The Global War on Terror and the requirements for deployment in support of

this great effort; USACE 2012; P2; A-76 initiatives (competitive outsourcing); and the National Security Personnel System.

First, let me tell you that I don't have all the answers for any of these topics. Frankly, nobody does. What I can tell you is that we are working very hard with Northwestern Division and Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to first understand them, and then to posture ourselves to best adjust to each of them. My commitment to each of you, and I ask the District leadership and staff to do the same, is that as new information becomes available, we will share it with you so you can adjust and make plans for the future.

The Global War on Terror is an on-going effort. I'm happy to report that our District continues to support it, with many of our fellow employees deployed at this very moment. Thank you again for your willingness to serve, both at home and abroad. As we continue building the Gulf Regional Division (GRD) and the Northern District

(GRN), I am convinced there will be plenty of opportunities for service in the future.

Other changes are either happening or will soon come to fruition. USACE 2012 is happening now. I am in close communication with division as we make recommendations to headquarters on how we want to work and interact as a region.

The next big thing coming is P2, the Corps' new business process system. As it looks now, some will receive training in January and February in preparation for a March 2004 deployment. This will significantly change the way we do business. Get ready for an exciting ride!

Congress has amended and implemented the Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-76, "Performance of Commercial Activities" that directs us to participate in competitive outsourcing. This means we, as government employees, will compete with private industry for the right to perform certain functions within our District. We will establish our most efficient organization (MEO) for various jobs and services. This MEO will then compete with private industry to see who can do it for less money. There are many rules we'll follow as we move through this process. Again, rest assured that we'll keep you informed as the situation develops.

Finally, Congress recently approved the National Security Personnel System that promises sweeping changes to the government civilian personnel system as it currently exists. Changes in the way we recruit, retain and compensate employees are coming. Approval was also granted for the Department of Defense to offer separation incentives for up to 25,000 personnel per year. Space in this article precludes me from telling you about all the changes this system will offer. For more information, I encourage you to go to <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/>.

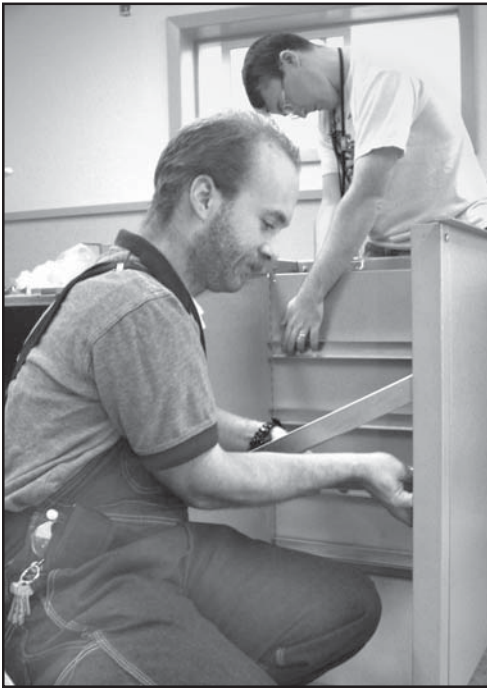
I ask that you join with me as we look at these changes from the glass-half-full perspective. Change is inevitable. If it weren't for change, we'd still be in the Stone Age.

Maj. Harry L. Cunningham
Acting District Commander

Got a suggestion or comment for the Commander?

Send a note to the District Commander via his e-mail page on the District Intranet site. Whether you sign your name or send anonymously, the commander assures employees' identity will be safeguarded (security and safety issues considered). Just remember, he can't respond to your question, suggestion or comment if you forget to give him a way to respond to you. Maj. Harry Cunningham, acting district commander, will be able to access this e-mail on behalf of the commander in his absence.

<http://w3.nwww.usace.army.mil/apps/suggestions/>



Scott Jones and Nick Jarosch, power plant trainees, assemble work stations.



John Farthing, power plant trainee, saws a piece of plywood to panel an open area of the wall near the new training center's staircase.

Self-help project yields new apprentice center

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

A new apprentice training facility opened at McNary Lock and Dam on Nov. 6.

Trainees and their instructors from Walla Walla District's apprenticeship program tackled the self-help project to better accommodate the growing needs of future hydroelectric operator trainees.

