



## Corps Hurricane Response

### Task Force Hope Status Report

October 16, 2006

# Corps of Engineers overseeing demolition of homes

## Louisiana Recovery Field Office, special mission in charge of demolishing hurricane-damaged homes

By Mike Park, Director  
Louisiana Recovery Field Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisiana Recovery Field Office (LA-RFO) operates at the direction of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to execute assigned missions under Emergency Support Function 3 (ESF-3) of the National Response Plan, Public Works and Engineering for emergency response and recovery support.

In the immediate aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the highest priority was saving lives and the relief of human suffering. The LA-RFO provided the logistical support for receipt and distribution of ice and potable water to the affected communities, and installation of emergency power generators to critical facilities. Concurrently, the LA-RFO deployed teams to manage the installation of temporary roofing of residential structures, effect debris removal, provide technical assistance, and repair of public facilities and/or installation of temporary critical public facilities.

At the present stage of the mission the LA-RFO is focused on completion of debris removal and demolition of structures that were substantially damaged by the hurricanes. To date the LA-RFO has removed approximately 25 million of an estimated 28



A Corps of Engineers' LA-RFO contract team demolishes a house in New Orleans in September, 2006. The LA-RFO has so far overseen about 3,900 demolitions, over 1,400 demolitions in Orleans Parish alone. (USACE Photo)

million cubic yards of debris from affected parishes and municipalities of south Louisiana under the Direct Federal Assistance program.

Demolition requirements are identified by local governments consistent with their demolition plans, which are approved by FEMA. Requests for demolition under the Federal program are accompanied by ample documentation including, but not limited to structural assessment reports, property ownership records, insurance documents, evaluation of historical significance of the properties and results of sampling and analysis to identify the presence of asbestos containing materials.

In the City of New Orleans the Corps provided technical assistance to complete initial assessments of over 100,000 properties to identify those that were in an imminent danger of collapse, which posed an immediate threat to public safety.

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Approximately 2,200 such "imminent danger" structures were identified for demolition to abate this hazard. Another 2,000-3,000 structures were "red-tagged" as having sustained substantial damage, which compromised their structural integrity and yet another 80,000 structures were "yellow tagged" representing significant levels of damage.

A second evaluation of these properties is pending to determine which are undergoing repairs, remain untouched, or have been demolished by private contractors. The findings of these evaluations will provide the information needed to identify the structures remaining to be demolished under the Federal program. Alternatively, home owners may "volunteer" their properties for demolition to advance the process.

Once FEMA has approved a home for demolition, the demolition packet for that home is delivered to the LA-RFO, which assigns the work to the Corps' demolition contractor. The contractor is responsible for acquiring any required permits and getting all utilities decommissioned: water, gas, electricity and sewerage.

The results of the aforementioned asbestos sampling and analyses determine the operating procedures for the actual demolition and the ultimate disposition of the debris generated from the demolition.

As of Sept. 30, 2006, the Corps has overseen about 3,900 demolitions in nine parishes, 1,400 of which were in Orleans Parish. 

**Quote of the Week**

"We have 1,200 people in the New Orleans District, and the people there who are doing the restoration work are the citizens of New Orleans. They are protecting their families, they are protecting their neighbors, they are protecting themselves; so they are totally committed."

- Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**LA-RFO team oversees damaged home demolitions**  
*Special mission is part of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*



**LA-RFO team members reviewing a house demolition map are, from left, Chris Alfonso, Debris Mission Manager; Don McClure, Office Engineer; Edward LeBlanc, Structural Debris Expert; and Michael Patrick, Environmental Expert.**  
(USACE Photo by Susan Spaht)

**Contact Information**

Topic	Phone	Organization
New Orleans District work	(504) 862-2201	New Orleans District Public Affairs
Task Force Hope - Overall hurricane protection system restoration, repair and improvement	(504) 862-1836	Task Force Hope Public Affairs
Debris Removal in Louisiana	(504) 681-2317	Louisiana Recovery Field Office

