

The New York District Times



March/April 2004 Vol. 29, No. 1

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

Col. Polo to take the helm of N.Y. District

Col. Richard J. Polo Jr. will assume command of New York District when he relieves Col. John B. O'Dowd at a change of command ceremony in June.

Polo was born at Fort Hood, Texas, and was commissioned into the Army after graduating from the United States Military Academy in 1980 with a bachelor of science degree. He later earned two master's degrees, one in civil engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and one in national security strategy from the National Defense University. His professional military education includes the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Command and General Staff College, and the National War College.

The new commander has been a platoon leader, battalion adjutant, brigade engineer company commander, and battalion executive officer. He has also served as a project engineer in the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office during Operation Desert Storm, and as the engineer brigade operations officer



Col. Richard J. Polo Jr.

in Bosnia as part of Task Force Eagle during Operation Joint Endeavor. Early assignments include serving in the Directorate of Engineering and Housing in Bad Kreuznach, Germany; as an assistant professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at West Point and as chief of the Commander's Planning Group and special assistant to the Chief of Engineers in Washington, D.C.

Prior to attending the National War College, Polo commanded the Detroit District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and later served as the executive officer to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

Polo's military awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (seven awards), the Army Commendation Medal (four awards), the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the NATO and Humanitarian Service Medals, the Parachutist Badge, and the Ranger Tab.

Col. Polo and his wife have two daughters.

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New York District Times

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

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Commander and District Engineer

Col. John B. O'Dowd

Chief, Public Affairs

Peter H. Shugert

peter.h.shugert@usace.army.mil

Editor & Graphic Design

Vince Elias

vincent.elias@usace.army.mil

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

District Engineer observes construction in Afghanistan

In February Col. John B. O'Dowd, District Engineer met with Corps members in Afghanistan at an Afghan army base at Darualaman where construction was being accomplished.

O'Dowd with construction crew examining a roof top of an existing building, built by the Soviet Union in 1985. The building is being renovated to house military troops.



(l-r) Steve Smith, Perini Management Services; Col. John B. O'Dowd, District Engineer, New York District; Douglas Liete, NAN, Lt. Cmdr. Gregg Harris, and Faim from ZMD Turkish subcontractor to Perini.



(l-r) Col. O'Dowd, District and Doug Liete inside a structure being refurbished in Afghanistan.



Col. John B. O'Dowd with Darualaman Crew 2 in Afghanistan. (l-r) Khalil Karimi, NAU; Marybeth Walker, NAB; Michael Wojcicki, NAN Fort Drum resident of office; Douglas Liete, NAN; Col O'Dowd; Kevin Smyth, NAN Plan formulation branch; and Lt. Cmdr. Gregg Harris, CEC, U.S. Navy.



People making headlines

Deputy Commander returns from mission in Iraq

Lt. Col. Kurt Hoffmann, deputy commander was reunited with his family and New York District colleagues and friends in April after a four-month assignment in Iraq. Hoffmann served as operations officer for the Corps' newly-activated Gulf Region Division Headquarters helping to rebuild and improve the Iraq's infrastructure.



Civilian volunteer returns from overseas duty



Carolyn Vadino of the Harbor Programs Branch recently returned from a 4.5-month deployment to Basra, Iraq. Vadino was involved with Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil while serving with the Corps unit as the Public Affairs Officer for the South Region.

“It was an amazing experience, both professionally and personally, to serve with the Corps and work with people from all over the world including the Coalitional Provision Authority, the multi-national divisions and especially the people of Iraq. The Corps should be proud of their people and the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

PPMD tech writer achieves milestone

JoAnne Castagna, technical writer/editor for PPMD recently received her doctorate in educational administration from Dowling College, in Oakdale. As part of her degree requirements, she conducted a study in collaboration with Cornell University that examined the impact videos have in changing the nutrition behavior of low-income men and women in drug rehabilitation. The study yielded interesting outcomes that Dr. Castagna plans on publishing in journals and describing at conferences in the future.



QM2 visits the Big Apple

On April 22, hundreds of people lined the shores of the New York Harbor and viewed the *Queen Mary 2* as she steamed slowly under the Verrazano Bridge heading towards her berth in Manhattan. The ship is the largest and most expensive ocean liner ever constructed. While docked, she extended 132 feet beyond Pier 92 into the Hudson River. She is four city blocks long, 23 stories higher than the Statue of Liberty, and 151,400 gross tons.



Photo: LTC K. Hoffmann

The *Queen Mary 2* steams under the Verrazano Bridge as she arrives in port.

A close up of the bow of the *Queen Mary 2* as she departs New York.



Photo: Peter Shugert

Fish tagging study nets valuable data

By JoAnne Castagna, Ed.D

Below the waters off the coast of New Jersey, fish are busy moving about as they assist the Corps in a complex fish tagging study that could net valuable data for the Corps and environmental community.

For over a century, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District has dredged the channels within the port of New York and New Jersey to help facilitate navigation that is crucial to our economy. Dredging the Port is necessary because fine-grained sediments accumulate on the bottom of the channels that can cause shoaling and interfere with safe navigation.

Historically, dredged material from the port has been disposed in the Atlantic Ocean, in and around a 2.2-square-nautical mile area off the shore of New Jersey commonly referred to as the Mud Dump Site.

In 1997, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency terminated the use of the MDS and redesignated the site and surrounding area that was historically used to dump dredged material as the Historic Area Remediation Site. The HARS is an approximately 15.7-square-nautical mile area — 3.5 nautical miles east of Highlands, N.J. and 7.7 nautical miles south of Rockaway, N.Y.

Only dredged sediment that has been tested and meets EPA's strict biological and chemical criteria can be used as remediation material. These sediments are placed in the HARS to cover or "cap" dredged materials previously placed there. This cap remediates the site and improves the habitat conditions for aquatic life in the HARS by covering historic sediments whose contaminant levels may potentially cause environmental concern. EPA has determined that a cap of at least one meter in thickness is required to effectively cover the HARS.