The McNary annex is the single-source training center for the District. Here, newly assigned apprentices receive initial skills training to become electrical, mechanical and operational journeymen. The program has grown more than 417 percent in the past decade – from six students per four-year period in 1993 to an average of 25 students every four years in 2003.

"The need for an expanded training facility has been apparent for some time," said Terry Filson, training officer for the program. "The District made a commitment to strengthen the training program and

provided the necessary funding to build a training annex capable of absorbing the larger training load."

Transforming McNary's old juvenile fish facility into a modern training center was no easy task. The second floor was gutted and replaced, the structural layout of the first floor had to be altered and a stairway was added to join the two floors of the building. The trainees provided more than 80 percent of the labor needed to refurbish the new training annex. The 50 percent increase in floorspace made room for more workstations, a computer lab, a dedicated hydraulics trainer and a new lunchroom.

Instructors consider the new training center an investment in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' future.

"A strong, viable apprenticeship program has been recognized as a primary source to replenish the Corps' workforce," said Pete McGuckin, an instructor at McNary. "We're developing the hydropower professionals we'll need in the future."

On the Cover...

Kirt Silva, a power plant mechanic at Lower Monumental Lock and Dam, loosens the bolts that secure a metal follower in place over the oil seals on Unit 4's turbine. Maintenance workers replaced Unit 4's seals with new ones made of a rubbery, less-fibrous material (photo by Gina Baltrusch).



Intercom



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Ice Harbor lock reopens

by Dutch Meier

Ice Harbor Dam's navigation lock reopened Dec. 1 to commercial and recreational vessels.

Gate repairs were completed over the Thanksgiving weekend, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintenance inspectors approved the lock for normal operations that evening.

"Our contractors and a variety of Walla Walla District staffers from the dam and the headquarters worked together as a team, starting just after midnight on November 28th, to restore the upstream lock gate here," said Scott Sutliff, operations and maintenance superintendent at the dam. "We're happy that we're able to resume this part of our mission and routinely pass commercial and recreational traffic along the Snake River again."

The repairs were needed to fix damage to the upstream lock gate that happened Oct. 22 when the *Empress of the North*, a tour boat owned by the American West Steamboat Company of Seattle, Wash., struck the gate. Corps experts set up a special system using a temporary barrier called a floating bulkhead, and allowed commercial river traffic to pass upstream and downstream with cargo within 43 hours of the incident. The lock was closed, however, to all recreational waterway traffic until repairs could be done by Corps and contractor staffers.

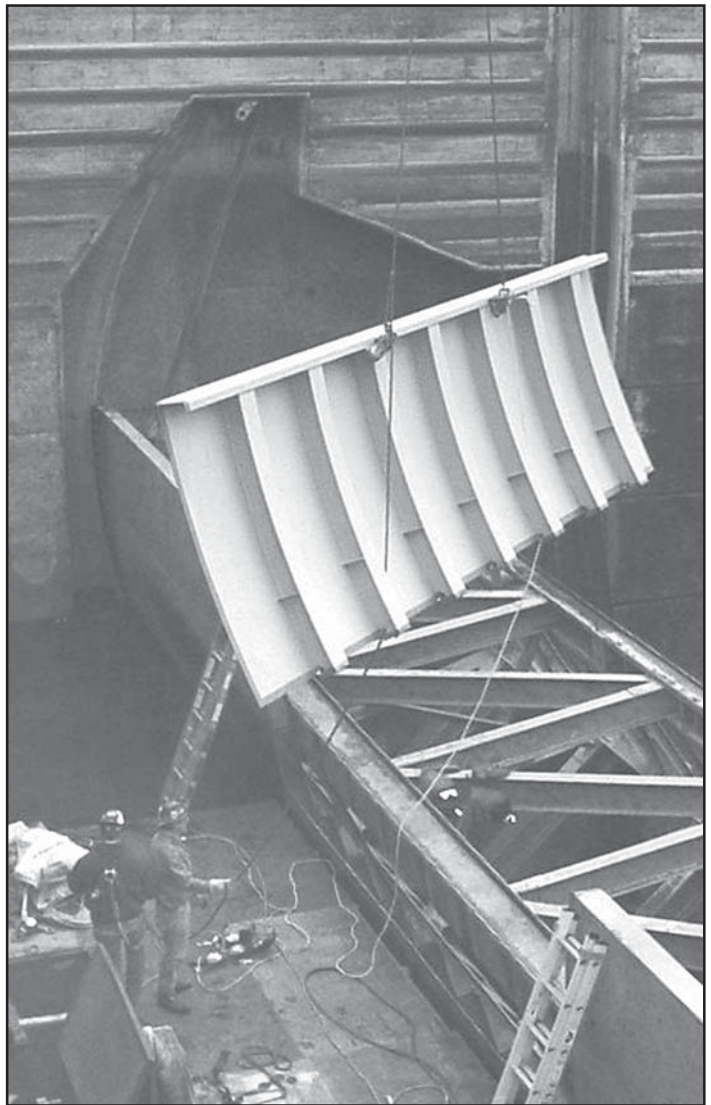
Corps officials issued a contract to repair the gate soon after the accident for approximately \$63,000. Corps members and contractor crews from Dix Corporation, based in Spokane, Wash., did the work. Early completion incentives were written into the contract.

