

# The New York District Times



Autumn 2007 Vol. 32, No. 4

'Cradle of the Corps'

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District

## Corps completes water treatment facility

Article and photos by Vince Elias

Clean purified water is now a reality for local residents of the High Falls area in upstate New York thanks to an ambitious partnership between the Army Corps and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The brand-new drinking water facility was built by the Army Corps as part of the U.S. EPA's cleanup of the Mohonk Road Industrial Plant Superfund site.

The inauguration was held October 9, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony which included speakers Rep. Maurice Hinchey, 22<sup>nd</sup> District of New York; Col. Nello Tortora, commander, New York District; Alan Steinberg, administrator, U.S. EPA Region 2; Vincent Martello, Marletown town supervisor; and Robert Gallagher, Rosendale town supervisor.

The High Falls Water District drinking water treatment facility was built on seven acres of the 14-acre Superfund Site. Reusing part of the site for the water treatment facility is in accordance with the U.S. EPA's Superfund program land reuse goals.

Well water was affected due to contaminants related to past industrial activities at the Monhonk Road Industrial Plant.

The new facility provides filtration and disinfecting of water. A stringent sampling and monitoring program has been established to ensure that the treated drinking water meets federal and state standards.

Construction began in August 2005 on the water treatment plant and water distribution system to provide clean drinking water to a projected population of 426 residents and businesses in the surrounding towns of Marletown and Rosendale.



(l-r) Rep. Maurice Hinchey, Col. Nello Tortora and Alan Steinberg cut the ribbon, officially opening the facility on Oct. 9.



*(Continued on page 3)*

The new water treatment site includes a green cylinder water tank that stores raw water; and an elevated green water tower for storing treated water. Cell phone service is poor at the site and there are plans for installing a cell phone antenna on the water tower that will improve phone service and create additional revenue.



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
New York District

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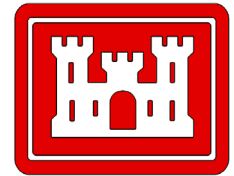
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# Chief of Engineers PRIORITIES AND TENETS



Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp's six priorities tell us what the Corps is going to do, and his three tenets tell us how the Corps will operate as we do them.

## PRIORITIES

- Support the Global War on Terror and the expeditionary mission.
- Enhance the quality of support of Soldiers, Civilians, families and the public.
- Complete transformation of the Theater Engineer Commands.
- Effectively prepare for and respond to disasters.
- Enable Gulf Coast Recovery.
- Deliver military, civil works, R&D, and regulatory programs and Projects.

## TENETS

- The first tenet is *Communicate transparently.*
- The second tenet is *Focus on your mission.*
- The third tenet is *Team with industry.*

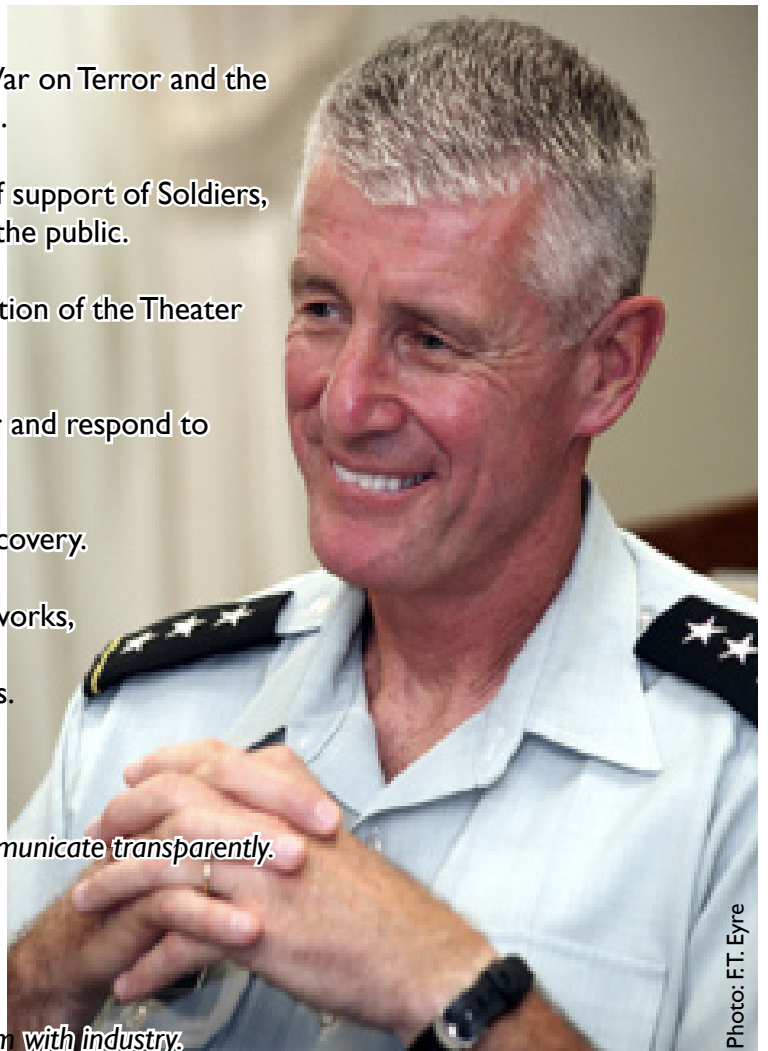


Photo: F.T. Eyre

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, Jr. Chief of Engineers

## Water treatment facility (Cont'd. from page 1)

“This is something I would like a lot of people to see. This is Superfund at its best,” said Steinberg as he and Tortora toured the inside of the plant and observed water treatment operations.

A new main water line connects the treatment facility to the main aqueduct in the Catskills that is also connected to the New York City water supply.

The Army Corps’ West Point Area Office oversaw the construction under the leadership of Dom Passantino. Klaus Kretschmer project engineer for the first 18 months up until September 30, 2006 retired prior to the project’s completion and turned the reins over to Andrew Smith, project engineer, who oversaw the project’s completion.

The facility is fully automated and is in the rear section of the Mohonk Road Industrial Plant property.

“We started this over two years ago. I got involved in the design stage with Kansas City District who handled the design. Conti construction was selected, based on their experience. It’s a great project. Very successful project,” said Kretschmer, who made a special trip to witness the grand opening.

The treatment system includes a ground level water tank where raw water is stored, and an elevated water tower tank for storing treated water and to ensure sufficient water pressure.

Final connections to existing plumbing within homes, disconnection of existing water supply wells and removal of individual granular activated carbon treatment systems began on September 20th after the treatment plant was thoroughly tested. Installation of residential service line connections to affected homes and businesses was the last step in the construction process. Service line connections from the water main in the street into each home were completed.

“What we’ve done, is provide a municipal water system for the community of High Falls. To provide them with good domestic drinking water and other operations they need. It’s a fabulous project we’ve been working on for the past year and a half. We’re providing a domestic water service for approximately 200 residential units and 60,000 gallons of water produced every day,” said Smith, who also serves as contracting office representative for the High Falls Water District Plant project.

“It was a great collaborative effort of the virtual Corps team.



Prior to the ribbon cutting ceremony, Col. Nello Tortora and Alan Steinberg tour the inside of the plant and observe the water treatment operations.

The project delivery team included Kansas City District which provided the project design and engineering support during construction, Baltimore District provided Real Estate support for the multiple easements and access agreements required, and New York District as the lead which provided construction management for the project,” said Angelo Antzoulis, project manager.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, Tortora thanked Hinchey and Steinberg for their leadership and emphasized the strong partnership and great teamwork.

“It’s great to be out here to do a ribbon-cutting especially when we see the positive impact that this project immediately has on 426 residents – in giving them clean water where they didn’t have that before, with the ground water contamination that existed here and was treated. It’s a great celebration for us, and it is really the end of a process that has involved a lot of partnerships, and also a lot of leadership,” said Tortora.

“When the Corps and US EPA get together, the first thing that goes on, is a lot of planning. In New York District, we were able to draw back upon the entire U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the expertise that was needed to make a project like this happen.

We turned to the Kansas City District that did the design work, and also to the Baltimore District that has expertise in real estate issues that needed to be resolved to make this project happen.

