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Spotlight on the District



Steve Russell

Assistant Chief, Operations Division

Story by Patricia Ryan, Public Affairs

“Deployment to Iraq has been one of the highlights of my life. It’s very special to know you are a part of history with the work you are doing,” said Steve Russell, assistant chief, Operations Division at the Rock Island District.

“My job in Iraq is Chief of Party for the United States Agency for International Development, Project Office. I lead a group of 32 American and 12 Iraqi employees doing construction management for USAID for their two cost-plus fixed-fee contracts with Bechtel, worth \$2.8 billion dollars.”

A native of Hillsboro, Ill., Russell joined the District in 1980. Steve’s hobby is golf, and he also builds his own clubs.

Russell said he likes the variety of assignments he has, and chose the Corps for his career because of their good reputation as a public engineering entity and the fact he has a chance to impact the region with the work that he does for the Corps. Now, he is working in Baghdad at the convention center, in the “Green Zone.”

“Living conditions here aren’t so bad,” said Russell. “We live in trailers in tight little trailer park areas. I share a trailer with one of my quality assurance people and Col. Williams, the district engineer from St. Louis District. Col. Williams is also my boss.”

“I make site visits to our projects a couple times a month. Traffic is very heavy when you drive to a site, and there seems to be no “rules of the road” here at the moment. I have also made three helicopter trips to farther away field sites including Mosul, Kirkuk, Tikrit, and one C-130 trip to Basrah. They take a lot of security precautions when we travel, and I have felt safe,” said Russell.

“Our office employs 10 Iraqis who are very happy that we are here. When I go to work sites, the workers there want to shake your hand and show you what is being done. The people will appreciate our work more after it is completed and they get more electricity for a longer time each day, and their water systems are functioning better,” said Russell.

new potable water systems are also projects we manage. When our construction work is finished, we will truly have benefited the Iraqi people,” said Russell.

USAID is a part of the State Department. Russell said they are good to work for as a partner.

“Because we work for a State Department office, we wear civilian clothes here, while most Corps employees deployed here wear uniforms, states Russell.

“One of my biggest accomplishments is the establishment and implementation of Hawaiian shirt Fridays in our office. I’m even getting some of the USAID people involved,” said Russell. I work hard, and use a warped sense of humor to try to keep everyone’s spirits up. When you work 12 hours a day, seven days a week, you can get tired out and need a boost. My solution is to work one 8 to 10 hour “short” day on Fridays, which is the Iraqi version of our Sundays.”

Russell said he would tell anyone considering deployment, but who can’t decide, that you only get opportunities like this a few times in your career.

“Come on over this summer. If you get here in time, I’ll meet you by the one of the two pools.”

Russell is a member of the Corps cadre who volunteered to travel to Iraq, taking on jobs in support of rebuilding a war-ravaged country, providing improved health services, schools and living conditions. He joins District employees who have returned from overseas assignments and says it is the opportunity of a lifetime to work on an assignment that ultimately makes the world a better place. 🇺🇸



Russell prepares for a site visit, this time on board a helicopter. He has used the helo to check on many projects and field sites that are not local.

The Corps supports work in Iraq including rebuilding schools, clinics, and fire stations; repairing airports in Baghdad and Basrah; restoring telecommunications to 250,000 people in the Baghdad area; and restoring operations to the port of Umm Qasr.

“Repairing numerous key bridges, repairing and building new power generation systems; repairing wastewater treatment plants; and repairing and building

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On the Cover

Nancy Pierce, Logistics Management, exchanges ideas on housekeeping and maintenance with local Iraqi women working as housekeepers.

"It was often like playing charades, but I was working to learn Arabic, and they were practicing their English," said Pierce. "The Iraqi people were wonderful and happy to be working with us to rebuild their country."

Photo by Lt. Col. Robert Morris, deputy district engineer, Fort Worth District.



Col. Duane Gapinski, District Engineer, is one of the first to tee off during the opening day festivities at the driving range held May 6.

District **C**ontributes to Arsenal Driving Range

Story and photos by Mark Kane, Public Affairs

Crowds of onlookers crowded the newly dedicated Canon Flats golf driving range on May 6 to get a first-hand look at the Rock Island Arsenal's newest addition and to tee off on the free golf balls offered opening day.

Three years ago in May 2001, the driving range was in the planning phase when the Arsenal's Morale, Welfare and Recreation contacted the District's Engineering Division and met with Kevin Holden and Tom Heinhold, Engineering Division, to work on a plan to construct the Army's first stand-alone golf driving range. Ultimately the District was responsible for the design, engineering and construction of the project.

"MWR had a vision, to construct a first-rate recreational facility for military and civilian personnel here on Arsenal Island," said Kevin Holden, Engineering Division. "Over the next six months MWR and the District's designers and engineers worked together to put the vision on paper. Construction began in 2002 and during construction Ray Tatro, Engineering Division, completed the

design for the snack bar and maintenance building. Construction was substantially completed in 2003."