"The contractor finished their work almost two days ahead of schedule, so it appears they'll get the full \$15,000 incentive," said Dave Opbroek, construction division chief at Walla Walla.

The incident remains under investigation.



Ken Rader (left) and Troy White, Dix Construction welders, attach the new section into the navigation lock gate by welding it into place from both sides of the gate (photo by Gina Baltrusch).



Dix Construction workers use a crane to lower a replacement piece to be welded into the section of the upstream navigation lock gate that was damaged Oct. 22 (photo by Gale Morgan).



Gale Morgan (right), a quality assurance inspector in Walla Walla District's Construction Division, discusses the repair job with Ken Rader, a Dix Construction welder (photo by Gina Baltrusch).

Corps SBO teaches business owners how to break through federal red tape

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

More than 80 people attended the Business Opportunities with Government Agencies Seminar in Walla Walla, Wash., Nov. 13.

The day-long event included presentations by federal, state and local agencies, teaching participants how to get through the red tape of doing business with government.

Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Veterans Administration, Washington State Penitentiary, Walla Walla Public School District and the Walla Walla Community College Center for Business and Professional Development offered practical, hands-on information for business owners.

Julie Dockery, the District's deputy for small business, told attendees how to get registered to compete for Corps

contracts within the District.

"The red-tape perception is really just a myth," Dockery said. "The registration process to become eligible to bid on federal contracts isn't that difficult. If you can fill out a job application, you can get through this paperwork."

She went on to talk about the president's competitive-outsourcing directive and how it helps small businesses get a shot at doing more of the work the District needs to accomplish. She explained some of the special consideration categories, including veteran-owned, woman-owned and historically underutilized business, to name a few.

One business owner who regularly competes for and performs work for the District told the group about his experience working with government agencies.

"It's not that hard to get your business approved to bid on government work," said Steve Menard, owner of Metal Bending, Incorporated which has done work at all District projects except Lucky Peak Dam. "Yes, there's paperwork. But, it's no more difficult than setting up a business. Doing work for the government has made my business grow."

After the presentations, Dockery and Connie Oberle, the District chief of contracting division, answered participants' questions, gave them additional handouts and encouraged them to not let the eligibility process overwhelm them.

"Just go for it," Menard advised several other business owners near the information booths who seemed daunted by the red-tape myth. "Take a look at the government agencies' advertised contracts. They need contractors to do everything from janitorial work to metal fabrication. The opportunities are there – you just have to get your business eligible to compete for them."



Seminar attendees take notes as federal, state and Walla Walla Valley agencies' officials explain how to compete for contracts.



Above, Julie Dockery, Walla Walla District's deputy for small business, helps Small Business Seminar attendees get on track to becoming eligible to compete for Corps contracts. Right, more than 80 people attended the seminar to learn about business opportunities with federal, state and local government agencies.



New turbine seals save

by Gina Baltrusch

Workers at Lower Monumental Dam recently tackled a job most maintenance folks see only once or twice during their careers.

It took less than three weeks during November to change the oil seals encircling turbine Unit 4's six rotating blades. The pitch of the blades is controlled with an oil hydraulic system. Two-way seals prevent the oil from escaping and keeps water from entering the turbine.

The original seals, called "packing" by some workers, contained fibrous materials and required more frequent maintenance, said Ron Standring, power plant mechanic crew foreman.

"Now, we're installing 100 percent rubber seals that work better, last longer and require less maintenance," said Standring.