*Continued on page 4)*

## Water treatment facility (Cont. from page 3)

We relied on the construction contractors and private industry, and in this case that was Conti who had a number of sub-contractors that worked out here and did a fantastic job. I want to thank Conti and the all the local and state agencies that were involved that are here today," added Tortora.

"It really demanded a partnership from everybody working together including the public who also had a

vote on this that live in this area. They were very well represented by Mr. Martell and Mr. Gallagher and I think what we've got here today is a very successful project as a result of the leadership and all those people working together," concluded Tortora.

The event ended with Hinchey, Tortora and Steinberg raising their glasses filled with sparkling clean water from the plant and toasting to the project's success.

## S.A.M.E. officers visit Big Apple – tour Harbor projects



Bill Slezak, Chief, Harbor Programs, PPMD, provides an overview of New York Harbor projects aboard the Corps vessel *Hocking* to Brig. Gen. Byers and his staff.

Byers, Col. Nello Tortora, commander, New York District, senior officer support staff and spouses participated in the event as part of the Society of American Military Engineers New York City visit Nov. 2-3. Slezak along with Tom Creamer, chief, Operations Division, and Joe Seebode, gave briefings and overviews of District projects. The group also toured ongoing construction at the World Trade Center site in lower Manhattan. (Photo: Vince Elias)

## New York District kicks off Combined Federal Campaign

By Carissa Scarpa, CFC command representative

The 2007 Combined Federal Campaign kicked off Sept. 1 and ends Dec. 15.

This year's motto is "Help Our World Forward."

We are surrounded by examples of problems that our world faces every day – war, sickness, poverty, natural disasters, unemployment - but through the contributions of those of us who have the resources to give we can make a difference in our world.

New York federal employees raised \$2.7 million last year that made a tremendous impact on the charities who benefited. This year, the New York District once again has the opportunity to make a difference and to make an even greater impact.

Last year, over 90 percent of all CFC funds raised were given through payroll deduction. There is just no simpler way to give.

CFC isn't a program that requires major cash donations in order for someone to make an impact.



Employees will never miss the \$2 a month that could shelter a homeless person for days or the \$10 a month which can pay for a complete platelet count for two children going through cancer treatment.

A keyworker from each office delivered a brochure and pledge form to all employees.

The brochure contains over 1700 different charities that are eligible for the CFC.

The pledge form is quick and easy to fill out and the Keyworkers are available to assist you and answer any questions.

Only \$12 a month can provide a student with a school lunch each day and \$30 a month will buy three weeks worth of medication for an AIDS trial participant. We can make a difference in our world.

To learn more about the campaign visit the CFC OPM web site @ [www.opm.gov/cfc](http://www.opm.gov/cfc) or [www.cfc-nyc.org](http://www.cfc-nyc.org).

## Forward Engineer Support Team-Advanced experiences Fulfillment, Excitement, Success, Travel, and Adventure

By Maj. Trinidad Gonzalez

New York District's Forward Engineer Support Team-Advanced has been at it again -- executing, delivering, and helping others.

Over the past year, it's been very busy for members of the FEST-A. They have been undergoing extensive training, deploying abroad, and enjoying being a member of an important program.

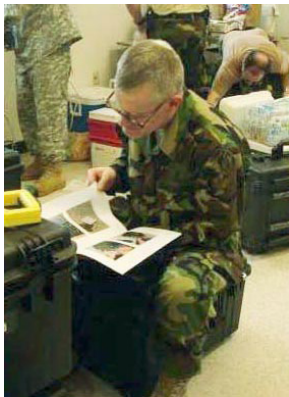
FEST-A is a Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers program that allows the Army Corps to support American armed forces combatant commands and any other government agencies that need technical engineer advice and to solve engineer issues in any part of the world. FEST-A is made up of volunteers. Anyone with any technical discipline can be part of the team. Because of the environment in which the team operates, individuals need to be flexible, a self starter, team player, and willing to help others. Everyone on the team will experience Fulfillment, Excitement, Success, Travel, and Adventure.

The FEST-A program is growing and has now been designated as a unit by the Department of Army. This coming year we will experience many improved changes.

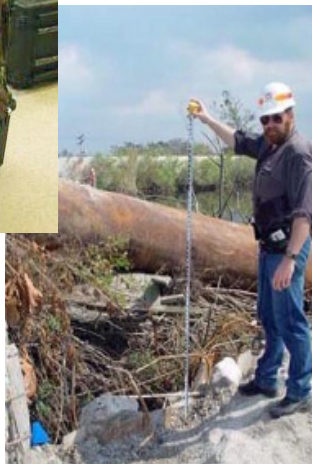
This past March, three members of the team deployed to Fort Stewart, Ga. to support the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division in their preparation for deployment to Iraq. The team provided support to the BCT and to the Provincial Reconstruction Team. For the BCT, they designed a base camp for an undisclosed location in Iraq where the BCT will be conducting operations. The camp consisted of barracks, office spaces, latrines, and the necessary infrastructure to support these facilities.

The team utilized as much environmentally-friendly structures available in country. The team most importantly, advised the unit's most senior engineer in constructing entry control points to their base camps and outposts.

In September, the entire team deployed to West Point, NY and conducted a week-long field training exercise. The team analyzed several bridges that West Point Range Control had concerns about vehicular traffic using them. While doing the bridge assessments, they took on a major project, designing a base camp for 1200 Soldiers.



Mark Kucera sets up communication equipment.



Dave Rackmales assisting after Hurricane Katrina.



Milton Ricks, and Kevin Smyth and assessing Camp Natural Bridge.



Fernando Bautista laying suppressive fire.

West Point's director of public works needed assistance in conducting an assessment of the current facility, Camp Natural Bridge, and a plan to increase the occupancy. The team quickly developed a plan to improve Camp Natural Bridge.

They developed a site layout for all the structures, designed a modular barracks and an overall plan on how it could be built. With this product, DPW briefed the garrison commander and has now begun to requisition military construction funds to improve the Camp Natural Bridge.

To end the week, the team conducted a fire and maneuver exercise. In order for the members to truly appreciate cover and concealment, the team went to a paint ball range.

*Continued on page 6*

## FEST (Cont'd. from page 5)

Not only does the team participate in events like these, but they also attend training courses in phenomenal places (unlike the prospect course in Huntsville, Ala.). For example, one team member trained in Williamsburg VA on security systems while two others trained at Fort Walton Beach, Fl. on entry control points.

If you desire to be a member of FEST-A, and want to volunteer and experience a change in your normal duties, please contact me, Maj. Trinidad Gonzalez, and I will provide you with all the necessary information to become a member of FEST-A.



... Then “step up” to **FEST-A!**

**FORWARD ENGINEER SUPPORT TEAM – ADVANCE**  
The Forward Engineer Support Team – Advance is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers program.

FEST-A members are civilian volunteers who deploy worldwide in response to military and civil emergency operations.

For more information contact Maj. Trinidad Gonzalez e-mail [trinidad.gonzalez@usace.army.mil](mailto:trinidad.gonzalez@usace.army.mil) or visit the CENAN intranet: <https://intranet.nan.usace.army.mil/festa>

## District recognized for Small Business achievement

The Army Corps’ New York District achieved another milestone when it was added to a list of USACE commands to be recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for contributing to the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Program.

USACE is one of the agencies selected to receive the Federal Achievement Award from the Department of Veterans Affairs. USACE was selected because several Corps districts met or exceeded the statutory goal for contract awards to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

The award recognizes significant contributions by organizations or individuals that are dedicated to expanding business opportunities for veterans and service-connected disabled veterans.

Anthony Bell, associate director for Small Business, HQ USACE announced that the New York District exceeded the SDVOSB goal for FY06.

Col. Nello Tortora, commander, New York District, received the excellent news from Brig. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, commander, North Atlantic Division who congratulated New York District on this significant achievement and thanked him for his team’s support to this important program.

“I am proud of our small business program and how important small businesses are to accomplishing our mission,” said Tortora.

New York District contributed to USACE achieving this goal along with the efforts of Humphrey Center, Jacksonville, Mobile, Nashville, Omaha, Savannah, and Sacramento Districts that were also recognized.

“The New York District awarded \$11.9 Million in FY06 to SDVOSB,” said Gregory Cuyjet, chief of New York District’s office of small business programs.