"The criteria used to determine whether dredged sediment can be placed at the HARS is among the most stringent in the United States," said Monte Greges, chief of the Dredged Material Management Section, New York District.

To evaluate the potential changes the EPA proposes to make to the current criteria, the Corps' New

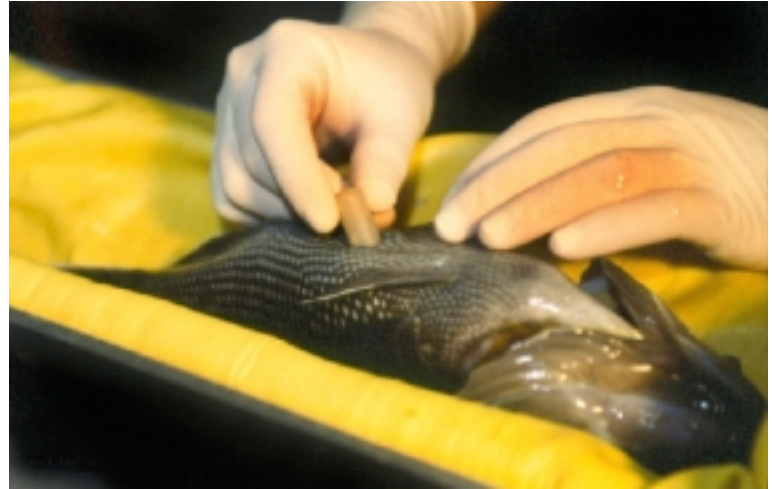


Photo: R. Cunha

Scientist inserts a transmitter covered in bees wax into the peritoneal cavity of a fish through a tiny incision made by a surgeon's scalpel.



The HARS is an approximately 15.7 square nautical mile area — 3.5 nautical miles east of Highlands, New Jersey and 7.7 nautical miles south of Rockaway, New York.

York District initiated and is funding a fish tagging study that is being conducted and managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Research and Development Center - Waterways Experimental Station, in the Vicksburg, Miss. District. The Waterways Experimental Station contracted the Northeast Fisheries Science Center to perform the study that will determine the residency time of fish in the HARS.

In the summer 2003, the 18-month study began and 153 healthy adult fish were tagged in the HARS, including 129 black sea bass and 24 summer flounder, also known as 'fluke,' important recreational and commercial fish.

(Continued on page 5)

Fish tagging (cont'd from prior page)

The fish were fitted with two different tags – an ultrasonic transmitter that was surgically implanted in their abdominal cavities and an external tag placed below their dorsal fins. These external tags are labeled, “Not for Human Consumption” on one side and have the study manager’s phone number on the other.

To pick up the signals from the fish’s ultrasonic transmitters, 72 receivers were strategically moored throughout the HARS, 800 meters apart. According to Dr. Mary Fabrizio, the study’s principal investigator and chief of the Behavioral Ecology Branch, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, “The signals produced by the transmitters will be detected by the receivers when a fish swims within 400 meters of the receivers.”

“The transmitters, which are only 30 mm long and 9 mm in diameter, are programmed to send 68KHz signals (pings) once every 3 to 5 minutes for about one full year. Every signal detected by a receiver is ‘decoded’ electronically and the receiver records the identification number of the transmitter, the date, and the time of day the signal was detected. These records accumulate in the memory of the receiver and when the receiver is retrieved, scientists download the data to a laptop computer using an interface between the receiver and one of the communication ports on the laptop.”

She continued, “The next step is to associate a particular receiver and all its data with a particular location, that is, the station where the receiver was moored. We do this by assigning a station identification number to the electronic file associated with each receiver.” She added, “Based on retrievals completed in September 2003, we know that over a period of about 3 months, 68 receivers detected over 1.3 million transmissions!”

In June 2004, the study’s survey period will end and the scientists will retrieve the receivers for the last time and download the remaining data. A final report will be completed in December 2004.



Male black sea bass being placed into a recovery tank following surgery.

Greges said, “In addition to providing a better estimate of residency time of these two fish species at the HARS, this study will also provide data to correlate fish movement and behavior with changes in bottom topography from disposals, changes in water temperature and salinity and storm events. This will be extremely helpful to fishery biologists.” He added, “this study will also help the New York District develop an environmental risk assessment for the HARS that will more realistically portray the effect that certain contaminants have on aquatic life. Knowing how much time fish spend in the HARS will provide information on the potential level of exposure.”

This study is considered “cutting edge.” “Most tagging studies of this kind are relegated to bays, lakes, streams and other relatively small ‘closed areas.’ This study is the only one performed in a mid-Atlantic continental shelf area,” said Fabrizio.

“In addition, this is the first use of ultrasonic transmitters to monitor movement and habitat use by two fish species that are closely associated with the bottom of the ocean. Also, most studies tag one to two dozen fish and use maybe a dozen receivers. In this context, this may be the largest study of this type ever performed. The amount of technical data that can be gleaned from it is unprecedented,” Fabrizio said.

Catch the action at home plate

District 2004 softball season begins in May

Games played in Central Park



Corps goodwill ambassadors help orphans

By Christopher Augsburger

Baltimore District Public Affairs

Several months ago, when Jim Sherman stopped at a traffic circle in downtown Kabul, a family came to the vehicle and began begging. At first, he thought little of the scene. "This happens all the time," he said.

But when the youngest daughter came to his window, gesturing with her hands that she wanted some food, he saw a familiar face. "She was the same age as my daughter, 6 years old, and looked a lot like her," he said. "That image haunted me."

The sight of the little girl's face moved him so much that he decided to do something. "I guess the reason I was driven was that I knew I couldn't find this one girl in all of Kabul, but I needed to make a difference to other children's lives. I asked my co-workers for donations and invited others to come help."

Thousands of Afghan children live in two main orphanages in a ruined western sector of Kabul. Victims of war, products of poor families and children of single mothers, they struggle at the feet of a withered economy in a nation of political instability. Many of their families survived 23 years of war, and thus, do not fit the standard definition of an orphan. In fact, almost half of these children come from families who have at least one parent but can't support their children, according to research conducted by the Christian Science Monitor.