The *Status Report Newsletter* supports the information program for Task Force Hope and its stakeholders. It also serves as the primary tool for accurately transmitting the hurricane recovery work to stakeholders. This is an online publication and open to public distribution. This issue and past issues can be found at: [www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps)

Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at: [b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil](mailto:b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil)

*Status Report Newsletter*  
Task Force Hope  
Public Affairs Office MVD-FWD  
7400 Leake Ave., Room #388  
New Orleans, LA 70118  
(504) 862-1688

## Faces of Hope

"I'm thankful that I'm in a position to make a difference in my community." - *Master Sgt. Gregory Holmes*



**Master Sgt. Gregory Holmes, left, discusses debris procedures with a contractor on the site of an LA-RFO demolition.** (USACE Photo)

By Susan Solomon

**M**aster Sgt. Gregory Holmes was born and raised in New Orleans and, like thousands of others in Louisiana, his home was heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Holmes, who has been in the Army Reserve for 23 years, reported to Baton Rouge immediately after the storm to work on the debris mission with the Corps of Engineers.

As part of the team facing the huge task of removing the debris strewn about from the fury and surge of the storm, Holmes was assigned to be a Quality Assurance Supervisor in the New Orleans area.

Today he works out of the Louisiana Regional Field Office (LA-RFO) in downtown New Orleans as a Field Supervisor for debris removal.

"I'm thankful that I'm in a position to

make a difference in my community," Holmes said. "I love it. I'm back in the city and I'm proud to be wearing this uniform."

Part of the Herculean task facing the residents of New Orleans and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the removal of an estimated 27.8 million cubic yards of debris left behind in Louisiana by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Years ago after Hurricane Betsy hit the area, all debris was hauled off and covered over with dirt without the materials being separated. The hazardous materials were disposed along with the biodegradable materials.

"Now we know that storm debris must be separated and disposed of properly to prevent contamination of the soil and water," said Holmes.


That's where the importance of Holmes' work enters the picture. He makes sure

that contractors know the scope of work, and he oversees the important job of separating hazardous debris from biodegradable household debris. To prevent landfills from becoming hazardous areas, electronic goods, refrigerators, asbestos, etc., are separated and disposed of properly.

Holmes was in the National Guard from 1983 to 2000, and then joined the Army Reserve from 2000 to the present. He served two three-month deployments in Iraq where he trained Army personnel on rough terrain equipment.

Holmes has a professional attitude towards everything he does. "I wanted to give those soldiers the best training possible because their lives could depend on it," he said proudly.

Since joining the Army in 1983, Holmes has served his country in far-flung locations in various assignments in Belize, Honduras, Iraq, Fort Sill (Oklahoma), and Fort Eustis (Norfolk, VA).

He graduated from Washington High School in New Orleans and later earned a Master of Business Administration degree. Now he is working on his Doctorate in Business Administration. 

**This Corps mission has now removed a total of 18.2 million cubic yards of debris** from Hurricane Katrina with 86 percent of the removal complete. The debris left behind in Louisiana by Hurricane Rita totaled 6.7 million cubic yards of debris. Ninety-nine percent or 6.6 million cubic yards of debris left by Rita have been removed. The total amount of debris in Louisiana was 27.8 million cubic yards with 24.8 million cubic yards now removed, or 89 percent.

**Corps of Engineers  
looking for employees  
to work in New Orleans**

**Make History  
in New Orleans  
Make a Difference  
for America**

Join the Corps in rebuilding the Big Easy

**New HPO Recruitment Brochure**

**M**ake History in New Orleans-*Make a Difference for America* is the phase being used in a campaign to encourage Corps of Engineers employees and others to check out Corps job opportunities in New Orleans.

Because the area is rebounding after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Corps is working hard on its reconstruction program to help restore, repair and improve the hurricane protection system.

Corps employees are encouraged to check out career options in a city that is often called the Jewel of the South, the Big Easy and the Crescent City. The brochure promotes New Orleans as one of the most beautiful and interesting places in America, renowned for its unique culture and cuisine, as well as the home of Mardi Gras and the French Quarter.