“Here at USACE we want the small business community to know that we are open for business and to us small business is big business,” said Bell.

# Army Corps improves conditions at veterans cemetery

By JoAnne Castagna, PPMD

Veteran's Day is celebrated every November to honor our uniformed personnel who have served our great nation.

It's also a time to honor those veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New York District is doing its part to honor our deceased veterans by improving the conditions at the Calverton Veterans national cemetery in Suffolk County, Long Island, N.Y.

The project will enhance the landscape of the 1,045 acre site which has deteriorated over the years due to an improper irrigation.

Families with loved ones buried at Calverton contacted their local representatives and brought to their attention the conditions and brown grass at the cemetery.

As a result, the Department of Veterans Affairs took action, and sought the expertise of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who are improving the cemetery's irrigation system and landscape.

The Army Corps is replacing over 30 8-inch valves, installing a new irrigation system to several of the burial sections, and constructing a new pump station to replace the older station.

'The cemetery's landscape had significant deterioration because of a lack of a proper irrigation system,' said Anthony DelVecchio, project engineer, New York District.

'The grass at the cemetery was watered using water cannon trucks,' said Anthony Ciorra, chief, Civil Works Branch, New York District. 'This method of irrigation is not effective in keeping the grass green during the warm summer months. The result is brown grass.'

'Our mission was to help correct this deficiency,' said DelVecchio. 'We utilized our in-house expertise to design new automatic irrigation systems in several of the main burial sections around Calverton Cemetery.'

He added, 'Last year, several of the cemetery's burial sections were provided with automatic site irrigation systems that are now being used.'

For the last phases of the project they wanted to negotiate a firm-fixed price with the contractor, but were

unable to successfully negotiate an agreeable price for one of the phases. As a result, the project team combined the last two phases of the project into one project. By combining the phases, it allowed them to save money in contractor overhead and supervision which helped to award the project.

The work is expected to be completed at the end of the year, and when completed, the new irrigation system will be maintained by the cemetery staff

'Next Veteran's Day when visitors visit the cemetery, they will see greener grass near the graves of their loved ones,' said Ciorra.



Calverton cemetery's landscape had significant deterioration because of a lack of a proper irrigation.



The Army Corps is replacing over 30 8-inch valves, installing a new irrigation system.

# District offers school students unique learning platform

Article and Photos by Vince Elias

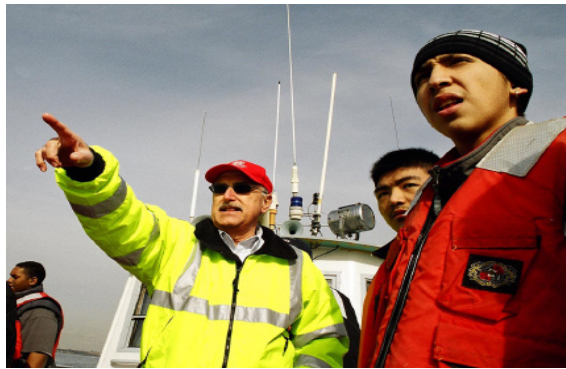
It wasn't an ordinary field trip held in November, but a unique learning experience beyond the classroom for 21 high school students, who for many was the first time going aboard an Army Corps vessel.

The students and faculty members were from the Arts and Technology High School at the Martin Luther King Educational Campus in Manhattan. This event was the second of the outreach programs with the school, aimed at educating top engineering students about the Corps and its mission. New York District's Rick Alvarez, chief of Construction Division headed the day-long event that featured an information-packed agenda that included a harbor event and a tour of the Operations facility at Caven Point, New Jersey.

"This was a unique opportunity beyond the classroom for students to learn what the Army Corps of Engineers conducts daily in and around the harbor," said Alvarez.

Following a safety briefing by Joe Meyers, captain of the *Hocking*, the students then boarded and immediately donned bright orange life vests before venturing on deck to observe harbor operations.

Once underway, Alvarez pointed out key features around the harbor and provided a question and answer session aimed at furthering their knowledge of harbor projects while explaining in detail the types of dredges used by the Corps. Highlights included a close up view of a dredge platform used for deepening harbor channels followed by a photo opportunity by the Statue of Liberty National Monument.



Rick Alvarez, chief of Construction Division points out key features around the harbor to students.

A comprehensive briefing followed at the Corps' Caven Point marine facility in New Jersey where Alvarez provided a slide briefing. Alvarez stressed to the students, the importance of keeping focused on studies and emphasized staying aligned with their aspirations using his personal experiences and adventures around the globe as an example.

Students listened intently as Alvarez pointed to individual slides and elaborated on the subject matter before turning the platform over for a question and answer period, followed by an equipment safety brief from Great Lakes

Dredging company representative, Chris Gunsten who also emphasized the importance of advancement through a diligent work ethic.

Light snacks and soda was on the menu before Jean Lau of EEO distributed Army Corps red backpacks filled with school supply items. Others from New York District participated in the event by supporting the Caven Point activities at the slide briefing and by helping arrange lunch and the assembly of the backpack items.

Robert Pivrotto chief of caven point marine terminal was one of three guides who took the students on a tour of the facility, showing points of interest and answering questions about the vessels and their different missions. While Francis Postiglione, chief Survey Branch showed students the hydrographic survey process, Rena Weichenberg explained the interdisciplinary nature of environmental mitigation and Corps' opportunities within the environmental field.

The benefits of this program was summed up by Alvarez. "The opportunity to learn about what the Army Corps does up close was a unique experience for the students and a great event for the Corps participants as well."

The experience to see up close what the Army Corps does made the event a successful community outreach program co-hosted by EEO and Construction Division.

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rick Alvarez, and his staff have offered our students an amazing gift of opportunity, and opened a world of possibility for students," said Antonio Arocho, assistant principal of instructional supervision.

"The learning experience was organized to the hilt and built around providing students access to an experience they normally wouldn't have. They (students) witnessed New York Harbor dredging projects, technological applications used in the field, and learned about college and career planning that could lead them to creating a successful career in the Math, Science and Engineering professions," said Arocho.



Robert Pivrotto, chief of Caven Point marine operations takes students on a tour of the facility.



# Exercise scenario tests District's crisis response

By Sue Hopkins, Public Affairs

There were two basic goals for the recent continuity of operations exercise at New York District Headquarters.

The first was to test the District's ability – along with that of other federal agencies in the New York City area – to establish emergency communications, including the ability to reorganize and communicate from an emergency relocation site.

The second was to learn from the exercise.

As for goal number one, the District succeeded, reported Mike Ganley, chief of the Readiness Unit.

"We attained our goal," he said, "and we identified areas for improvement.

"The Crisis Management Team and Crisis Action Team successfully deployed to the Caven Point facility and participated in the exercise" Oct. 23 and 24, he said. The two teams responded to various "injects," or scenario changes, in an exercise focusing on the potential damage from suspected weapons of mass destruction placed in various locations throughout the city.

And as for goal number two... "we're learning."

"The biggest lesson learned was that we need to improve our internal communications," Ganley reported.

Communication was through the chain of command, he noted.

"We need to be more succinct in briefing supervisors and provide more training to ensure they know their responsibilities in an emergency situation," Ganley continued.

The District needs to educate employees at all levels, he said.

Another area for improved communication: The Crisis Management Team and Crisis Action Team. The first consists of office and division chiefs, and the second is the core of employees, many also on the COOP Project Delivery Team, charged with carrying out the CMT's directives.

"One of the things we're looking at is whether to reconfigure the CMT and CAT," explained George Lamboy, who directed the COOP exercise.

"Does it need to be leaner?" Some functions may be moved from

the CMT to the CAT, Ganley said. The goal is to find the structure that works best for the District in the event of a COOP activation.

"Our goal is continuity of operations," Ganley stressed. "Business continues, the District's mission must get accomplished."

The COOP is designed to allow the District to continue its mission within the first 30 days of an event. If the emergency continues for a longer period, then the CMT determines how and where the District and its employees would continue to work toward mission accomplishment.

Key elements of the COOP include the chain of succession, determination of essential functions, identification of essential records, and accountability for personnel – four requirements, by Presidential Directive, which must be addressed in every COOP. All were included in the exercise.