Mohammad Ghuas Bahiri, the deputy minister of labor and social affairs in the Afghan transitional government, acknowledged the extreme financial strain of the families of his nation.

"They are forced to separate (from their families) because of economic reasons," said Bahiri, during a June 2002 interview. Since then, the number of children enrolled in the two main orphanages, Allahuddin and Thahieya Maskan, exploded to over 4,200, according to Bahiri.

The orphanages, which struggled to provide food and clothing while under Taliban control, have reached their capacity and now have to turn away children, according to many published reports.



Doug Liete of New York District (far left) along with Kevin Smyth and Mike Wojcicki handed out donated clothing items on one particular day in March to orphans in Afghanistan.

In response to these conditions, witnessed first-hand by Sherman and other Corps employees serving in Afghanistan as part of a Field Force Engineering team, Sherman saw an opportunity to help.

Sherman, a Portland District employee, spearheaded a relief effort to supply the orphanages with food, clothes and toys, and formed a committee that collected contributions from everywhere.

The Afghan Area Office staff donated over \$1,000. Corps employees contributed items collected from home, while other Corps districts collected a thousand pairs of children's gloves from a church. Detroit District alone sent 16 boxes of donations over a two-week period.

"There are children without socks or shoes — so all your help is paying off," said Doug Liete of New York District. "Col John B. O'Dowd, New York District Engineer and Kevin Smythe helped unload boxes and our Corps folks loaded vehicles with clothing for the children. Please extend our thanks to all stateside who have participated," said Liete.

Several Baltimore District employees were among the committee members who helped Sherman organize this effort, including Jodie Beauchamp from Planning and Billie Leigh from Resource Management.

"We did this on our own time and with our own resources," said Beauchamp.

On New Year's Day, Sherman's efforts had a resounding and residual effect on those who participated in this effort.

(Continued on page 7)

Orphanage (cont'd from previous page)

"It was obvious from the sores, scabs and scars some of the children carry on their bodies that they have not always had the best care nor lived under optimal conditions," said Andrea Duff-Arnold from Detroit District. She, along with 11 other members and soldiers from the Corps, spent the first day of 2004 delivering food, clothes and toys to the children of the Allahuddin Orphanage.

"A couple of the people who attended started to tear up when they saw the wounds on the kids," she said.

Many children had bare feet, made all the more disturbing by the fact that the buildings had little heat, according to the delivery team.

Corps employees did not make the trip alone. Always mindful of the constant threat to safety, the committee recruited three military personnel to accompany the group during the trip to the orphanages.

"This was one of the few days off that they have, and they were more than eager to help us get to the orphanage," said Beauchamp.

Sherman's mission became, at once, a low point and a high point for those who saw the orphanages for the first time with their own eyes.

"To see the need and the smiles of the children reminded me of my purpose here, which is simply to help the people of Afghanistan," said Brett Call from Rock Island District.

According to Leigh, children came from their rooms and hallways in droves and formed lines where the team had set up distribution tables.

"The youngest came first, and each successive line was a little taller than the previous line," said Leigh. "After a short period, I was somewhat overwhelmed with emotion and had to go outside to clear my mind."

Team member Duff-Arnold said that she chose not to view this as a sad moment.

"I was more focused on the joy we were bringing the children. Their eyes lit up when they saw the toys," she said.

The members of the delivery team said they plan to keep Sherman's cause alive and make more trips to the orphanages. Leigh and Beauchamp said the team's goal is to develop a lasting program.

"I will stay involved with the committee to get something in place that will last," said Leigh.

Sherman said he will always think about that one little girl on the street and wonder. But thanks to his Corps team, maybe she no longer will be a starving child on the street.

Corps receives letter of thanks from President of Afghanistan Orphanages



To: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

We send greetings to the fine people at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers! The Department of Orphanages is very thankful for your help in distributing many various items to our Allahudin orphanage. We received 805m of cloth for sewing projects and 340m of white cloth for bed sheets. We also received other tailoring materials totaling an estimated value of \$1,080.

We recognize even further that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has donated toys, games, gloves, socks, food stuff, and further miscellaneous goods for the assistance of our young orphans at Allahudin. This receipt is to acknowledge this aid.

We also look forward to your additional aid in the future. We are thankful for your time and significant help thus far.

Best regards,

Soraya A. Hakim
President, Department of Orphanages
Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs

District donates computers to local high school

By Vince Elias

With the support of the Logistics Management Office staff, New York District was able to donate 10 sets of computers to the Fanwood High School of Scotch Plains, N.J., March 2.

The request for the computers came from Joanne Arvey, network administrator for the high school which is in need of computers in their classrooms. The District provided 10 computers, which consists of a hard drive, monitor, keyboard and mouse.

Maj. Don Pincus, acting District Engineer at the time, was on hand to oversee the transfer of equipment and to accept a thank you from Jonathan Greenberg and Tom Napier of the Fanwood High School faculty.

Michael Murphy, logistics property officer, oversaw the donation process and began preparing the paperwork as soon as he contacted the school and coordinated the property transfer. "There is a program to transfer excess Federal computer equipment to schools and educational nonprofit organizations, giving special consideration to those in the greatest need," said Murphy.

"This promotes the school education program in addition to saving us time and paperwork," he said. "I'm pleased that we have a program to help the community."

The transfer process is designed to go through the Defense Department supply system with certain criteria to be met. If a higher priority does not take precedence, such as law enforcement agencies, or ROTC, then the school can obtain the excess computers.

"Special thanks to all who made this happen," added Murphy.



Photo: Vince Elias

Maj. Don Pincus receives special thanks from Jonathan Greenberg of Fanwood High School as (l-r) Alvin Washington, Jonathan Munoz, and Robert Goldfarb assist with the computer transfer.

EAP offers variety of counseling services



The Metropolitan Employee Assistance Program is a confidential counseling program offered to New York District employees and their immediate family members who may require help in resolving personal problems.