The upgrade costs more than \$10,000 for a set of 52-inch-diameter seals – enough for one turbine. But, the price is worth it, according to dam officials.

"Material technology has advanced to the point where it's worth making the switch," said Matt Allen, operations manager. "We put this type of seal on Units 2 and 6 last year. In October, we ran the oil usage numbers for those units and discovered that they had not needed any oil added during that time. That saves oil and labor hours. Most importantly, it reduces the risk of oil getting into the water."

The seal-replacement job offered a unique training opportunity for the maintenance crew, said Standring.



Clint LeMar, foreground, and Jim Allen, power plant mechanics at Lower Monumental Dam, remove the metal followers to access the old oil seals (photo by Gina Baltrusch).



After cleaning the followers to remove the past year's build-up of rust and grime, Richard Spooner, power plant mechanic, applies a thin, rubber-like material that will create a washer-like sealing effect once the followers are reinstalled over the new oil seals (photo by Sue Walton).



Jamie Munson, a painter, caps off the bolt holes of the followers with putty and epoxy to p

e oil, labor; reduce risk

“There was only one guy on our crew who had done a turbine seal replacement before,” he explained. “Completely replacing a seal isn’t necessary very often, so we weren’t surprised to find some of the old seals we removed were the original 30-year-old packing.”

To install new seals, the old ones first had to come out. Workers used raw manpower to wrench the bolts off the followers that held the seals in place. Once removed, the followers were sandblasted to remove any rust and residue built up over years, then painted to prevent future rusting when reinstalled.

The challenge of removing the old seals and installing the new ones sparked some innovation among the maintenance folks. To make it easier, they developed new tools and techniques to help.

They bent screwdrivers in unique angles to pry out the old seals, shaped wooden sticks just right to push the new seals into place without causing damage and applied putty under a sealing layer of epoxy over the bolt holes to make removing the followers easier the next time seals would need to be replaced.

“These folks get better each time they do another turbine,” said Standing. “The first one we did last year took a whole month to complete. Unit 4 was done in two and a half weeks. Now, we’re working on Unit 1.”

Several maintenance workers from the District’s other dams and trainees from the apprentice program were brought in to get some experience with the process, Allen added.

Next year, Lower Monumental’s maintenance team plans to put the new seals on Units 3 and 5, applying the improved materials technology to all six turbines at the dam.



Leo Janes, power plant mechanic, loosens a bolt on a follower that workers need to remove to take out the old oil seals.(photo by Sue Walton).



prevent cavitation (photo by Sue Walton).



Above-left, Power plant mechanics at Lower Monumental Lock and Dam, use screwdrivers to pry out the old, fibrous-material oil seal from the Unit 4 turbine (photo by Sue Walton). Above-right, Ron Standing, power plant mechanic crew foreman at the dam, examines one of the new rubber seals that his crew will install on the Unit 4 turbine (photo by Gina Baltrusch).

Mill Creek Project seeks new park hosts

by Gina Baltrusch

Mill Creek Project needs a new park host to serve as caretaker at Rooks Park.

Bill and Darlene Hill, hosts at the park for the past seven years, plan to leave their recreational vehicle site at the park, located just east of Walla Walla city limits, in March.

Project officials are looking for eligible candidates to take on the caretaker position when the Hills leave.

"The Hills will be difficult to replace, but I'm sure there is another person or couple out there who would enjoy being park hosts out here," said Dave Hays, project manager.

"Rooks Park is a great place to live," said Darlene, who retired in 1991 from a 36-year career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District. "It's beautiful and peaceful out here. And, there are always lots of birds, squirrels and deer to watch."

Bill, a U.S. Navy retiree, said their park host duties are minimal compared to the benefits they receive in exchange.

"We get trailer space, water, sewage, electric and garbage service," said Bill. "The best thing about the deal was getting out of that crowded, noisy RV park we used to be in."

A typical park host agreement requires caretakers to open and close the park gates at certain hours, keep the information boards stocked, empty trash bins and similar routine duties, said Steve Thompson, a Mill Creek natural resources specialist.



After seven years in residence, Bill and Darlene Hill will leave their positions as hosts at Rooks Park in March. Project officials hope to line up a new host by Jan. 16 (file photo).

The Hills were honored with appreciation certificates during a town hall awards ceremony Dec. 13, 2002 for the additional volunteer work they did while living at Rooks Park. During their years as hosts, they performed more than 4,000 hours of volunteer service at the project.