In the exercise scenario, an office or division chief died. For example, the chief of Operations Division, and chief of Human Resources, were killed in the explosion.

The second-in-command for each office had to step up to ensure the office continued its mission and all employees were accounted for.

*Continued on page 10*



GETTING READY – Khie Go (left) and Juan Pinero finish testing for laptop computers and other equipment set up for the Crisis Management Team and the Continuity of Operations exercise at Caven Point Oct. 24.

## Exercise scenario tests District's crisis response (Cont'd. from page 9)

Perhaps the most thought-provoking question of the exercise was, if you had only 15 minutes in your office to get everything you needed to operate elsewhere for 30 days or more, what would you take?

"It got the chiefs thinking," Ganley said.

Answers included taking their Corps of Engineers Financial Management System cards, government credit cards and checks, computer access cards, payroll data, current contracts or cases, records not yet archived, plans and blueprints, and laptop computers. For Information Management, it would be key e-mail and computer network servers.

"The most important thing that employees should remember is that each office needs to think about its own functions in a crisis situation," Ganley said.

The District also needs to remember that the crisis might not be doom and gloom.

"It could be a flood or a utility problem," he noted. A fire on the floors above or below could result in smoke or water damage that could put the District out of its headquarters for months.

"The idea is to keep the District on track," Ganley said, and that means everyone needs to know about the District COOP and their own office's emergency procedures.

## What's a COOP?

COOP stands for Continuity of Operations Plan. It's the basis for how New York District would continue to function if office headquarters became unusable. Each division and office has its own annex to the plan for its particular missions, functions – and employees.



**IN CRISIS** – George Lamboy, exercise manager for the District's Readiness Unit, makes a point during the Continuity of Operations exercise at Caven Point Oct. 24. Monique Wiggins (left) and Sandra Gaffney served as members of the Crisis Action Team, responding on behalf of the District to various exercise scenarios.

## Army Public Affairs professionals meet at 2<sup>nd</sup> regional conference

Over 25 U.S. Army, Reserve, Corps of Engineers, and National Guard public affairs professionals from the metropolitan area participated in a Regional Public Affairs Conference held at Fort Hamilton, an Army post in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The day-long event was held at the community club Oct. 17, and featured presentations and discussions on media topics and public affairs issues facing today's Army. Speakers included Col. Dan Baggio, director, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Media Relations Division, Warren Nordman, deputy director, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Community Relations, and an appearance by television news journalist and area native, Geraldo Rivera. Some of the attendees worked with Rivera while covering the war in Iraq.

Army Corps participants included David Lipsky, chief, Public Affairs, North Atlantic Division; Scott Harris, chief Public Affairs, New York District; JoAnne Castagna, technical writer-editor, New York District; and Vince Elias, public affairs specialist - Harbor Programs Division, New York District.



U.S. Army Photo

## District volunteers participate at two area cleanups

Over 230 volunteers showed up to participate in the clean up of the Rahway River, N.J. as part of Earth Day 2007. Participants included New York District's Joe Seebode, Cub Scouts from Pack 30 and Boy Scout Troop 330. The river cleanup is an annual event for Seebode and volunteers which is sponsored by various agencies, corporations, and organizations.

"We anticipated a decent level of participation, but to see over 230 persons participate was beyond our expectations," said Seebode.

Everyone was split up into teams, with each team focusing on a different area of the river with significant debris and litter problems. After four hours, the teams amassed an incredible volume and array of garbage from the river and its floodplain. All of the debris was methodically inventoried later that evening.



At the Rahway River clean up, team leaders and Cub and Boy Scouts collect debris where over 240 large plastic garbage bags were filled.

At another event on Staten Island during early summer, volunteers from New York District also participated in the clean-up near New York Container Terminal on Staten Island.

Rebecca Callahan and other volunteers arrived early, armed with sticks and plastic bags and collected an enormous amount of debris "that was all over the shore around the terminal," said Callahan. After it was over, "I must admit that it wasn't a bad way to spend a few hours on a Saturday, and was a very nice bunch of people to meet including others from the Army Corps that came to help out as well. It also made me rather glad that they

furnished me good gloves and I had brought good boots."



Rebecca Callahan, public affairs specialist sporting a castle Corps ball cap, is joined with other volunteers who spent the day filling trash bags with rubbish at the Staten Island cleanup event.

## Corps honored for Woodbridge NJ Restored Salt Marsh project



Col. Nello Tortora

On Oct. 16, the New York District was awarded with the 'Coastal America Spirit Award' by Coastal America for the successful restoration of 64 acres of salt marsh in Woodbridge, N.J.

Recipients of the award also included partners: the Port of New York and New Jersey, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Township of Woodbridge and other local partners.

"This salt marsh restoration is an example of successful mitigation brought about when the Army Corps works together with its partners for the benefit of New Jersey," said Col. Nello Tortora, commander, New York District.

"The Corps will continue to work with its partners to maintain a healthy, diverse, and sustainable salt marsh that restores vital habitat for fish and wildlife."

The project involved the excavation of fill from 36.5 acres and the planting of more than 360,000 marsh plants. The restoration was completed under the terms of an agreement with the Army Corps, NOAA and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The design for the restoration was developed with significant negotiation and technical guidance from the NJ DEP and the township of Woodbridge, N.J.

## North Atlantic Division program aimed at developing leaders today to lead the Corps tomorrow

Article and photo by Vince Elias  
New York District

**W**e all need to demonstrate leadership characteristics to create value for our customers. Recently, six new Corps leaders emerged after completing the Army Corps' North Atlantic Division Executive Leadership Development Program and recognized by senior leadership at a ceremony held at Fort Hamilton Nov. 15.

Senior leaders included Brig. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, commander North Atlantic Division, senior executive service directors, and military District commanders.

The new graduates are from each District within the North Atlantic Division and are: Scott Acone, NAE; Cheryl Fromme, NAO; Carolyn Jackson, NAB; Allen Roos, NAN; Mark Wheeler, NAP; and Alan Huntley of North Atlantic Division.

In recognition of their new success, Semonite presented individual framed certificates encircled with command coins of each District within the North Atlantic Division.

New York District graduate Allen Roos said that the program has given him a sense of the larger organization. "If each of us takes the approach to look two levels above us and understand what that level of the organization is faced with, then we can tailor our actions and work within our sphere of influence. If I present a positive view and help others to understand where the organization is heading then we can be better positioned for success."

Debra Smith, NAN's PDT member said, "The program provides civilian employees with an opportunity to experience a regional perspective on leadership and to participate in various senior-level Corps activities over a period of time within the Division's geographical area of responsibility.



GRADS AND LEADERS - (l-r) Howard Stickley-NAD, Director, Regional Business; Scott Acone-NAE Graduate; Paul Giovinco-NAD PM for ELDP; Cheryl Fromme-NAO Graduate; Alan Huntley-NAD Graduate; Allen Roos-NAN Graduate; Mark Wheeler-NAP Graduate; Carolyn Jackson-NAB Graduate; Larry Petrosino-NAD Chief, Programs Directorate; and Brig. Gen. Todd T. Semonite-NAD Division Commander.

It's designed to provide a consistent set of tools throughout the region, exposing participants to a variety of leadership opportunities and grooming them for future senior leadership opportunities.

The program is reserved for GS-13 and GS-14 civilian employees, and NSPS pay band equivalent employees. It offers the opportunity and resources for them to deal with real life situations, and relevant problems encountered by senior leaders, and for them to obtain a regional perspective.

"They get the opportunity to see themselves in an executive role, engage in regional and national teams and activities," said Smith.

The program also allows them to seek professional development and gain a better understanding of the burdens and rewards of leadership at the executive level with an aim at them improving their presentation and interview skills and to increase their competitiveness.

*Continued on page 13*

## NAD Executive Leadership Program (Cont'd. from page 12)

The aim is to graduate more future leaders at every level and to encourage all eligible team members, regardless of their job series or positions; a role to develop their leadership potential, knowledge and skills.

To participate in the program, applicants need to meet the criteria which includes attending a one-week formal leadership development training course at a University. The individual also develops a leadership development plan, and attends a Capitol Hill workshop at a Congressional briefing conference.