The Metro EAP is no longer located in the Federal Building. The address is 49 West 12th St., Suite 1D, in Manhattan between 5th and 6th Avenues.

"The EAP provides counseling for depression; family, marital, relationship, work-related problems; alcohol/drug, addiction; financial debt; bereavement; and work-related issues," said Elizabeth Ojakian, director of the Metro EAP.

The service is at no cost to the employee, and the Corps pays for the program.

According to Ojakian, if additional specialized assistance is required, the cost is the employee's responsibility, although health insurance plans may cover costs.

For questions about the EAP or for an appointment call 212.352.3274 or 212.924.4349.

District hosts students and seniors on Earth Day

New York District participated in an educational Earth Day forum in Elizabeth, N.J. April 23. More than 200 students from four local high schools boarded the vessel *Hayward* and received demonstrations on sediment and water testing sampling.

The event, hosted by Future Cities, Inc., was designed to increase awareness and importance of watershed and water quality in the Port of New York and New Jersey. The demonstrations were lead by Thomas Wyche of Operations and Ronald Pinzon of Planning.

Additional Corps staff was on hand to answer questions and provide an overview of the Corps role as environmental stewards of the harbor estuary. Additionally, almost 130 senior citizens from the local Elizabeth senior center were provided a harbor inspection.

The Elizabeth mayor's office and representatives from Congressman Payne's office attended the event and thanked the Corps for help in making the Earth Day function a success.



(Above) High school students and senior citizens aboard the vessel *Hayward* during Earth Day.

(Right) Corps personnel demonstrating sediment and water testing sampling procedures.



Photos and information Carolyn Vadino

Corporate challengers lace up for annual event

The next Corporate Challenge road race will be held June 9 at 7 p.m. in Central Park. The event is open to all full-time employees. Participants may run, jog or walk the 3.5- mile course.

The event's aim is to promote exercise and friendly competition among New York area companies.

The New York Road Runners Club, a major sponsor of the event, will provide beverages and fruit following the race. Everyone who completes the 3.5 miles receives a commemorative T-shirt acknowledging their effort.

Contact the District race coordinator, Patricia Donohue in Operations for an application form. Registration must be completed by April 23, including the fee.



Corps attracts top professionals at annual awards conference and career fair

Each year, representatives from various Corps-wide districts and divisions participate in the annual Black Engineers of the Year Awards Conference.

In February, New York District professionals joined other district representatives along with Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers, Chief of Engineers, in Baltimore, Md., at the 8th annual event which included a career fair and a USACE workshop for Corps employees that included information on 2012.

Victoria Gross, EEO, Diane Depula, HR, and Michael Rovi, EN were active in the career fair that attracted top professionals from various fields of science, engineering and technology.

Deptula and Gross worked the recruitment booth as Rovi interviewed potential candidates for employment. The career fair proved very successful with Rovi interviewing over 24 college students with backgrounds in civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering.

“This event was one of the most successful black engineering conferences that I have attended in the last four years,” said Gross “There were a lot of progressive, enthusiastic young people from historically black colleges who were eager to become members of the Corps family.”

“Students attended the event from a variety of colleges and universities such as Morgan University, Temple University, Hampton College, to name a few,” said Deptula. “There were also a number of students interested in the Corps’ very ambitious summer recruitment program.”

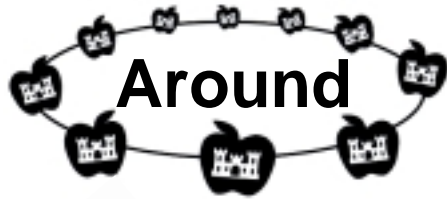
According to Gross, the USACE workshop was very interesting to the Corps employees. “It gave the Corps employees a comprehensive overview of the 2012 process,” said Gross.



Corps representatives explain the Corps’ important mission to interested participants.



Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers, Chief of Engineers and other Corps professionals at the 8th annual Black Engineers of the Year Awards Conference held in Baltimore, Md.



Around New York District

Wedding Bells



Ronald Brattain of Planning Division has tied the knot. He and wife Melissa were wed at their Monroe N.Y., home at a private ceremony in Dec. 2003.



Stork Club



It's a girl!

Attorney Rita Fang of the Office of Counsel announced the birth of Theresa Victoria Morano Feb. 11. Vital stats: 7 pounds 7 oz., 21 inches

Announcement



District visual artist to retire

Arnold Weber of the Art Department



Welcome Wagon

Thomas Creamer, OP
Daniel Desmet, PA
Darrin Damiani, PL
Catherine Donohue, OP
Colleen Joseph, OC
Kasey Malerbi, OP
Mark McKenna, CO
Adam Pereleson, PL
Michael Pretty, OP
William Shadel, PL
Jennifer Thalhauser, PL
Dan Ward, CO

SUMMER TEMPORARY

Trecia Ashman, PPMD
Chantel Borroum, OP
Tia Brooks, OPS
Alanna Emanuel, OPS
Scott Florek, OPS
Peter Herrick, OPS
Joel Kellogg, OPS
Eric Rozychi, OPS
Jonathan Slezak, IM

Hass retires from the Guard

Robert Hass of Real Estate received a certificate of retirement from the Army National Guard in April. Hass served for 26 years and was a member of the 101st Cavalry. He also spent two years on active duty.

Farewell



Ron Ackerman, CO	Richard Anderson, CO
George Stanley, EN	Catherine Applegate, PPMD
William Fort, OP	Joseph Gedeon, CO
John Wilbur, OP	Gertrude Leon, RE

Sympathy



Gerald Gilliard of Contracting Division passed away in February. He is survived by his father, mother, sister, three brothers, and daughter. Gerald Gilliard was one of the original founders of the IFPTE, Local 98 union and served as a steward since 1994. He was honored at a memorial service in March held in the Federal Building which his family, friends and former colleagues attended.

Performers add spark to annual EEO program

In honor of National African American History and Black History Month, the Magbana Drum & Dance Ensemble of New York City performed at the New York District annual African American History Month program held in March in the Federal Building.