Heinhold said he's really pleased with the new facility.

"It's so nice that MWR has decided

to move its main beverage (the concession/operation) down there during fair-weather months," said Heinhold. "It's a perfect spot to get away from the office to have lunch, and relax or vent your frustrations on a bucket of little yellow golf balls."

The Canon Flats Driving Range, located at the Arsenal's Moline Gate, is open to the public and features free parking, a snack bar with various foods and beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), and range lighting that will enable golfers to play after daylight hours.

The range is a self-serve vending operation, with the full service snack bar. Keys for the automated ball-dispensing machine can be purchased from the Ticketing and Registration office in Building 60. A \$5 deposit for each key is required. Keys can be purchased in any dollar amount. The driving range is open daily 6 a.m.– 10 p.m. The driving range snack bar is open Monday through Friday 6 a.m.– 6:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 6 a.m.– 2 p.m. 



A Marine works with his daughter on her swing at the grand opening of the driving range.

Driving, Dialing ... One at a Time!

By Dean Magee, Safety Office

There are several categories of distracted driving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Take a look at these next bullets and think about how many times you've been there, done that ... and hopefully, without incident.

- Talking to other passengers;
- Changing the radio station;
- Looking for CDs or tapes;
- Eating/drinking;
- Dealing with children in the back seat;
- Trying to read a map;
- Personal grooming i.e. brushing hair, touching up make up, etc.;
- Reading;
- Making outgoing calls on cell phone;
- Taking incoming calls on cell phone.


Obviously, some of these activities are more or less distracting than others, but more and more auto accidents are due to drivers using cell phones. In the United States, 148 million people used cell phones in 2003, compared to 4.3 million in 1990. Each year, more than 42,000 people are killed, and more than 3 million are injured in more than 6 million motor vehicle accidents on our nation's roads. It has been estimated that driver distraction contributed to 20 to 30 percent, or at least 1.2 million, motor vehicle accidents.

Talking on a cell phone quadruples the chances of getting into an auto accident, according to the New England Journal of Medicine. There are three primary dangers associated with driving and cell phone use: First, drivers must take their eyes off the road to dial or operate the phone. Second, drivers lose focus and attention while fumbling around and looking for a ringing cell phone. And third, people can become so absorbed in their conversations, that their ability to concentrate on the act of driving is severely impaired.

Since 1999, every state has considered legislation related to driver use of wireless phones. Seventeen states have passed laws regarding mobile phone restrictions, and 30 states currently have active bills to prohibit or restrict the use of hand-held cell phones while driving.

So now that I've briefly touched on the facts, the history, the statistics, and current legislation on driving while using cell phones. Now, I would like to pass on a friendly "FYI" for all employees working in the District. In accordance with the latest edition of our Safety and Health Requirements Manual (Nov. 3, 2003), the Rock Island District has recently posted a new local



directive, Regulation 385-1-6, Motor Vehicle Safety: Seat Belts, Cell Phones & Safe Practices, April 26, 2004. You can review the regulation from the District home page by clicking on the Intranet, then Rules and Regulations, then MVR Memorandums & Regulations. 

Generally, the new regulation explains that only hands-free devices are to be used with cellular phones, while operating vehicles on government time. It also reiterates that drivers shall not eat, drink, smoke or use headphones (e.g. CD player), and each vehicle occupant shall use his or her seat belt.

If you must use wireless communication equipment while on the road, consider the following:

- Use the phone only if it is absolutely necessary.
- Pull over safely to the side of the road to begin a call, use hands-free equipment, then proceed with caution, paying attention to your surroundings with both hands on the wheel, and keep both eyes on the road.
- Use the phone only when and where it is safe to do so.
- Keep the call short.
- Secure the phone so it doesn't become a projectile in a crash.
- Ask a passenger to place the call for you and to do the talking.
- Best alternative – wait until you've arrived at your destination to take care of business on the phone.

Don't hesitate to contact the Safety Office for help or information. Stay tuned into your surroundings and have a safe summer! 

Teamwork Definitely Works

Story and photos by Susan Yager, Illinois Waterway Project Office

By definition teamwork is a joint action by a group of people, in which each person subordinates his or her individual interests and opinions to the unity and efficiency of the group – the ‘mumbo jumbo’ Webster’s New World Dictionary definition.

My definition would read like this: The work performed by Illinois Waterway Maintenance Crew Unit 1’s Mazon crew and the maintenance support unit at Chicago Lock these past few months, “Replacement of the gate rollers.”

The Chicago Lock contracted the job to the ILWW after Mike Beneventi, general foreman of the Peoria Project Office, estimated cost of the work at \$600,000. The contract was originally for the replacement of the lower-gate rollers, but it was later determined that all eight rollers, both the upper and lower gate rollers, needed to be replaced. The additional work increased the cost to \$1.1 million, which (as an added benefit) partially offset the ILWW 2004 budget shortfall.