Participants also become part of a formal mentoring partnership and shadow the commander, a senior executive service member, and Deputy District Engineer for PPMD.

*For information about the program contact Debra Smith in the Human Resources Office.*

### WHAT THE PROGRAM ENTAILS

- One week of formal leadership development training at a University
- Development of an Individual Leadership Development Plan (ILDP)
- Capitol Hill Workshop – Congressional Briefing Conference
- Shadowing and formal mentoring partnerships with Commanders, SES Member, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management
- Attends and participates in various meetings; command councils, regional management boards, and Senior Leadership conferences
- A four month developmental assignment. Examples of the four month development assignment opportunities through the ELDP program:

NAO - Asst. deputy counsel to chief, Business Resource Division

NAB - PM at DC Schools to HQ Military Programs

NAE - Chief Regulatory to NAD RIT (CW) at Headquarters

NAB - Project manager PPMD to Civil Programs chief in Planning Division

NAP - Resident engineer Superfund to acting chief Project Support Branch, Operations

NAB - Chief public affairs to PPMD-PM for Civil Works

NAE - PM for Superfund Project to Chief Geotechnical Section in Engineering/Planning

## District program paves the way for future leaders

By Vince Elias

**T**oday's Bridge for Tomorrow's Leaders,' is the theme for New York District's Leadership Development Program, now in its second year. The goal of the program is to provide today's employees with the opportunity to be tomorrow's leaders.

New York District is actively engaged in focusing on the Corps' leadership and the future of the District through a grass roots program designed to mold employees into future leaders through a unique training curriculum.

According to program administrators Debra Smith and Sandra Gaffney, the LDP has been a tremendous success with Class 1 graduating this past spring, and Class 2 currently engaged in the program.

The success of the program is attributed to participants undergoing a rigorous selection process and their willingness to be part of a curriculum that involves hands-on assignments.

"The LDP grooms participants for ascension to potential in future leadership positions," said Smith.

The LDP is managed by corporate board members and administrators consisting of Smith, Gaffney; Lorraine Lee, corporate board sponsor; and Diane Deptula, chief of Human Resources. The LDP meets the guidance set forth by HQ USACE and is tailored specifically to

New York District's culture, and takes advantage of the myriad of the District's unique missions.

According to Smith, the program offers opportunities "and is not merely a 'check the box' type of program. It takes commitment where participants will be fully engaged, and involved in activities outside their comfort zone, having an advantage of seeing District leaders at work."

"Participants can observe Corps leaders' approach and how they make decisions, solve problems and think strategically. The program is designed to give them a greater understanding of the District and a larger perspective of mission accomplishment. The program is rewarding and offers tremendous professional growth," added Smith.

Gaffney and Smith continuously met and deliberated to ensure the program's design fits the District, and is cost effective.

The program provides participants with experience outside of their normal area of responsibility. The developmental assignments which are a part of the program's curriculum, expand a participant's expertise and experience in all areas of the District's mission.

*Continued on page 14*

## District program paves the way for future leaders (Cont'd. from page 13)

Gaffney outlined the prerequisites. "Participation in the Program is a competitive process and is open to eligible GS-11, GS-12, and GS-13 employees (or NSPS pay band equivalent)," she said. The Program consists of various components required to be completed within a calendar year. Each participant has a corporate board member who serves as a sponsor during the program year. Participants must shadow the commander and the deputy district engineer for Programs and Project Management, while working on developmental assignments outside of their normal jobs or offices, and create and lead a special project team.

Participants/special project teams interface with District, Division and Headquarters leaders – which overall benefits the participant and New York District. Their reading, writing and speaking skills are also honed, and participants have the opportunity to address senior management and observe them while at work.

Recent graduates offered their perspective about the program:

"The Corp's Leadership Development Program gives you access to other divisions for developmental assignments. I have already had an interesting assignment with Engineering Division relating to sustainable design and construction for military buildings. I have learned a lot and enjoyed the opportunity to expand my knowledge base and work with new people," said Patricia Donohue.

"The Leadership Development Program is somewhat unique. It encourages the participant to find, design, and pursue his or her own leadership development opportunities within the framework of the Program. The framework of the program is its various components, e.g., shadowing senior leadership, an independent project that benefits the entire district, and thirty days of develop-

### DISTRICT LDP GRADS AND PARTICIPANTS

#### LDP Graduates, Class 1

Randall Hintz

Rena Weichenberg

#### LDP Participants, Class 2

John Brown

Patricia Donohue

Helen Kim

Jenifer Thalhauser

mental assignment(s) outside one's area of concentration, etc., among others. Participants are free to design their compliance with the components, subject to the oversight of the program directors. This independent developmental approach creates an opportunity for each participant's unique leadership style and/or skills to develop and come into focus," said John Brown.

"The individual project component of the Program was a unique opportunity to exhibit leadership skills in the course of working closely with talented people across divisions and disciplines. It was the highlight of my participation in the program", said Rena Weichenberg.

Graduates have the personal satisfaction, and peer and management recognition, that they have maximized their opportunities, and took the initiative to strive to be one of the future leaders of the Corps.

"The competition is keen and the rewards are well worth the effort," Gaffney concluded.



## Around the District

In mid-summer, several New York District employees attended the PPM CoP Conference in St. Louis, Mo., to discuss Corps project management issues. JoAnne Castagna, technical writer-editor attended as the new editor of the "PMBP News," a HQ USACE project management newsletter. She also authors the "Corps of the Matter" column which is featured in the "PPM Cop Newsflash", another Corps' project management publication.

JoAnne Castagna, technical writer-editor during the PPM CoP Conference in St. Louis, takes a minute for a photo by the Arch. Photo: Alan W. Feistner, Walla Walla District.



## Construction conference focuses on projects, personnel, and initiatives

By Fred Pike, P.E., project engineer, Fort Drum Resident Office

Watertown, N.Y. was the site of Construction Division's annual area/resident engineer conference held October 17 through 19.

The commander New York District, several engineers, team leaders, and key personnel from New York District met for the event with an agenda that included a wide variety of video briefings, award presentations, a promotion, and tours of ongoing construction projects at Fort Drum, one of the Army's largest military installations.

Col. Nello Tortora, commander of the Army Corps' New York District took advantage of the opportunity to recognize individuals, and team members for their performance. Tortora presented a commemorative plaque to team members, and presented the Commander's Award for 2007 to James Valianos, New York District's Professional of the Year, and Cheryl Mesa, the District's Program Assistant of the Year.

Rick Alvarez, chief of Construction Division recognized the Corps' Fort Drum Construction Team for outstanding efforts associated with the on-going \$3 billion Military Construction Transformation Construction Program.

A ceremony was held recognizing deputy resident engineer William R. Davis, Jr.'s who was promoted to the rank of Major.

During the first day, Alvarez made the opening remarks, with visual presentations focusing on design-build projects, supervision and Administration distribution, new request for proposal wizard and career-related continuous learning initiatives.

"The State of the District is strong," said Tortora in his opening remarks. Tortora focused on the military

transformation program; spoke about New York District's key involvement with the Washington Headquarters services in that area; and stated that Fort Drum is the primary focus in military construction; along with dredging and deepening projects of the Kill Van Kull and Newark Bay.

Jack Kons, program manager, New York District, discussed the Washington Headquarters services project, and incorporated an integrated program office briefing which highlighted construction challenges in the heavily urbanized area of Fort Belvoir, Va. Kons discussed recognizing benefits in utilizing already-developed sites to assist in streamlining environmental permits.

Douglas Sommer, chief military construction and program manager, presented metrics used to evaluate successful military construction projects, including the importance of controlling construction cost growth and Beneficial Occupancy Date growth prior to project turnover. Current program drivers included Military Construction, Army, and Base Realignment and Closure projects. Edward Sim, Fort Drum's program manager presented the projected \$3 billion transformation and grow the force program update.

Alvarez welcomed Jim Corriveau, director of Public Works, Fort Drum, and Mary Corriveau, city manager, Watertown, N.Y., as conference presenters. They had the opportunity to learn first hand the regional growth benefits both on, and off-post as a result of the installation's active transformation program.