The event, which drew a huge crowd, was sponsored by EEO and also featured a poetry reading, and soul food refreshments. Maj. Don Pincus, acting District Engineer made the opening remarks and Victoria Gross of EEO oversaw the event.



Photo: Vince Elias

District Engineer honored by community *lauded for superb Corps work*



Photo: Miles Truesdell III

(left) Col. John B. O'Dowd, District Engineer received a certificate of recognition from the New York Shipping Association, Inc. in April. The certificate reads, "In recognition for his leadership and commitment to dredging and the environment." The award was presented by New York Shipping President Frank McDonough, and Rep. Robert Menendez for work in advancing the navigation programs in the Port of New York and New Jersey.

(right) Col. John B. O'Dowd, District Engineer received the public service award from the Gowanus Canal Community Development Corp. in April at a ceremony held in the Marriott hotel in Brooklyn, N.Y. (l-r) Brig. Gen. Bo Temple, commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, North Atlantic Division; O'Dowd and Rep. Nadia Velazquez. O'Dowd received the award for his many years of dedicated service to the Gowanus Community in Brooklyn, N.Y.



Photo: Peter Shugert

Corps retiree finds his niche in the art of woodcarving

By Sandra Gaffney, OC

For 23 years, Seymour “Sy” White had a successful career with the Corps in the Engineering Division at New York District and North Atlantic Division before retiring in 1994.

His retirement provided him ample time to pursue for pleasure and profit, an entire new career in the art of woodcarving.

White resides in Florida where his woodcarving talent keeps him very occupied. He creates exquisite woodcarvings for pleasure and exhibits them regionally at art at exhibits for others to admire. He has also created several commissioned woodcarvings, such as a submariner’s dolphin insignia, and occasionally repairs damaged pieces of wooden furniture. During a past holiday season he carved tree ornaments and contributed them to a local hospice.

His artwork varies in size, ranging from three inches to three feet high. He also creates flat, two-dimensional pictures, chip carvings folk art used to decorate boxes, frames, plaques, etc., with geometric patterns, and decorative floral boxes.

White’s Santa Claus carvings were unique and made from cypress knees, the growths on the roots of the bald cypress tree which grow above the waterline and are considered air roots.

White’s wife Anna shares his love of carving. Throughout the year, they travel to various exhibits and shows to display their prize-winning pieces. “I like to carve anything,” said White. “Something new is always a challenge.”



Sy White holding one of his woodcarving creations.

Army streamlines resumix procedures for delegated examining



Resumix for delegated examining, also referred to as external recruitment, was deployed by the Department of the Army in March. It is the primary mechanism for U.S. citizens without prior Federal service to be considered for Army vacancies.

The new automated system is a resume-based system similar to what is used for internal merit promotion. Under this system, there will no longer be a need to develop KSAs and crediting plans, and applicants won’t have to respond to KSAs. One significant difference with the delegated examining version of Resumix is an embedded skill weighting mechanism. This weighting tool allows the manager to array skills from the most to least important for successful job performance; and personnelists to refer those applicants who possess the greatest percentage of the heaviest weighted skills. Referrals, along with the applicants’ resumes, will be issued electronically.

Applicants can view the status of jobs to which they have applied via an on-line applicant response system. Veterans preference and the requirement to select from among the three highest ranking candidates, unique delegated examining requirements based in law, still apply.

(Source: Mercedes Fernandez, HR)



UPDATE



Photo: Ed. Sim

Troops get new training facility

The battle simulation center at Fort Drum, N.Y., is in full operation following several months of construction. Ed Sim is the project manager for overseeing construction of the energy saving state-of-the-art facility that was completed in March. The BSC is equipped with modern training equipment. Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning is provided by a self-contained system using air-cooled chillers and multi-zone air handlers. Elena Manno, a mechanical engineer for New York District, worked under the lead mechanical engineer in designing the mechanical systems for the center. "From a mechanical systems standpoint, this building incorporates all the latest energy savings that I have yet to see from my reviews of private architectural engineering firms' design concepts," said Manno. According to Sim, the BSC consists of several training, evaluation, administrative, equipment storage and maintenance areas.



Work to resume at Waterbury Dam

Work will resume with the construction of the concrete cutoff wall and wells at the Waterbury Dam in Vermont, according to Paul Tumminello, project manager.

Subject to the availability of funds, rehabilitation of the dam is scheduled to be completed in 2005, which will include construction of environmental mitigation measures and repairs to the spillway gates. New York District and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources are jointly involved in the rehabilitation project that started in July 2002. The Corps of Engineers built the dam in the late 1930s. The state of Vermont took over operations and maintenance of the dam, and in 1953 power generating capacity was added.

Bldg. 110 receives facelift

Repairs by the Corps to courtyard porches at Building 110 at Fort Hamilton, began in March. According to Matt Walsh, Construction Division, the project at the Brooklyn Army fort involves demolishing two wooden porches, shoring up rooms above the porches, installing masonry to support building columns, setting and welding steel cross beams, and installing new wood decking, columns, railings and stairs.



Photo: Matthew Walsh

Corps observes work at New Jersey flood control project

Brig. Gen. Bo Temple, commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, North Atlantic Division along with the Green Brook Flood Control Project team observed ongoing work at the Bround Brook, N.J. construction site in March. The team viewed construction of a new concrete culvert along Vosseller Brook. At the construction site (l-r) John Sasson, Joe Forcina, Joe Rossano, Brig. Gen. Temple, Capt. Andrew Kelly and Stu Piken.



Photo: Peter Shugert

Corps does its part to help build a new Iraq

Photos and captions by Carolyn Vadino

Part of the Restore Iraqi Oil Directorate's mission, along with the Oil Ministry and the contractors, is to bring the water injection program in North and South Rumayla online. Since the oil fields in North and South Rumayla operate under natural pressure, the cluster pump stations provide the final boost of water injection needed to service the oil wells in the south.