In my last article (*ILWW Structures Maintenance Crews Perform Emergency Work, April 2004, Tower Times*) I wrote how precise and well trained these men were and to perform this job; this job was

no different.

The replacement of rollers, each of which hold a 90-ton gate, is complicated, but the crews have their jobs and know how to do them.

As the job began in early March, when the crew of the Motor Vessel Creve Coeur and Unit 1 met up with the Mazon crew at Brandon Road Lock to make up their fleet (three work barges, Barge 9 crane barge, Mazon crane barge, and MV Channahon) and push up to Chicago to assemble the dewatering bulkheads. Each bulkhead, made up of five to six 85-foot-wide sections, were set in place, one resting on each other until the water stopped passing through the lock chamber. Then, very large pumps were placed down on the chamber floor and began the approximately 18-hour dewatering process.

Now, with most of the water pumped



The crew of the MV Creve Coeur use the Manitowac 3900 crane to lift a bulkhead section during the team’s work at the Chicago Lock.

out, the crews were able to begin pulling the rollers. Each roller is housed in a steel frame with each roller being slightly different from the other, so the markings made on each roller were essential for easy replacement. The roller itself, consisting of three parts -- the roller (outside), the bushing (second outer part), and finally the pin (inside, cylinder); would be removed as a whole unit and then transported to Peoria Boat Yards where they would be refurbished.

Twelve-hour shifts were scheduled for the Structures Support Unit (Peoria Boat Yard Crew), to enable them to continue the process and maintain the minimal amount of time for the Chicago Lock closure.

The following describes how the tear



Left -- the old bushing and roller are displayed prior to its replacement. Right -- the new bushing and roller are displayed.

Birth Keeping

down of the rollers went, with the help of Dave Washington, supervisor of Peoria Boatyards.

"When the roller assemblies arrived at the boatyard the first thing we did was steamed clean them ... they were loaded with zebra mussels," said Washington. "Then we disassembled each unit and marked all the parts. New shafts were made out of 4140 heat-treated steel. New bushings were made out of C86300 bronze. The new thrust washers and dowel-pins were made by a local foundry/machine shop, also out of C86300 bronze. After the old bushing material was cut out of the rollers, a local machine shop bored the internal diameters to true them up. When the rollers came back to our shop we shrunk fitted the new bushings into the rollers by using a liquid-nitrogen bath. Then the bronze thrust washers were placed over the ends of the rollers, drilled and doweled. The existing stainless-steel thrust washers were drilled and bolted to the roller-housing end plates. The final step involved re-assembling of the roller

and the roller housing, and bolting everything together. We loaded the units on the stake truck for delivery to Chicago Lock."

In on Thursday, out on Monday. This was a great accomplishment by Washington and his men.

Back in Chicago, the Manitowoc M80 crane picked up each roller and placed it precisely in front of the gate to where it would permanently be placed. Then the "hallmark crew" literally used crowbars to push and roll the roller into place. Line pins would then be inserted, and the 90-ton jack was released so the gate would be lowered down to rest on the new roller and its housing. Placement of permanent bolts, as well as removal of all tools and onto the next roller, went just like clockwork. This process was repeated for all eight rollers at both the upper and lower gates.

The work started on March 1 and finished 43 days later. The quick turnaround in such a short period of time is a

I think it's great that we, as an organization, have the ability to share resources across division boundaries.

- Greg Vejvoda

testimony to the ability of all these men and their drive to do a good job!

"The Illinois Waterway Maintenance crews did a wonderful job at the Chicago Lock," said Greg Vejvoda, civil engineer and lockmaster, Chicago Lock. "I commend them for their effort. They are a credit to the Rock Island District. I think it's great that we, as an organization, have the ability to share resources across division boundaries. Trying to contract out this type of emergency repair work would have been a real nightmare. Your crews have the right blend of personnel, equipment and expertise to take on and expedite difficult assignments without the aid of elaborate sets of plans and specifications. They are also highly mobile and have the flexibility that is needed to quickly respond to emergencies. I truly appreciate that they were able to fit the Chicago Lock into their busy schedule. It's reassuring to know that the Chicago District can depend on the Illinois Waterway Project Office for support."

Gratification from the Chicago Lock continued when they presented the crewmembers with a certificate at a pizza luncheon the last day before shoving off.

Obstacles! Wind – lots of wind and maneuvering the bulkheads under such windy conditions was a feat in and of itself. Smell – the smell from zebra mussels that had dried on the gates was so strong I had to wear a surgical mask just to take the pictures. But these guys put all their efforts to do a good job and finished ahead of schedule. When asked how he felt the job went, Glen Baugh, Unit 1 supervisor, said, "Great job! Set records right and left!"

What can I say, that hasn't already been said. I'm proud of these men and the Corps can be too! 🇺🇸



The "hallmark crew" work diligently at the Chicago Lock. Pictured from left to right: Bryan Smith, Bryon Ray, Matt Dillon, and Ben Domingez.