Anyone interested in the park host opportunity should call the Mill Creek office at (509) 527-7160. Applications will be accepted until Jan. 16.

Winter weather presents safety hazards

from Countermeasure, U.S. Army Safety Center

A popular motivational anecdote goes something like this: "That which does not kill you, makes you stronger." While this oft-quoted line might have some fundamental truth, it forgets to mention that those things that don't kill you often hurt a lot.

Working in cold weather presents many hazards that, if not approached correctly, can lead to disaster: automobile accidents and severe-cold-weather injuries, to name a couple. But, the winter environment also introduces other, not-so-serious risks that can increase pain and decrease productivity. These minor aches and pains are not only a nuisance; they are also costly in terms of lost man-hours and dollars.

Fortunately, most cold injuries are completely preventable if appropriate precautionary measures are taken. But sometimes, even the best-prepared employee can fall prey to one of the "minor" injuries listed below.

Frostnip: this type of injury, along with more serious ailments such as frostbite, can occur anytime the air

temperature is below freezing (32 °F or 0 °C). Frostnip is caused by water freezing on the skin's surface.

Sunburn: the threat of sunburn depends on the intensity of sunlight, not air temperature. Add in snow, ice, and lightly colored objects, all of which reflect the sun's rays, and the scene is set for a major sunburn injury if you're not careful.

Snow Blindness: snow blindness, like sunburn, is a threat posed by the intensity of the sun's rays, not the temperature outside. Solar radiation can "sunburn" unprotected eyes, leading to snow blindness.

Slips and falls: paths, walkways, and roads are frequently muddy or frozen. Also, heat escaping from the entrances of buildings causes cycles of thawing and freezing of the ground surface, making those areas particularly hazardous. Add to the mix fatigue, bulky clothing, and vision-restricting hoods and hats, and the danger becomes very real.

For more information about winter safety hazards at your duty location, call the District Safety Office.

DEPLOYMENT

what's in it for me?

by Nola Conway

By now, most of us are familiar with the Districtwide emails announcing deployment opportunities with Forward Engineer Support Teams. If you are looking for reasons to volunteer for duty in Iraq, consider these:

- Got a student loan, debts, car payments, dream vacation, or need extra cash for a college education for your children? Depending on your schedule, series, grade and other entitlements, you could double or even triple your pay while deployed. Your expenses while deployed—housing, meals, transportation, etc. — are fully paid.

- Want an adventure of a lifetime? Most of the people deployed to Iraq told historians their main reason for deployment was their sense of adventure. In Iraq, you are in the cradle of civilization. You have an opportunity to see sites most people only read about, and have an opportunity to work with the Iraqi people to restore their nation. It's one of the most rewarding assignments you may have during your career.

- Professional challenge. You get to apply everything you know and do for the Corps, plus more. The work is challenging, but rewarding. You see the benefits and results of your work daily. You can develop lifetime relationships

with the teams and the Iraqi people you will work with.

- A deployment can be personally rewarding. You are part of a historical event, rebuilding a nation's infrastructure that could be one of the richest nations in the world, but has suffered greatly. You make a difference. The Iraqi people are truly grateful for having us there — working side-by-side with them is one of the most humbling and rewarding experiences you could have.

- The deployment cycle set for January through April is during Iraq's mildest weather season. Although it can get very hot in Iraq, this is the optimum time for deployment if you are concerned about the heat.

- And lastly, but probably most importantly, you get to serve your country and help in the global war on terrorism, not by taking part in combat operations, but by working side-by-side with the Iraqi people to rebuild their nation. This is one of those times, as President John Kennedy pointed out, "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." Your country is asking.

Editor's Note: Nola Conway is a Walla Walla District Public Affairs Specialist who deployed from April to September in support of Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil.



Thanksgiving feast



Ryan Pierce, a computer specialist at the District headquarters in Walla Walla, dishes up a helping of turkey during Thanksgiving activities on Nov. 13 (photo by Gina Baltrusch).

FEST duty offers rewards

Pay, benefits issues top frequently-asked questions

Will my pay continue while I am deployed? There is no change to a deployed employee's base pay. Base pay, for this purpose, includes a special salary rate and locality pay. You will also receive premium for overtime, night, holiday, Sunday and other types of work. You are also entitled to receive foreign post differential and danger pay — the amounts vary depending on duty location.