(right) Andre Sujko, from the Coalition Provisional Authority, Jeremy Draggio, Corps quality assurance representative from the Walla, Walla District, and Tom Miller, Corps quality assurance representative from the St. Louis District, inspect the pumps and newly installed control panels at Cluster Pump Station 6 in South Rumayla.



(Left) Qarmat Ali, located on the Shat Al-Arab, is the main water treatment facility that provides water to the cluster pump stations in North and South Rumayla. Greg Wishard, from Arkansas District, and Jeromy Caldwell, from the Tulsa District, are all suited up in their protective gear to perform their quality assurance work at Qarmat Ali water treatment facility. Wishard and Caldwell, both based out of Basra, Iraq, monitor the water injection program in North Rumayla as part of their daily mission.

(Right) Lee Wolf, Walla Walla District, Paul Lauderdale, Fort Worth District, and Tom Miller, St. Louis District, all Corps quality assurance representatives examine fished out cable from an oil well in South Rumayla. Part of the Restore Iraqi Oil Directorate, the Corps mission was to rehab several oil wells in the south that were set on fire during the war. Well 67 is the last of the burnt wells to be rehabbed.



(Left) Tom Miller of the St. Louis District performs his quality assurance work at cluster pump station 6 located in South Rumayla. As part of his QA work for the Restore Iraqi Oil Directorate, Miller travels daily to several cluster pump stations to monitor the progression of the water injection program in the southern oil fields.

District shore project is for the birds

Article and photos by Randy Hintz, Operations

The evolution of any dredging project includes identifying opportunities for the beneficial use of dredged material. This was the case when East Inlet Island near Moriches Inlet on the south shore of Long Island, N.Y., was identified as a site for the beneficial use of dredged material from the Long Island Intercoastal Waterway. It was an opportunity to enhance shorebird habitat.

In the fall of 2002, New York District began placing dredged material from the Intracoastal channel onto a 13-acre portion of the island. Sediment samples taken prior to dredging indicated the material to be placed would be predominantly sand. Unfortunately, as with any dredging project, individual pockets of finer grain material can pop up during the dredging operation. Of the 53,000 cubic yards of material dredged from the project, about 7,000 cubic yards of fine silty material was encountered. Though not contaminated, the appearance of the finer grain materials would detract from the overall shore bird habitat restoration and preclude the re-growth of native beach grass and goldenrod.

If encountered early in the project, contractors can generally cover the finer materials with sandy material since there is no threat to nature by the presence of the silty material. Unfortunately for East Inlet Island, the finer materials were encountered late in the project and had to be left exposed on the surface.

The appearance resembled the surface of the moon and was a frequent sore point among the natural resource agencies.

The agencies felt betrayed by the Corps in its promise to create shorebird habitat.

Recognizing the need for immediate action, a project delivery team was organized within New York District, led by Jodi McDonald, to develop suitable alternatives to remediate the situation. The plan was to cover over the majority of the silty materials with a layer of sand and where the silt was deeper, create trenches to allow the material to dry. Timing is everything and this case was no different. Resource agencies concurred with the Corps' remediation plan in March and all work had to be completed by April prior to the return of the native birds.



(Above) Randy Hintz and Ken Peterson dig a test pit to determine of the depth of silty material on the island.



Army Corps staff work side by side with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to plant 1,500 plugs of beach grass and 300 goldenrod plants on top of the now-sandy surface of the island.

In the following weeks, plans were finalized by the Operations Technical Support section, and a contract was awarded March 25 to HUBZone, a small business contractor, with only one week to complete the work.

Work on the island began March 25 and was completed March 28, with three days to spare.

On April 7, staff from Operations Division, working side by side with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, planted 1,500 plugs of beach grass and 300 goldenrod plants on top of the now sandy surface of the island. The teams successfully turned a bad news situation for the resource agencies into good news of partnering between the Federal and non-federal stakeholders.

USACE 2012

Remarks given by Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, Chief of Engineers, during a town hall meeting at Headquarters on USACE 2012

What's USACE 2012 all about? Why are we doing it? Those are my most frequently asked questions; so let me give you a quick history.

Before I became Chief of Engineers, I asked the Corps' historian, Dr. Paul Walker, to look back over the times that the Corps tried to reorganize, and how we had dealt with it.

One thing that became clear to me was that during my tenure as Chief of Engineers I did not want to do any reorganization! I wanted my legacy to be the Project Management Business Process, the power of teams and the improved capability of teams, and P2, the common enabler that would set the stage for our organization to operate virtually. (Operating virtually means working together through electronic communications, rather than working face-to-face.)

But about two years ago, the division commanders jumped on me at Fort Leonard Wood at ENFORCE and said, "Chief, we don't have enough people in the Headquarters in Washington or in the division headquarters to do the job." So I said, "OK, tell me what you need."

Some asked for as few as 15 people, some asked for as many as 35. And those of you who have been in Headquarters for a while know we've taken some hits in the past few years, so there was a good-sized bill there as well.

So I pulled this all together and justified it based on our manning documents, and on the roles and missions of headquarters in the divisions and in Washington. Then I went to Congress and said, "I need some more General Expense funds and Operation & Maintenance, Army funds." And Congress said, "Lt. Gen. Flowers, you've got to be kidding if you think we're going to give you more money for overhead, unless you can show us how this will make your districts more effective."

Stockton Report

So I called my old softball partner from my days in Portland District, Steve Stockton. I said, "Steve, I need you to run a study for me. I want you to look at command and control. Start with the Witherspoon Report that came out in the mid-'90s, and think out of the box. Make it a broad-based study; bring in people from across the Corps and outside the Corps. Look out about 10 years, and make some recommendations on how we might more effectively command and control."

So he did. It was called the Stockton Report. But when everyone looked at it, they basically threw up on it. No one liked it, because it was change. So Steve decided he no longer wanted his name associated with the study, and



he changed the name of the study from the Stockton Report to USACE 2012. That name is not a good descriptor. It probably should be USACE 2003 or 2004, but that name has stuck and we're going with it. So that's how the name came about.