District Operations, Training Heat Up

By Col. Duane Gapinski, District Engineer

Strategic Planning

The Executive Steering Board and strategy team members recently conducted an After Action Review of our latest strategic planning cycle. One of the most important things we learned was that we need to communicate more effectively with both the strategy teams in terms of what we're asking them to do, and with the workforce in terms of why we have strategic goals and their importance. As a result, among other actions, we will involve members of the workforce in the process of updating our strategic goals. Specifically, a focus group of employees will evaluate the clarity and rationale of the updated strategic goals during our strategic planning workshop in August.

Cost-Saving Measures

I mentioned in my last Tower Times article that we would actively pursue Voluntary Early Retirement Authority and Voluntary Separation Incentive Program authorizations. We have 12 employees who have accepted this offer. Most of these positions will be abolished. A small number will be restructured. We continue to update our budget for the remainder of year and have been somewhat successful in generating extra income. Right now we are in the process of updating our assessment of the size of our shortfall and I will inform everyone what, if any, additional cost-saving measures will be implemented.

P2 Deployment

On May 17, the District began deployment of the P2 Project Management-Automated Information System. This is the final step in implementing the Chief of

Engineers' Project Management Business Process initiative. We are now operating in a new project manager-led, team-centered business environment. You may have noticed that a P2 deployment room has been established in the Clock Tower Annex Building. The deployment room will be staffed with a team of trained P2 practitioners from around the District. Their job will be to load projects into P2 and establish the link to Corps of Engineers Financial Management System, which allows us access to our funding. Many of you will be serving on project delivery teams and be involved in developing the project management plans destined for entry into P2. I can't overstate the importance of this deployment. I also realize there will probably be bumps along the way, but in the end P2 will allow us to provide better products and services.

LDP Program

The District will be conducting another year of the Leadership Development Program beginning on Oct. 1. Details on the format and application process will be published early this summer. We are planning some significant changes from previous offerings, based upon participant input, funding considerations, and revamped LDP management. We will be using many more internal resources, with closer ties to the work force and its desires. This is exactly the kind of transformational effort that will result in graduates who are better prepared to take on the challenges the District has to offer. I urge all of you in the General Schedule pay grades 9 through 12, and similar



hourly pay ranges, to seriously consider how participation in LDP will benefit you personally, your career progression, and the District as a whole. And current supervisors and senior leaders should think about how you can contribute to a quality program by encouraging applicants and volunteering to serve as mentors or speakers. Let's work together to forge Rock Island District's future by developing the leaders of tomorrow.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Corps Day Awards Ceremony and Corps Day Picnic in July. I appreciate the opportunity to recognize many of our outstanding employees and look forward to spending a relaxing Saturday afternoon with my co-workers and their families.

Finally, as warmer weather arrives and you increase your outdoor activities, I ask that you always keep safety on your mind.

Thanks for all you do. 🇺🇸

Over the past several months, the Tower Times published three articles regarding Transformational Change, all of which included the image of an African Lowland Gorilla as a sort of backdrop for the articles. District members have not allowed this to go

can be through their writings and their broad consulting experience with many major corporations around the world, introduced me to another author (Daniel Quinn), whose work continues to have a profound influence on my thinking and on my journey into the world of the

many major organizations including: Shell Oil Company, General Electric, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Xerox, Harley Davidson, Cadillac, and others.

Quinn studied at St. Louis University, the University of Vienna in Austria, and Loyola University in Chicago. He currently resides in Austin, Texas. The unique way Quinn lures the reader into a world seen through the eyes of Ishmael is both fascinating and provocative. I have personally purchased and given many copies as gifts to friends and family. To tell you more about the story would ruin an adventure of the mind and spirit.

Experience for yourself the deep systemic thinking that he craftily draws you into and then you'll learn the answer to the question – what is with the gorilla? And why, like Jim Britell of the Whole Earth Review, from now on, I too, divide the books I have read into

two categories – the ones that I read before Ishmael and those I've read afterwards.

Once you've finished the book and would like to join a

discussion group to explore the deeper implication for organizational life, send me an email at douglas.d.davis@usace.army.mil or give me a call at 309-794-5205 and we'll get one started. 📧



Organizational Change – What's With the Gorilla?

By Douglas Davis, Deputy for Small Business

unnoticed and several have indicated a desire to learn about the relevance of this mage to the topic of change, and why I chose it. They deserve an answer.

During the late fall of 1996, I was fortunate enough to have been able to attend what was soon labeled by many as one of the most influential Organizational Development workshops offered during these times of ever expanding, complex, and accelerated organizational change. The workshop was delivered by two very prominent leaders in the field of organizational change, Peter Senge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor and acclaimed author of *The Fifth Discipline*, and William Isaacs, Harvard Professor and author of *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*.

These very powerful and forward thinking scholars and consultants, whom have led the way in helping organizations become the best that they

learning organization.