Day two included resident engineers exchanging ideas and lessons learned, experiences gained, and relationships with customers. Discussions included architectural entryway features and foundation design challenges at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point library project; off-post wetland restoration agreements with the U.S. Fisheries & Wildlife as a result of impacts created on the installation at Fort Drum; and preparation of 1354 forms, and turnover of projects at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.

The final day's agenda included a tour of the combat aviation brigade campus at the Wheeler Sack Army Airfield which was recently completed; the Division Troops barracks Building B ready for turnover; and the 10100 barracks where construction is underway involving safety aspects associated with leading edge work when placing concrete planks.



The 10100 Barracks project during construction at Fort Drum, NY.

# District assists New York City in hurricane planning effort

By Mike Ganley, Emergency Operations

The Army Corps' New York District has a long history of working with New York City's Office of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The District recently provided assistance to New York City in efforts that have included coastal sea, lake and overland surges from hurricanes modeling, known as SLOSH, and the development of a New York City hurricane evacuation re-study. The re-study will provide a host of products, such as behavioral and transportation analyses.

In May 2006, FEMA invited personnel from New York District along with experts from the city's OEM to discuss types of support available from the Corps, while addressing impacts of major coastal storms. They discussed opportunities for planning assistance, and outlined 'Emergency Support Function No. 3,' prescribed mission assignments.

In June 2006, the city released a coastal storm plan that precipitated several additional meetings among the Corps, FEMA, and the City's Office of Emergency Management.

Subsequently, the Corps formed a working group to respond to technical inquiries from the city that included experts from New York Districts' Emergency Operations, Planning Division, and the Programs and Project Management Division.

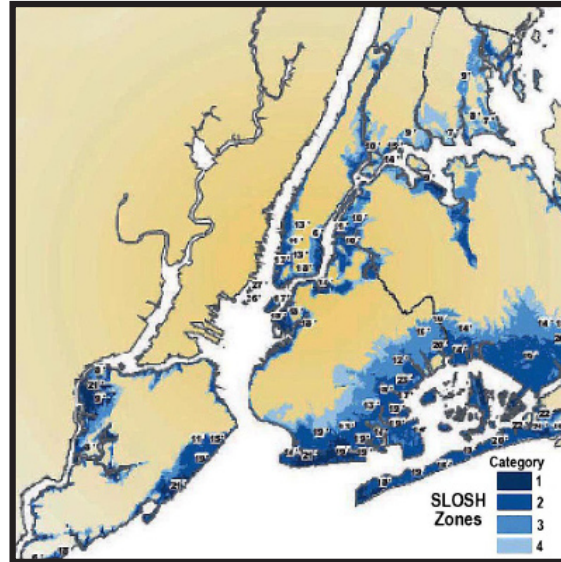
New York District cooperatively works with the city and continues to define a scope of work for providing planning assistance to bolster hurricane preparedness and strengthen a coastal storm plan.

In November and December 2006, the Corps and the city's Office of Emergency Management collaborated in identifying specific coastal storm response issues that warrant additional analyses.

They developed a phased approach that begins with modeling the impacts of various storm tracks, and storm intensities, followed by a planning, integration of products into the coastal storm plan, and pre-event project execution and implementation.

The initial goal was to provide planning products of value to the city, as well as benefit FEMA and the Corps in executing Emergency Support Function No. 3 and other missions in an urban setting prior to, and following a major coastal storm. The products will also aid in subsequent response and recovery after a storm.

This will strengthen the city's pre-event planning and preparation efforts, and identify opportunities for pre-event missions to protect and secure infrastructure and save lives.



*SLOSH Zone map shows inundation levels during categories of storms in New York City's 5 boroughs.*

The initial phase is a modeling effort, due to the topography, population, and infrastructure of the city, and to acquire information through outputs that reflect the city's unique characteristics. The initial model outputs will have value in planning, but also form the basis for additional refinements to further increase the probability estimates of various parameters.

Although the Corps has significant coastal expertise, particularly in association with the city, the working group realized that Corps' Louisville District has the expertise necessary to adjust the quantitative hurricane model for a more urbanized output. As a result, the group has been expanded to include personnel from Louisville District.

In March 2007, FEMA approved limited funding that allows Louisville District to perform very basic refinements to the existing model to better reflect the conditions of the city and coastline. While Louisville District has been working on the model, the project delivery team has begun discussions on evaluating the city's emergency electrical power plan.

It is anticipated that its efforts will be somewhat iterative, identifying key issues for planning and response prior to hurricane season.

The electrical power project delivery team will also identify a planning process that will require additional funding and several years to complete. It is expected that as the process progresses, this effort will improve the current Emergency Support Function No. 3 mission models by adjusting them to other urbanized areas. It is believed that the benefits of this effort will be able to be shared and used as planning templates for other major highly urbanized areas.



# New state-of-the-art MEPS facility opens upstate

By Vince Elias, Public Affairs Specialist

The business of assessing men and women for military service is critical in the evaluation of high-quality civilians.

A first impression could influence a prospect's decision to enlist in the military where the eager patriot is in-processed. A prospect's first experience with the military might be at a Military Entrance Processing Station accompanied by a recruiter.

The MEPS mission is to ensure fully-qualified individuals meet the criteria for acceptance into the armed forces.

In upstate New York, applicants are now processed at an impressive new state-of-the-art MEPS facility recently built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, at Hancock Air Force Base, N.Y. Prospects receiving their first military experience at the new facility gives them an initial look at the military, as they walk through the modern building enabling them to get the finest treatment.

The \$6 million, 24-thousand square foot facility was officially opened at a ribbon cutting ceremony in September. The new MEPS replaces an antiquated facility that was located in a federal office building in downtown Syracuse, NY.

The MEPS opened its doors prior to the ribbon cutting for the staff to occupy and get set up. The station features an array of services for staff to test and indoctrinate military prospects.

Personnel from each branch of the military were on hand as well as civilian staff during the official opening.

"The project began in 2004, and design work was a design-build project – the Corps did an RFP package for the design-build, and a contractor took over in 2005 who did the remainder of the design and completed it," said Armando Jimenez, project manager, New York District

"The Army Corps' Norfolk District did the standard design, and prepared the package. Joe Taylor, of Norfolk District was the principal person in doing the interior design and selecting all the furniture. Joe Wojnas, project engineer, really helped out in keeping this project under control day to day and minimized issues that required a PM and upper management's attention.

Brett Gorham was very instrumental in the project's success as well as the resident engineer.

Matt Walsh, of construction division took care of all the necessary funding requests and modifications which made the project execution very smooth.

The user also had a really good MEPSCOM representative, Dennis Evans who worked with us during the RFP, design and construction who is now retired."

In little over a year the new military entrance processing station was constructed. The facility was finished two months ahead of schedule, and the user occupied the building prior to the ribbon cutting.

"The MEPS commander is very impressed with the building. It's first class – it functions really well compared to the building in downtown (Syracuse) where his staff was separated over different floors, and recruits not familiar with the federal building were roaming the floors. The MEPS staff didn't have that much control over recruits and visitors who sometimes got lost in the building," added Jimenez.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, five new recruits marched in front of the podium and raised their right hand and were sworn in as they read the military oath of enlistment.

(Everyone who enlists takes the oath of enlistment into the Armed Forces. The oath is administered by a commissioned officer for a term of service into any branch of the military. The officer asks the person, or persons, to raise their right hand and repeat the oath after him. The oath is traditionally performed in front of the United States Flag and other flags, such as the state flag, military branch flag).



PROUD DAY -- American patriots outside the new MEPS facility raise their right hand and read the oath of enlistment -- "I, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States, the Governor, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to law and regulations. So help me God."

## Harbor transformed into outdoor classroom during Estuary Day



Several area school students joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and environmental community in September to celebrate Estuary Day -- an annual event planned and sponsored by Future City Inc. of New Jersey, a non-profit organization.

The Corps was invited to attend, and New York District volunteers included Bill Slezak, chief of Harbor Programs, Hal Hawkins, Joe Seebode, Richard Dabal, and several engineers, archeologists, biologists, along with estuary partners.

The Marina dock in Elizabeth New Jersey was the site for students and the community to assemble and participate in the day-long event that featured information sessions about the health of the New York Harbor Estuary and its importance.