Will my pay be taxed? Civilian salaries are not tax free while deployed.

Will I receive per diem? During your deployment you receive \$3.50 a day. All of your meals, travel and lodging are provided.

Will my life insurance still be in effect? Being sent to a combat zone does not cancel FEGLI coverage. Civilian employees who are sent to a war zone or combat zone in a support capacity keep their FEGLI coverage, including Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage. Being sent to a combat zone does not affect the amount of your FEGLI coverage. If you are a current employee and not covered under FEGLI, and are deployed overseas, you become eligible to enroll under a 60 day personal "open season" because you have been designated an emergency essential employee.

Will I lose my annual leave that is over 240 hours (maximum carry over)? Excess annual leave accrued while deployed will be permitted for carry-over upon return to home station. Restored annual leave is good for two years.

More information about civilian deployment issues can be found on Walla Walla District's Emergency Operations intranet website.

Remember our people serving overseas

Chief of Engineers holiday message

The holidays are a time for remembering others, and for giving to others.

This year, I want us to remember that there are many in our Corps of Engineers family who are serving in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq. They are giving an expensive gift...willingly sacrificing their holiday with their families so that others who lived for decades under tyrannical rule might have a future of safety and freedom.

I'm enormously proud of them. They volunteered for an important cause, and they are doing excellent work under difficult circumstances.

Of course, Afghanistan and Iraq are not the only places where our Corps team members will spend the holidays. Our people are at work in 91 countries worldwide, and many of them will also be separated from their loved ones during the holidays.

Please, take a few moments during these holidays to remember those in the Corps family who are serving overseas. If you are acquainted with some of them, please mail them a card or send them an e-mail letting them know that you're thinking about them,

and that their service is appreciated.

I have also served overseas during the holidays under difficult conditions, and you can trust me on this...in the situations that our people face in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere, simple gifts like those will be treasured.

For all of us, this has been a busy year. As in years past, the Corps of Engineers has taken part in events that made headlines, and made a difference.

When the space shuttle Columbia burned up during re-entry, Corps people took part in the search in Texas and other states to find debris that helped piece together what happened to the spacecraft.

During Supertyphoon Pongsona on Guam, Hurricane Isabel on the East Coast, and the wildfires in California, Corps emergency teams were on the scene to fight the disaster, and to clean up afterwards.

Whether it is helping clear landmines in Afghanistan, or advising the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources in re-routing water to preserve the Marsh Arabs' way of life, or providing new facilities for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, this year Corps people have

continued making a difference in America, and in the world.

The holidays are also a time to look to the future, and the Corps of Engineers' future is bright. The plans for USACE 2012 have been released and are now being implemented. People throughout the Corps are learning the basics of the Project Management Business Process, cornerstone of the Corps' new way of doing business. And Corps people are learning the concepts of competitive sourcing, which will be our part in the President's Management Agenda.

These actions and others will give the Corps of Engineers the best possible gift...the ability to improve our service to the American people.

As always, I encourage all of you to take time off during this holiday season. Relax and have fun, and especially make time to enjoy your families.

And my family and I wish you all a safe and joyous holiday season, and a happy, prosperous New Year.

Essays!

Robert B. Flowers
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

An ounce of prevention...

Fernando Aguilar, a civil engineer in Walla Walla District's construction division, rolls up his sleeve for Brenda Sherman, a registered nurse from Walla Walla General Hospital, to administer this year's flu vaccine. More than 200 employees from throughout the District elected to receive the vaccine when offered at their duty locations during October and November. The national Centers for Disease Control recommend flu shots for several segments of the population, including young children and people over age 50. The Walla Walla County Health Department has vaccinated more than 2,300 people this flu season. Those interested in getting a flu shot should contact their personal physicians or local health departments (photo by Gina Baltrusch).



McNary supervisor loses locks to CFC

by Gina Baltrusch

Walla Walla District employees donated almost \$46,000 during the annual Combined Federal Campaign.

Donations were processed through the CFC coordination center nearest to employees' duty locations. The centers typically joined the federal fund-raising efforts of two or more counties, said Lisa Rodighiero, CFC coordinator for the Walla Walla County federal community.

At the headquarters, employees raised \$30,946.12 – almost \$10,000 more than last year, Rodighiero reported.