The Gorilla figure represents the fictional character affectionately known as “Ishmael” in the Turner Tomorrow Fellowship award-winning book of the same name. Ishmael is an utterly unique and captivating novel that is suspenseful, inventive, and socially urgent. Ishmael, and several other books by Quinn, have and continue to be used in more than 20 countries as the basis for hundreds of college, high school, and elementary school courses ranging from economics, systems dynamics, and psychology, to history, philosophy, and drama. Ishmael is also listed as a must read for executives in

“ ... several have indicated a desire to learn about the relevance of this mage to the topic of change.”

قمتلخانظره Iraq

By Patricia Ryan, Public Affairs

As a branch of the Army, the Corps goes where the Army goes, providing services required to ensure the success of missions and remaining involved until the job is done. This can be for days, weeks, months, or even years.

The Rock Island District takes an active role participating in that noble tradition. Many District employees are volunteering for deployment to assist in restoring services and rebuilding war-ravaged countries in the Middle East. The District has 26 employees who have returned from deployment and 10 presently deployed. While their missions varied depending upon the job they filled, District employees who returned from deployment share some common feelings and observations.

While their stories could easily fill a book, here is a glimpse into the lives of a few who have volunteered to answer the call to serve. There are many more who have returned from deployment with stories, from managing billion-dollar projects and political interfacing, to camaraderie, challenge, frustration, satisfaction, and close-calls that were a part of every day life.

"I ended up being the only person in what had been a three-person shop," said Nancy Pierce, Logistics Management. "You must be flexible and willing to wear many hats. I deployed as a property book officer, but suddenly found I was in charge of billeting, supplies, transportation, and manifesting people on leased aircraft. I traveled to the Baghdad Airport five to six times a week, sometimes twice a day. I would greet incoming personnel, assign and get them settled in quarters, then deliver them to their offices for further processing. You do anything that needs to be done. I stripped beds after visitors departed, coordinated security for ground transportation, and worked side by side with



Rick Stebens, project manager in southern Iraq rebuilding schools, said his team was out working in the field nearly every day, and within six months of arrival had reopened more than 252 schools in the Basrah area.

local laborers and high-ranking individuals from around the world."

Pierce said the Iraqis are wonderful people who want the same things we want; to be safe, healthy, to educate their children, and have the freedom to make choices about their own lives. They are caught in a crossfire between political, religious, economic, and cultural upheaval, and are trying to survive to see their country grow into a place of peace and prosperity.

"People you work with become your family; you create lifelong friendships and share experiences of joy, sadness, satisfaction, frustration, and hope," said Pierce. This sentiment was shared by others from the District who worked closely with contractors, international coworkers, Iraqis, and Corps employees from many districts.

Darryl Carattini, Programs and Project Management, was responsible for the oversight of all the Bechtel contracts, and was replaced February by Steve Russell, Operations Division (see spotlight page 2). As Chief of Party (Senior Civilian) under the Commander of the Corps Iraq Reconstruction Office in direct support of the United States Agency for International Development, he oversaw the Bechtel contracts that grew from \$680 million to more than \$2.8 billion for rebuilding the infrastructure of Iraq. Carattini said that from the beginning they faced the challenge of creating a standardized way of approaching contract management, balancing resources, and project completion.

"I participated on a regular basis in the nightly world-wide planning sessions by video teleconference with deployed engineering commands and representatives from Corps divisions



Brian Lane, Engineering Division, seen here (second from the left) walking with Iraqi contractors, oversaw Bechtel water and sewer projects in the Hilla area and is surveying a site with Iraqi contractors.



Students from the Hala Bint Khuwaylid secondary girl's school in the Amil district of Baghdad, attend a class in a refurbished school. USAID funded the renovation of 1,260 schools throughout Iraq in time for the start of school in October 2003. Photo by Thomas Hartwell, USAID contract photographer, www.usaid.gov.

back in the States," Carattini said. "Occasionally Lt. Gen. Flowers participated as we discussed the status of on-going projects and the plan charting the reconstruction of Iraq in the context of the region and world. We also discussed immediate requests for resources including more people; we never seemed to have enough, and the constant rotation frequently caused delays in filling vacancies."

Carattini said the Corps was responsible for holding Bechtel accountable for quality contract deliverables, from project development, through construction and closeout. The projects covered a gamut of enterprises from opening the Port of Umm Qsar enabling goods to be received, rebuilding the rail system and bridges and restoring more than 1,230 schools with another 900 plus in the works so the children of Iraq will have a safe and healthy learning environment. Carattini's team was also responsible for restoring bomb-damaged communication centers which enabled the Iraqi people to communicate with each other and the rest of the world as free people in a free country.

"Fully half of the budget was slated for restoring reliable electrical power to the country," Carattini said. "In addition to installing new power generation, the existing facilities all needed major overhauling since they had been neglected for years under Saddam and were later decimated by looting." The next large budget items were the water and sewage treatment systems which were unsafe and mostly inoperable. There was an urgent need to rebuild sewer systems to stop the flow of raw sewage into the rivers and canals to prevent catastrophic health risks."