Burning platform

But after we got comments back on USACE 2012, I had an off-site at Fort Belvoir, Va., with the senior leaders, and we had our customers and stakeholders come in and talk to us. Our customers and stakeholders said, "You all aren't listening." They sent two very clear messages. One, "You've got great people in the Corps of Engineers and we love working with them." But the second message was, "Your processes are daunting; we don't understand them. You don't partner like a partner. When we deal with one part of the Corps, it's not like dealing with another part. We're frustrated!"

It was then that I realized that I was standing on a burning platform. I could stand there and hope that it held until the 51st Chief of Engineers showed up, or I could grab a fire extinguisher called USACE 2012 and fight the fire. And I went for the latter.

So we directed a functional area assessment be done after this off-site. We looked at every area of the Corps - civil works, military programs, public affairs, HR, counsel. We took all the recommendations and gave them to the Process Committee. The ProCom gave it to the senior leaders at our Senior Leaders Conference last August, and I made every senior leader tell me what they thought. We did something called a Samoan Circle, and what came out was USACE 2012 as you see it today.

Poaching

It's a radical departure, but everything we're doing under USACE 2012 is being done someplace in the Corps of Engineers today with great success. What we're doing is expanding those successes to the entire organization. What it's all about is acting as one Corps, and operating virtually. We will always deliver through the district where the work resides, but some of the effort and process may be done in other places.

We've been moving down this road for a while. I remember when I came in as commander of what was then the Lower Mississippi Valley Division. One of my districts was completing a very large program of locks and dams on the Red River in Louisiana, and they were looking at a RIF (Reduction In Force). But the neighboring district was hiring like crazy, because they beginning a major program that would use the same types of employees.

So I said, "Why don't we just take the work and move it from this district to that district so we don't have to RIF and we don't have to hire?"

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And you would have thought I had stepped on somebody's grave. The district said, "It's our turn now." I said, "What do you mean, 'It's your turn now?' Isn't this us?"

And when I looked at the workload across my division, my districts went up and down from year-to-year, depending on how much work was funded. But across the division, the curve was much flatter. So it didn't take a rocket scientist to say, "If I could operate regionally, and move work around, I could put a lot more consistency and sanity into my employees' lives." And I remember visiting my area office in Shreveport, La., when I was a division commander. There were three Corps offices in Shreveport — one on Barksdale Air Force Base that did military construction at Barksdale. There was an HTRW office doing a Superfund clean-up. And there was my area office. So I went to my area office and asked, "How often do you get together with the other Corps offices here in town?" And they said "What Corps offices?"

Regional Business Centers

So we told Lt. Gen. Ballard in '96, "Boss, we've got to change this. You've got to enable us to operate more regionally." So he established Regional Business Centers, and some of our divisions have been operating very well as RBCs, moving around hundreds of millions of dollars in work every year. The Regional Business Center is the focal point of USACE 2012, and everything we do through the RBCs will enable executing districts to deliver better products, faster.

Teams and integration

Something else that came up, about a year ago. I was visiting one of our districts that has both civil works and military programs, and the district engineer said, "Sir, this came down three weeks ago through Civil Works, and there are resource implications for my district. Then two days ago I got this through Military Programs and it has resource implications. And we just got this down through Human Resources, and Counsel sent us this! It doesn't seem to me that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing." So when I came back to Headquarters, I got the senior leadership together and asked, "Where in this Headquarters is the first place that we integrate what we send down to divisions and districts?" And the answer was, "On your desk, sir."

And if you looked at the way we were organized with wiring diagrams, that's the way it was. Something came up to the director of Military Programs, and the director could either sign it or give it to the Chief to sign, and it would get in. Same thing in Civil Works. All very well intentioned. It just wasn't coordinated.

Well, we've got to change that. So under USACE 2012, there are no more stovepipes. When you look at how this Headquarters is organized under USACE 2012, you don't see a wiring diagram. You see parachutes and circles and bubbles and it looks weird, because it's different. What

we want to be is a team of teams that enables those Regional Business Centers.

You ask, "Where's that working in the Corps, Chief?"

Well, what did Civil Works do about a year-and-a-half ago? They created some division-focused teams to do work. Very traumatic when we first put them together, but the feedback from the field was enormously positive.

The other example is the Arizona Area Office in L.A. District. Pretty good-sized area office, and they've reorganized so everybody sits in regionally focused, cross-functional teams. They have regulators, contract representatives, counsel, contracting, engineering and construction, all sitting on a team. And everyone in those cross-functional teams works together on the challenges in their particular region of the Arizona area. You walk into that floor of the federal building in downtown Phoenix and the energy just pulses out of the door at you. They enjoy going to work. It's challenging. They're learning something new.

Cyberspace

Operating virtually. My best example is what we did with the Panama Canal. In January of 2002 we got the mission from the Panama Canal Authority to provide a concept design for replacement locks so they could handle post-PANAMAX vessels. It was a big job, and we don't have that expertise in any one district. So we put together a project delivery team. We put some members of the Panama Canal Authority on the team. The district where the work resides is Mobile District, so Mobile provided the project manager. We had 10 districts working on that project. They met once face-to-face; the rest of their meetings were virtual, using e-mail, conference calls, video teleconferences, and other electronic communications.

We delivered that product in nine months, to the delight of the customer. Now we're doing six more jobs with them, and we'll probably soon open an office in Panama.

Communities

Communities of Practice. Well, we've been doing that informally for a long time. Don't we get the Human Resources people together now and then? Get the regulators together now and then? Well, we're going to formalize that, and our Communities of Practice will maintain our technical competence. I'm not just talking about engineering and science; I'm talking about all areas where we need technical competence.

Each Community of Practice will be responsible for laying out the professional development paths for that community, and for making sure that members of that Community of Practice serve effectively on teams.

We used our Project Delivery Team Conference in San Diego in November to put some of the best minds in the Corps to work on this...How do we stand up these Communities of Practice? How do we enable them?