Students once again had the opportunity to speak openly with Corps personnel and learned about the rich history of the harbor, its current condition as well as getting a hands-on view of its marine life and ongoing port activities.

Highlighting the event were several interactive educational stations such as water filled tanks containing sea life from the Estuary and Harbor.



Alina Le, daughter of **Quangthanh Nguyen**, of Information Management was born August 7, 2007. Weight: 6 pounds, 2oz.



Michael Wells son of **Kenneth Wells** of Public Affairs and wife Michelle was born in September 2007. Birth weight: 7 Pounds.

## Stork Club



Isaiah F. Mitchell, son of **Sharayah Fernandez** of Security was born Oct 1, 2007.



Arianna Sarai, daughter of **Robin Tulsiram** of Civil Works Branch was born October 16, 2007.

# Retirements, announcements, and milestones



Stuart Piken

**Stuart Piken**, deputy district engineer for Programs and Project Management announced his plans to retire. Piken accepted a senior management position in the private sector.

In a message to the Corps team, he wrote, "I have enjoyed a wonderful 35-plus year career in the Corps. Together we have overcome many challenges, and fulfilled the needs of the people we serve. I value the friendships I have made over the years. While I move on to the next phase of my life, I am confident that you will continue to do the great things you do everyday." ESSAYONS!

**Juliette Baker** of New York District's Program Management Office, Civil Works Branch of Programs and Project Management retired following an 28year career with the U.S. Government. Her colleagues and friends held a send off in her honor in September and recognized her many accomplishments and contributions to the Corps and nation.



Juliette Baker



Lou Benard

**Lou Benard**, executive assistant/physical scientist, has bid aloha to the Big Apple District for an assignment with the Corps' Pacific Ocean Division in Hawaii. Benard will become the executive assistant for Brig. Gen. John Peabody, commander and division engineer. The Pacific Division's area of responsibility includes projects in Alaska, Japan, Republic of Korea, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Hawaiian Islands.



Bob Kurtz

**Bob Kurtz**, biologist in the Environmental Section of Planning Division and Endangered Species Act coordinator for the District retired after 30 years of service with the Army Corps plus two years on active duty with the U.S. Navy including a tour of

duty in Viet Nam.

Kurtz also became a regional technical specialist for North Atlantic Division, and his work included external independent technical reviews of other districts documents on the biological aspects of coastal protection and restoration projects; and expert input on projects such as the Hudson-Raritan Estuary study.

**George Van Cook** was selected at the Resident Engineer for the Metro East Resident Office, Construction Division, at Ft. Hamilton, N.Y.

Van Cook has a strong track record of construction management and contract administration experience. He was previously working in the Quality Assurance Section for Construction Division, and was previously the resident engineer for the Army Corps in Germany. His experience includes substantial program and construction management and over 29 years of professional engineering experience.



Airman Lawrence Danner, Jr.  
U.S. Air Force

**Airman Lawrence Danner, Jr., U.S. Air Force** son of Maureen Shepherd-Danner of Planning Division graduated from basic military training in September at Lackland Air Force Base, Tex. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force while in high school in which he graduated in June 2007. Maureen Danner attended his graduation ceremony in September. "It was a very exciting day seeing him for the first time following basic training . He graduated with the 320 TRS/Flight 585 at Lackland.

**Sue Hopkins**, public affairs specialist with the New York District Public Affairs Team left the District for a job and promotion with the Veteran's Administration in Manhattan. Hopkins was with New York District for 10 years.

## The Media is our Friend -- Honest!

Article and photo by Rebecca Callahan,  
Public Affairs Specialist

Reaching out to the media with tips for potential stories about your project and work is one way to get the public excited about what you are doing and maintain stakeholder interest.

In September at New York District's Caven Point operations facility, Brian Thompson, a news reporter with the NBC local television network boarded a Corps vessel to interview Thomas Creamer, chief of the Operations Division.

The interview was to learn about the interagency floatables and debris collection program.

A long slick of floating debris in the Atlantic Ocean had washed up on the New Jersey shoreline during Labor Day weekend, causing the closure of several beaches.

The day was perfect for going aboard the vessel *Hocking* for the interview with Creamer, and with Captain Joseph Myers at the helm along with his crew. Creamer met with Thompson and his cameraman, Dennis DeAppolonio, and escorted them around the Caven Point facility. While meeting with Francis Postiglione, chief of the Survey Section, Thompson seemed very interested in his demonstration of computers and the hydrographic surveys that the Corps uses to search for sunken obstructions and other hazards to maritime navigation.

"The Corps of Engineers takes its navigation and environmental stewardship roles very seriously and as you can see, we have a lot of great professionals working on them," said Creamer.

Thompson also seemed surprised at how many roles the Corps had day-to-day all around the harbor and its waterways.

Creamer stressed that the Corps performs many more important stewardship roles than generally perceived by the public.

Noteworthy information for everyone to learn from this example is the best way to inform the public on the Corps' roles is through the media, and we need to connect with them.

There is nothing like the knowledge gained from asking everyone if they are amenable my reaching out to the media to increase project awareness.

How does the Corps get the news out? A product developed by District Public Affairs is *The Corps Bytes*, a tip sheet distributed to the news media. The goal is to get coverage of Corps activities.

The press plays both the role of ally and nemesis. You don't see them often, you don't need them every day, and your first preference would be avoiding them altogether. But eventually there will come a time that you cannot avoid them. You need to interact if you are going to survive, and if you wait until you need the media, by then it will be far too late.

The Corps generally is brought in to do engineering, dredging, or construction projects or a study that benefits the



Aboard the Corps vessel *Hocking*, Thomas Creamer, chief of Operations Division is interviewed by Brian Thompson, local New York TV news reporter.

American people and the nation in some capacity. The Corps always makes certain that the public and the officials know what those benefits are.

The media will always be there to cover a crisis. How do you take the steps beforehand so that during a crisis you are not cornered into trying to convince them to trust you and believe what you are telling them? The same way you do in any other part of your life. You need to develop the relationships first.

When starting any relationship there are risks. The risk of rejection is always an issue. You can't guarantee that the media contact will not ignore you to do something they consider more newsworthy. However, you can improve your odds a lot by knowing what they need and helping them get it.

First, know that a busy news week with a lot of events happening nationally, internationally and locally is not the time you will generate interest. You can send out feelers when things are quieter and when they are searching for events to cover.

Second, what is the interest that will capture the reader and viewer? What may seem like the most exciting project in the universe in your mind, may not be as easy for the layman to see, hear or read. If you assume the reader or viewers first thoughts are "What is relevant to me?" You may keep their attention. If your project or event has direct or even indirect impact on the local population -- whether its their home, money, health, convenience, or hobbies -- use any issue that can tie your project to their lives to generate interest.

When you are meeting with your public affairs office or local government official, local residents or anyone related to your project, remember to take the opportunity to educate, inform, build relationships and get the message out. Sending leads to your Public Affairs team for the *Corps Bytes* is a good start.

# District scores high in readiness safety survey

By Paula Higgins, Chief Safety Officer

Earlier this year, several employees participated in the Army's Readiness Assessment Program internet online safety survey. The survey was developed by the Army Combat Readiness Center to identify and address root causes of accidents by focusing on the organization's climate and culture.

The results of the survey were submitted to Col. Nello Tortora, commander, New York District by the readiness center.

The general findings on how New York District did as an organization relative to the U.S. Army and Army Corps follows:

427 employees completed the survey. That's about 70 percent of the District population and more than the 66 percent required to obtain statistically-valid data. There were 124 written responses provided to each of two 'write-in' questions (for example, questions: What is my most hazardous job? and What is the most significant action to improve safety?).

To date, over 10,000 Army Corps employees and over 340,000 U.S. Army personnel have completed the survey. The ARAP places organizations into one of four categories, (or quartiles), based on an overall assessment score determined by individual responses to each question; with the top quartile being the highest scored organizations and the bottom quartile being the lowest.

New York District scored in the second highest quartile. What is the significance of this score?

The U.S. Army has found that the ARAP assessment score can predict the likelihood of accidents. The lower the score the higher the dollar cost and severity of accidents.