In addition to the two largest budget items, other contract projects included the repair of 12 fire stations, rebuilding the airports of Basra and Baghdad, rehabilitating 60 clinics, building a new hospital, as well as countless smaller-scale projects throughout the country. Several district employees played key roles as infrastructure sector managers in the Baghdad office. Paul Holcomb, Engineering Division, was "power king" in charge of projects restoring electrical power, while Joel Peterson, Engineering Division, was in charge of water and waste water projects. Jim Wilson, Operations Division, oversaw airport reconstruction projects, Ray Tatro, Engineering Division, led the

work to rebuild the schools, and Randy Braley, Construction Division, led Bechtel in the design efforts for a new hospital. Perry Hubert, Program and Project Management, still deployed, serves as the Baghdad office project manager, specializing in final acceptance and closeout of projects. They were joined by fellow District employees who served in many capacities from administrative to construction and project management.

Mark Hoague, Engineering Division, said his work with the United Nations development program Oil-for-Food, required patience and persistence in order to work within the Coalition Provisional Authority to restart the delivery of contracts that were initiated during the Saddam regime. This assignment involved setting up a system to track, inventory, authenticate, and safely deliver more than \$1 billion worth of electrical contracts for the Ministry of Electricity. The goods and services included in more than 286 contracts were paid for by Iraqi funds.

"We saw a real opportunity to help make sure the Iraqis got what they had already paid for in these contracts before the war began," said Hoague.

The team Hoague worked with had to determine what parts of the contracts had been delivered, the condition of the materials, and how to have the remaining portions safely distributed to various contractors working for Task Force Restore Iraq Electricity, or the Ministry of Electricity. Due to the fact that the existing warehouses in Iraq were not in condition or prepared to receive these goods, free trade zones in Jordan and Turkey were set up to receive the goods (transmission towers, cable, power plant parts, transformers, generators, chemicals, etc.). These goods had to be delivered as soon as possible in order to increase the amount of electricity generated and sent throughout Iraq.

"It was very difficult work, with language barriers and lack of communication such as telephones and e-mail that we take for granted here in the States, creating additional challenges to deal



Corps project manager for the Sweet Water Canal Project, Chuck VanLaarhoven, and Iraqi site engineer, Abdul Karim Ali, inspect ongoing work at the canal. Photo by Thomas Hartwell, USAID contract photographer, www.usaid.gov.



contracting firm Research Triangle Institute (not managed by the Corps), and British soldiers were also rebuilding schools. Bechtel had to canvass the existing contracts to see the status and then update contracts as needed.”

Corps project managers operated out of the Basra Airport, one of their completed projects. The weekly meetings took place at the airport, since many other entities working on reconstruction had offices elsewhere in the city and communication was an ongoing problem.

Stebens said there were also cultural differences that had to be worked through, such as updated methods of construction not familiar to Iraqi contractors. They had never seen cement trucks and, typically, just mixed concrete on site which is much less efficient. In the past, most schools had dirt playgrounds, but during reconstruction many were upgraded to concrete. Other cultural differences had to be addressed by Bechtel contractors who worked diligently to provide the exact equipment the Iraqis wanted, in spite of the fact their preconceptions regarding quality of goods was not always correct, but were conditioned beliefs stemming from the past.

“We were out working in the field nearly every day,” said Stebens. “Within six months of arriving here last June, we had the sea port reopened, airport reopened, 252 schools reopened, the railroad rebuilt and countless smaller projects completed, and the work continues today.

“The supply of fresh water has been compromised for many years, since it comes from the north in an open canal called the Sweet Water Canal, which is anything but sweet,” said Stebens. There are more than 14 water treatment plants that have been mostly inoperable for many years, and they will be up and running

with every day,” said Hoague.

Often the equipment became outdated, or subjected to poor storage conditions and ruined so it had to be replaced or scrapped. It was also a challenge to work with international vendors who often did not show up at meetings or follow through with contracted goods and services said Hoague.

Rick Stebens, Construction Division, and the construction team responsible for projects south of Hillah where Babylon is located, faced many of the same challenges in the southern part of the country as Hoague did in the Baghdad region.

“Chuck VanLaarhoven (Engineering Division) and I, along with four other Corps employees from New Orleans and Vicksburg districts were responsible for managing all the construction contracts in southern Iraq,” Stebens said. “Saddam had sunk more than 300 vessels in the Port of Umm Qasr, the largest and only sea port in Iraq. One of our major accomplishments was getting that port opened again, which we did by December of last year.”

Stebens said the main priorities were electric power, water and sewage, the airport, schools and services, just as they are in the Baghdad region; and they faced the same challenges managing contracts, many of which mandated only the use of Iraqi labor.