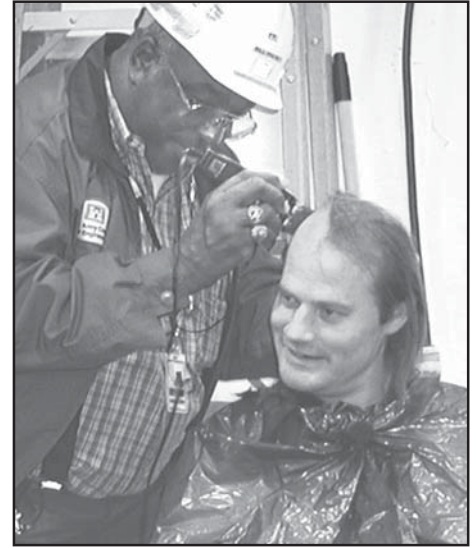
McNary project employees got into the charitable spirit with donations totalling \$10,733. Project Manager Dave Coleman agreed to have his head shaved if McNary project donations totalled at least \$10,000. Coleman's foot-long ponytail was the first thing to go Nov. 20 when the electrical team put the clippers to his head.

"Last year, McNary employees donated about \$8,000," said Coleman, who sported the ponytail since 1988. "So, when the CFC committee asked me, I thought, 'Why not, I'm pretty safe.' I never expected our project folks would hit that 10-grand mark, but I'm proud of their generosity."

The District headquarters and projects raised a total of \$45,958.12.



McNary Lock and Dam Operations Manager Dave Coleman checks out his newly shorn head.



Will Prewitt, part of McNary's electrical team, puts his experience as a retired Army sergeant major to work on Coleman's basic training-style haircut (photos by Tony Fink).

Celebrating military service



Walla Walla District joined Veteran's Day activities in Walla Walla, Wash., by inviting its military veterans and recently deployed civilian employees to ride in the city's Nov. 11 parade. Above, District veterans throw candy to celebrators along Walla Walla's Main Street parade route. Above-left, Bob Bonstead, Dave Parker and Art Cadieux, Army veterans, claim seats on the District's parade vehicle. Below-left, a cool, autumn wind unfurls the American and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flags posted on the front of Walla Walla District's parade float (photos by Gina Baltrusch).

Dancers share culture, traditions

by Gina Baltrusch

Almost 100 Walla Walla District workers and family members gathered at the headquarters Nov. 21 to celebrate National American Indian Heritage Month.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation dance team “Generations” brought 11 dancers, three drummer-singers and their leader-storyteller to share a bit of their culture with District members. The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes make up the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, located within the District boundaries.

“The performers treated us to a great display of colorful, beaded costumes, dazzling footwork and traditional tribal dances,” said Bob Bonstead, safety specialist.

As their name hints, “Generations” dancers were comprised of parents, children and grandchildren.

“In tribal culture, it’s common to have families that are known as ‘the dancing family’ or ‘the hunting family.’ These traditions are passed on through the generations of a family,” said Bill Mellick, the District’s Native American coordinator. “It’s good for us, as Corps employees, to understand and appreciate the Native American culture. There’s a lot we can learn from them and apply to the work we do here.”

Deputy District Commander Maj. Harry Cunningham

presented a certificate of appreciation to the leader of the dance team, Toby Patrick.

Tribal members stayed after the performance to answer employees’ questions about their costumes, dancing and drumming styles.

The Boy Scouts of America were the first to set aside a day for the “First Americans” in the early 1900s. Since then, days and weeks of different months were set aside to honor the first Americans until they were given the month of November in 1990. President George H. W. Bush proclaimed 1992 as the “Year of the American Indian,” based on legislation by Congress.

This year, President George W. Bush proclaimed in a Nov. 14 announcement that November was “National American Indian Heritage Month,” honoring the accomplishments and culture of American Indians and Alaska Natives and recognizing their contributions to our country. In his proclamation, Bush reflected on the patriotism of the almost 20,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives serving in our country’s armed forces.

“I encourage citizens to learn more about the rich heritage of American Indians and Alaska Natives and the role they have played in building and sustaining our Nation,” he said.



Left, John Watchman, a ‘Generations’ drummer-singer, keeps the beat for the dancers. Above, District employees watch Alice Johnson, perform a “fancy dance” at the headquarters Nov. 21 (photos by Krissy Antes).