For example, organizations scoring in the lowest quartile had five times the dollar costs of accidents as those in the 2nd highest quartile, and experienced 25 percent more Class A accidents (i.e., serious accidents resulting in death, permanent disability, and/or \$2 million in damages).

The results indicated a high degree of safety awareness among employees and a strong safety-culture within New York District, but with room for improvement. Based on how employees scored, the District can improve in the areas of communication, planning, supervision, and training. Training and communication were the top



individual responses to the write-in question, "What are the most significant actions to improve safety?" with management oversight and individual responsibility following closely behind.

What did employees identify as the most hazardous thing they do?

Field work, as expected, was the number one answer followed by driving on the job. Some employees did have specific concerns about time spent driving to and from work; while others were concerned about their work location at District headquarters or that they sometimes worked alone in remote locations. Commuting by public transportation into and out of Manhattan was also a significant concern.

## What's next?

The District will be using the results of the ARAP survey along with an analysis over a six year period of accidents, injuries, and illness data to focus on the most hazardous risks employees face.

As identified in the ARAP, the District will be placing increased emphasis on safety training and risk management. Per New York District's Safety Management Action Plan, all employees are required to complete the computer internet on-line Composite Risk Management training.

The Corps' North Atlantic Division also prepared a training matrix identifying required and recommended training for every job series within the Division.

On-line training modules have been procured by North Atlantic Division to assist the District in meeting employee training needs. There will also be increased emphasis on Position Hazards Analyses for employees in the top 30 job series, having the most accidents and most lost work-day cases. This includes job series such as deckhands, engineers, and management automation clerks.

At the mid-term, New York District will again complete the survey to check the progress against the initial results. The command's goal is to attain the highest quartile as this will ensure the District is taking care of the most precious asset – You, and the New York District Team.

# Regulatory field office staff get new digs at Watervliet Arsenal

By Sue Hopkins, Public Affairs Specialist

Some New York District employees are quietly celebrating what, for them, is a monumental transition.

In October, they moved from cramped quarters in the old lock keeper's cottage at the Troy Lock and Dam to renovated office spaces at Watervliet Arsenal, New York.

The move may be only about 2.5 miles from the old building, but it's light years away in terms of professionalism and amenities. The move included hauling out dozens upon dozens of unneeded records, dumped into a front end loader's bucket for transfer to a recycling center.

"We have a lot more room," noted Kevin Bruce in the permitting section. "We had some problems with meetings. We had to clean off the kitchen table" because the kitchen in the lock keeper's cottage was the staff lunch room as well as the conference area. "This is a lot more professional."

Just that one addition will improve customer service, according to team leaders Heidi Firstencel, permitting staff, and Amy Gitchell, enforcement unit.

Both have been representing New York District in the Albany area since 1993.

"We process about 1,000 requests a year," Firstencel noted. "Most of them are nationwide permits or jurisdictional determinations."

The capabilities of the new facility – the new work spaces and conference areas in particular – will add a lot to the mission, noted Lt. Col. Leonard J. Law, deputy District engineer.

"The partnership between the permitting and enforcement sections will be enhanced by the new office setup and the partnerships already forged with sister agencies will continue to serve the mission well," said Law.

"When I was here a few months ago on my first visit there was paint peeling off the ceiling."

Law thanked New York-based Regulatory and Operations staff who worked closely with Watervliet Arsenal personnel for a record turnaround time.

Col. Kevin Moore, commander, Watervliet Arsenal was on hand to welcome the new Corps tenants.

Noting that the Corps played a key role in the arsenal's establishment in 1813 – and in keeping it going as the oldest U.S. arsenal – he encouraged the Regulatory staff to consider themselves part of the arsenal family.

Richard Tomer, chief, Regulatory Branch, Army Corps New York District said he knew the permitting staff "would miss the charm of the old office," but expects rewards from the new facility.

"We deal with the public a lot," he said, "meeting with professionals and stakeholders. This was truly a team effort. Everybody pitched in."

For Firstencel, while the new office is a tremendous improvement, it's still business as usual. "Our first call this morning was from an arsenal employee who needs a permit."



The Albany Field Office became the Upstate Regulatory Field Office when permitting specialists moved out of the old lock master's cottage at the Troy Lock and Dam



Interior of the Upstate Regulatory Field Office new work space at Watervliet Arsenal.



## Lymberis speaks at symposium

**Costas (Gus) Lymberis** was recently a featured speaker at the NACE New York Nanoscience, Nanotechnology and Corrosion symposium held Nov. 13 at the Stevens Institute in Hoboken New Jersey.

Lymberis spoke about the evolution of sciences of chemistry, physics and material science today, and nanoscience and nanotechnology. Lymberis, a construction and engineering corrosion specialist is a member of NACE as the section treasurer.

The symposium featured top scientists and researchers in the fields of materials science and corrosion who are turning to nanoscience/nanotechnology in a continuous effort to be more clear and precise in explaining natural phenomena at the macromolecular level.

The exclusive symposium featured product developers and several leading speakers from top universities.



## Corps offers engineering opportunities at annual conference

The Army Corps' New York District has a history of supporting and recruiting students from the college level to join the nation's premier building organization.

In November, personnel from the Corps' various Districts, including **Marty Goff** of New York District traveled to Phoenix, and participated in the annual American Indian Science and Engineering Society Conference. Goff is a member of AISES and has participated in the Corps' career booth since 2004. The Army Corps of Engineers has been a sponsor for several years and provides a venue for college students majoring in the sciences and engineering an opportunity to meet potential employees. Primarily, the target audience is college students nearing graduation, however, the Corps also speaks with high school students and answers questions they may have about science and engineering careers.

"The Corps has been a 'gem stone,' sponsor," said Goff. "Annually the Corps provides \$20,000.00 to help cover the cost of the conference."

Goff looks forward to the 2008 conference where he will be coordinating a large part of the Corps' participation during AISES 30th anniversary.



## Tidbits

### Did You Know?

In the spring of 1903, Douglas MacArthur graduated at the top of his class from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. To commemorate the occasion, his proud family presented him with 14 KT gold castle insignia as a graduation gift. MacArthur wore the castles as a young engineer officer and later carried them with him during his career as a commander in World War I, Army Chief of Staff, and Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Pacific in World War II.

In March 1945, MacArthur presented the castles to Maj. Gen. Leif Sverdrup, a close friend, who had served as chief engineer on his staff in the Southwest Pacific Area in World War II. Sverdrup recalled that MacArthur, who had transferred to the infantry branch in 1917, told him that the castles meant very much to him, but that they "deserved to be worn by a real engineer" and that they should "never end up in a museum somewhere."

Thirty years later, on May 2, 1975, Sverdrup attended the Engineer dinner at Fort Belvoir, Va., marking the Corps' 200th anniversary. In a quiet corner before the banquet, Sverdrup presented the castles privately to Lt. Gen. Gribble, then Chief of Engineers. Overwhelmed by the unexpected gesture, Gribble later announced to the banquet guests his intention for the future: "I (propose) to hand the castles over to my successor at the conclusion of my tenure as Chief of Engineers, thus initiating an important tradition as well as discharging my trust to him."

When Gribble retired on June 25, 1976, he handed the coveted insignia over to his successor, Lt. Gen. John W. Morris. The castles, Gribble said in his departing remarks, epitomized Esprit de Corps—the spirit of the Corps. Since then, all Chiefs have received MacArthur's gold castles upon assuming command and have proudly worn them as unique symbols of the spirit of the Engineer Regiment.

(Source USACE Office of History)



MacArthur's castle pins  
Photo: F.T. Eyre



## New York District's Diversity Day



Thursday, Jan 10, 2008

290 Broadway, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor

Enjoy food, music and cultures from New York District

Win Prizes – Represent your heritage

Don't miss out

### A reminder for all employees

**Personnel accountability procedures in the event of an emergency:**

**In the event of an emergency, New York District personnel should first make every effort to contact their supervisor in accordance with locally established plans.**

**For some reason, if personnel are unable to follow local personnel accountability procedures, employees should then use the USACE toll-free phone number or alternatively use the e-mail address within 72 hours of an emergency or an evacuation. Toll free phone number: 1-877-HI-USACE (1-877-448-7223) E-mail address: 877.hi.usace@usace.army.mil**



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**  
New York District

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