“We had weekly meetings set up by U.S. Agency for International Development to coordinate efforts ensuring we were not duplicating or overlapping work,” said Stebens. “The American



Mark Hoague, Engineering Division, stands next to an Iraqi Army soldier at a bridge site near Mosul in the northern region of Iraq. Hoague was on a field trip to understand the scope of repairs necessary to reopen the bridge.



Rock Island District employees Paul Holcomb, Dan Holmes, and Nancy Pierce, pose with former district engineer, Charles “Stoney” Cox (second from right), at the reception following the activation ceremony for the Corps’ Gulf Region Division.

again this spring or early summer through Corps project work.

“For the first time in years, the Iraqi people in the Basra region of Southern Iraq will have safe fresh water to drink.” said VanLaarhoven, Corps project manager for rehabilitation of the Sweet Water Canal Reservoir in southern Iraq. “It was good to see projects near completion before completing my six-month deployment.”

The Iraqi people have been using polluted water for years. In many cases old leaking sewer pipes cross the canal, further polluting the water supply and increasing health risks. VanLaarhoven said the conditions are often very primitive. People get household water from large barrels along the road, which are filled with water from the existing canal. In one circumstance a contractor accidentally drank water from an unapproved source, and became gravely ill for many days. Anyone who is not a native Iraqi uses bottled and treated water to prevent illness and disease. Brian Lane, Engineering Division, oversaw Bechtel water and sewer projects in the Hilla area.

One sentiment shared by District employees, was the concern over the lack of positive media coverage portraying all the progress that has been made. All were adamant about the huge strides that have been, and continue to be, made improving the daily health and well being of the citizens of Iraq.

“All you hear about is the war, hardships and negative stories in the media,” said Hoague. “It is important the world know about the positive work that is ongoing and the fact we are working shoulder-to-shoulder with the Iraqis rebuilding their country, improving their lives and helping create a positive future for all Iraqi people.”

Stebens spoke about how he was in awe of the culture and history of the region, and how amazing it was to see an old hotel on the site of what is stated to be the exact location of the apple tree that tempted Eve, in the Garden of Eden at the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

Another common response from District employees was the resounding “yes” answer to the question regarding another opportunity for deployment. While most say their families want them to stay put, they all share the Corps spirit of adventure, commitment, dedication and a sincere work ethic as they strive to do their part to make the world a better place. 🗣️ 🔑

Note: This is just a brief glimpse containing a fraction of the information and stories from District employees who have been and are presently deployed. There are many more stories to be shared from others of their ranks, and we look forward to writing about them in upcoming issues of the Tower Times.



Nick Peschang, District engineering technician, working as a quality assurance representative for the Task Force Restore Iraqi Electricity, proudly stands in front of the last tower to be erected on the 400-Kilovolt power line from Hartha to Al Kut, the longest in Iraq.

“This was one of the major milestones in restoring electricity to the people of Iraq,” said Peschang. “And I was honored to be a part of it, and if it weren’t for my family wanting me home, I would still be there.”



Investing In Our People

Around the District

District Volunteer Surpasses 5,160 Hours, is Recognized

Richard Haggard, a volunteer at the Mississippi River Visitor Center, was awarded a Department of the Army Certificate of Appreciation for volunteering more than 5,160 hours of his time to the Mississippi River Project.

Haggard's service to the Corps has a dollar value in excess of \$87,900. Since beginning as a volunteer with the Corps in 1991, Haggard's responsibilities have been assisting with Eco-Meets, fishing clinics, and visitor center customer service.

The award citation said Haggard has been a role model of determination, dedication and discipline to everyone who has ever had the pleasure of working with him.

Recent Retirements ...

Wesley Larsen, construction representative, Eastern Area Office, Construction Division, will retire June 30 after dedicating 20 years to the federal government.

Robert McAfee, civil engineer, chief, Specifications Section, Design Branch, Engineering Division, retired June 3, after dedicating 35 years and four months to the federal government.

William Riebe, supervisory land surveyor, chief, Survey Branch, Engineering Division, retired June 3, after dedicating 44 years, five months, and 20 days to the federal government.

Steven Vander Horn, supervisory environmental engineer, chief, Regulatory Branch, Operations Division, retired June 3, after dedicating 34 years and six months to the federal government.

Holly Jo Alford, tools and parts attendant, Information Requirements and Planning Branch, Information Management, retired June 1, after dedicating 26 years and seven months to the federal government.

Gary Bertram, construction representative, Central Area Office, Construction Division, retired June 1, after dedicating 25 years, five months, and 13 days to the federal government.

Ronald Cover, civil engineering technician, General Engineering Section, Design Branch, Engineering Division, retired June 1, after dedicating 36 years, 11 months, and 20 days to the federal government.

Dawn Gatlin, civil engineering technician, Central Area Office, Construction Division, retired June 1, after dedicating 26 years to the federal government.

Russell Gruenwald, civil engineering technician, Structural Section, Design Branch, Engineering Division, retired June 1, after dedicating 36 years, 10 months, and 20 days to the federal government.