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USACE 2012 (Cont'd. from page 18)

If you want an example of where this has worked well in the Corps, look at our natural resource people. On their own, they formed a Community of Practice. They meet periodically, and they established a knowledge management system. It's a website called The Gateway where they placed their best practices, and names of people to contact if you're working on a subject. They've even opened their Community of Practice to other agencies who do the same sorts of things.

Accepting risks

Process improvements for greater efficiency and effectiveness, and accepting some risk ... Do you know how we evolved our processes in the past? Well, we always started with a fairly sane process. But if something bad happened, we would put another step in the process to ensure that it never happened again. And we kept adding these things, and pretty soon you get a pretty convoluted process.

Very low risk of anything ever going wrong, but what are you doing to your cost-sharing partners and customers? "You all aren't listening. Your processes are daunting; we don't understand them. You don't partner like a partner. When we deal with one part of the Corps, it's not like dealing with another part. We're frustrated!"

So we have to become less risk-adverse, and more committed to delivering in a timely fashion. By having Regional Integration Teams here in Headquarters, and district support teams in the Regional Business Centers, we will be able to monitor the process to enable people to do their jobs better.

How did we do things in the past? Well, the district designed a project. They shipped the project up to division. Division looked at it, and they might return it. Once they thought it was OK, they shipped it up to Headquarters and we looked it over. Well, we might find some policy issue with it. What happens then? All the way back down to the district. All this could take considerable time.

Under the new paradigm (the cross-functional, regionally focused teams), everybody will look at a project as it happens, so issues will surface quicker. They will get resolved much sooner, and we'll end up with a better product, faster.

You say, "Well Chief, I'm not comfortable because we don't have two or three layers of review." That's where being less risk-adverse comes in. We've got to become comfortable with quality reviews, but less of them.

And we have already begun implementing this. There are implementation plans from all the Regional Business Centers that must be back in here by Dec. 12. We will turn them quickly, and our intent is to begin implementation soon. By Jan. 5, people on Regional Integration Teams in Headquarters will know where they will be working, where their position is, and if their position is an enduring one in this organization.

We're going to conduct a mock RIF in Headquarters beginning next week, and shortly thereafter we will notify those whose positions are not going to be permanent.

Now, I've been in the Army for 35 years. I have never RIFed an employee, and I do not intend to start now. We are conducting this mock RIF because we plan to shape this organization with some traditional tools, Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay, and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority. We have to conduct this mock RIF to identify positions we can VSIP and VERA.

Why reorganize?

So, back to why we're doing this. The nation cannot afford to have what happened to the Civil Aeronautics Board happen to the Corps of Engineers. The CAB was a pretty powerful federal aviation agency. But President Reagan deregulated the airline industry and changed the CAB's environment. They had an opportunity to change their culture, but they said, "We like the way we've always been, so we're not changing."

Where is the Civil Aeronautics Board today? It doesn't exist. They broke 'em up and gave their functions to other federal agencies.

We can't let that happen to the Corps of Engineers, because we're too vital to this nation. The country has become comfortable turning to us, giving us the tough ones, and having us come through. Whenever we transition from peace to conflict, or from conflict back to peace, we're the go-to agency.

I got called to testify before Congress a couple of months ago. Congress wanted to know if we have any plans to do away with the Corps of Engineers. One question they asked me was, "General, give us an example of another country that has a Corps of Engineers and how it operates."

And I said, "I can't, because no other country has anything like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We're unique, and I think it gives our country a tremendous advantage."

Right now, the Corps of Engineers' services are in great demand in Iraq. What other federal agency can do infrastructure? We rebuilt Greece from 1947 to 1949. Athens District was our first district outside the U.S. Kuwait — some of you worked there. Saudi Arabia — we built the infrastructure for its armed forces.

So we can't let what happened to the Civil Aeronautics Board happen to the Corps of Engineers. We must reorganize ourselves to remain the agency of choice. We have to operate more like a business, because our customers have other choices. We must always work to get better. That's what the learning organization does for us. That's what operating virtually will help do. And becoming a team of teams is a key enabler.

(Editor's note – Article originally appeared in Engineer Update January 2004, Chief explains USACE 2012 in "plain English")



SAFETY LINE

Health and safety tips

Research shows that sedentary living is hazardous to health. Sitting for long periods such as a long car trip or airplane travel can double a person's chances of getting a blood clot in the leg. That's a danger, as clots can travel and block blood and oxygen flow to major organs and cause organ damage -- including a heart attack or stroke.



Stand and stretch twice every hour or so. On long road trips, do the same at rest stops. This will get the blood flowing and prevent a clot from happening.



Fleet Week 2004

The 17th annual New York City Fleet Week is planned from May 26 to June 2. A parade of Navy and Coast Guard ships in the New York Harbor May 26 will kick off the military extravaganza.

In cooperation with New York City, the U.S. Navy and the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, Navy and Coast Guard ships as well as ships from other countries will visit New York Harbor during Fleet Week 2004.

Fleet Week provides an opportunity for the public to witness the latest capabilities of today's military with ships from America and foreign nations.

New York City has hosted Fleet Week since 1984 as a demonstration of its appreciation for our military service members.

All the involved Fleet Week ships will be available for boarding to the public for free.

What is P2?

P2 is the tool that enables USACE to implement its business processes and to change to its desired Project Management Business Process culture.

USACE is committed to accomplishing work through project-focused teams, using proven project management practices.

P2 is a suite of commercial-off-the-shelf software applications configured to support project execution in the Military, Civil Works, Environmental, Research &

The ultimate goal is to manage all project and program work through P2.

P2 initiatives include increasing the user friendliness and creating additional interfaces between USACE legacy systems and P2 in accordance with evolving business processes.

Previous software systems such as PROMIS, were deployed without standard business processes. P2 is different in that it is the enabling tool for the new USACE business processes. The P2 system functionality is configured in a way that keeps the focus on delivering the best tools to the Project Delivery Team, including virtual teams, to support project planning and execution while also supporting programmatic processes,



Security Note

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