Nancy Holling, writer-editor, Project Management Branch, Programs and Project Management, retired June 1, after dedicating 33 years and five months to the federal government.

Dorothy Lindsey, computer operator, Customer Assistance Branch, Information Management, retired June 1, after dedicating 26 years and 11 months to the federal government.

Michael Petersen, civil engineering technician, Quality Assurance Branch, Construction Division, retired June 1, after dedicating 23 years and seven months to the federal government.

John Sederwall, maintenance worker supervisor, Saylorville Lake, Operations Division, retired June 1, after dedicating 38 years, seven months, and 24 days to the federal government.

Larry Straight, construction representative, Central Area Office, Construction Division, retired June 1, after dedicating 36 years to the federal government.

Glenda DeDoncker, secretary, Programs and Project Management, retired May 31, after dedicating 22 years and 10 months to the federal government.

Willie Mason, motor vehicle operator, Logistics Management, retired May 31, after dedicating 25 years and 10 months to the federal government.

Sympathy ...

Donald Phillips, 79, of Bristol, Tenn., died May 23.

Phillips retired from the District as the chief of procurement in 1992.

After a tour of duty with the Navy during World War II serving aboard USS Bunker



Hill, which was bombed and sunk by Kamakazi fighters, Phillips was cited by the Navy for saving 10 men aboard the aircraft carrier.

Wayne Lidgard, 74, of Washington, Ill., died April 30, at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Ill.

Lidgard retired from the District in 1984 as the lockmaster at Brandon Road Lock and Dam.

District Participates in Adopt-a-Mile Program

Photo by Mark Kane, Public Affairs



Anne Werner, Engineering Division, retrieves a plastic oil container during the District's River Relief Cleanup held May 22 at Locks and Dam 14 in Pleasant Valley, Iowa.

After a couple hours of hard work participants collected numerous bags of trash and debris from the area.

The District has adopted river miles 493-495 through the Adopt-a-Mississippi River Mile Program. These miles are located LeClaire Base, Iowa. The locations to clean include the area around Locks and Dam 14 and Smith's Island.

The Adopt-a-Mile Program is an important part of the Mississippi River Beautification and Restoration Project. Schools, organizations, companies, and families have adopted shoreline miles since the program started in 1999. There are no fees involved in adopting shoreline miles, only a voluntary commitment to stewardship. Chad Pregracke, coordinator of the MRBRP, estimates that by the end of the project more than 100 groups will be adopting Mississippi River miles. 

HAPPY 229TH BIRTHDAY U.S. ARMY

Since its birth on June 14, 1775 – more than a year before the Declaration of Independence – the United States Army has played a vital role in the growth and development of our nation. Soldiers have fought more than 10 wars, from the American Revolution through the Cold War, the Gulf War, to the current Global War on Terrorism. This 229th Birthday is a recognition of The Army's history, traditions, and service to the Nation. Our Army at War – Relevant and Ready.

On the 'Net: www.army.mil/birthday/229/ 



2004 Corps Day Awards Ceremony



July 8 at 10 a.m.




This year, Corps Day will be celebrated as two segments. The first segment will be a District-wide Corps Day Award Ceremony that will be held on Thursday, July 8 at 10 a.m., on the Clock Tower grounds.

Similar awards to year's past will be given out at the ceremony to include Length of Service, Employee and Suggester of the Year, as well as honorary awards.

Many of the traditional events such as the team awards and the retirees program are postponed this year and will not be included in the award ceremony.

In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will take place at the Naval reserve center located across the street from the Clock Tower Building.

Employees and retirees are invited and encouraged to attend the award ceremony. Contact Jim Toohey at 309-794-5563 or e-mail at james.b.toohey@usace.army.mil with any questions specifically concerning the Corps Day Awards Ceremony.

There will also be a District-wide picnic on Saturday, July 31, at Shady Creek Recreation Area (see back cover for additional information). 



2004 Corps Day Picnic

July 31 at 11 a.m.



In year's past, the District coordinated its summer employee picnic to correspond with the District's annual award ceremony, but this year the festivities are taking to the field.

This summer's picnic will take place near Fairport, Iowa, at the District's Shady Creek Recreation Area.

Shady Creek is easily accessible off Highway 22, 1 mile east of Fairport, Iowa. The recreation area is 10 miles east of Muscatine, Iowa, and 20 miles west of Davenport, Iowa.

A main entrée, beverages (both non-alcoholic and alcoholic), and door prizes will be provided. Participants are encouraged, if possible, to bring a side dish of their choice.

Retirees are also invited to join the festivities to meet, greet and catch up with their former co-workers.

For more information about the Shady Creek Recreation Area, as well as campsite reservation information, go to www.ReserveUSA.com.

For further information about the picnic refer to the 2004 Corps Day on "Rocky" (the Intranet), while District retirees can contact Justine Barati at 309-794-5730 or e-mail at justine.a.barati@usace.army.mil.