However, the city offers a lot more for those who choose to work for the


**Brig. Gen. Crear meets with city and parish leaders**



Brig. Gen. Robert Crear (center), Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, meets regularly with local elected officials to discuss ongoing hurricane protection projects. Shown at a September 28 meeting are, from left, Col. Jeffrey Bedey, Commander of the Hurricane Protection Office; Hon. Aaron Broussard, President of Jefferson Parish; Brig. Gen. Crear; Col. Richard Wagenaar, Commander, New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers; and Hon. David Camardelle, Mayor of Grand Isle. (USACE Photo by Susan Spaht)


Corps there. **They can be a part of one of the largest public works projects in American history.**

Commander and Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, in encouraging staff to come to New Orleans, said, "I can't promise you fame or glory, but I can guarantee you the satisfaction of being part of something bigger than yourself - of truly making a difference in the future of this city."

And while helping to rebuild New Orleans, potential employees will have the opportunity for promotion and eligibility for higher-level positions throughout the Corps, and "return rights" for the position they left at their home base. 

*Interested employees should call (504) 862-2800 or visit [www.mvn.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil) [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil) or [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)*

**Pump Capacity Report**



**17th Street Canal.....4,060 cfs  
London Ave. Canal....2,800 cfs  
Orleans Ave. Canal... 2,200 cfs**

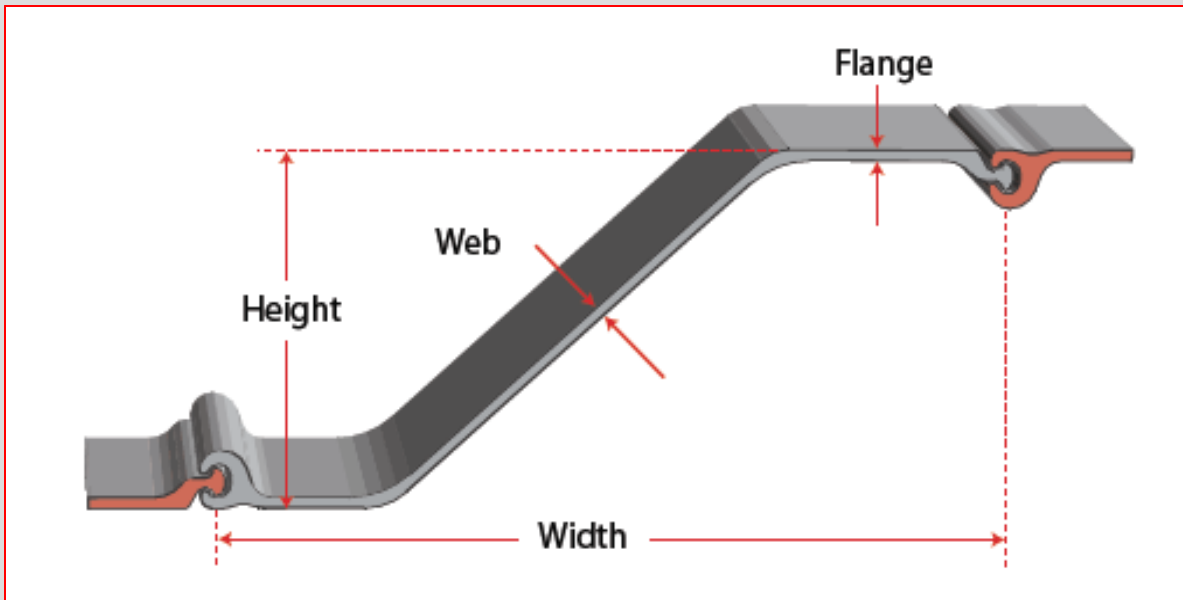
**As of October 16, 2006**

Note: The Status Report Newsletter will give weekly reports on the pump capacity of the three outfall canals under construction. For more details, please visit this website:

<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps/pumpcomp.htm>

## Lakefront levee tie-ins to be longer, stronger

*Hurricane sheet-pile construction expected to begin this month*



This is the standard steel sheet-pile that will be driven to strengthen the East Jefferson levee and pump stations tie-ins on the lakefront. The strong, corrugated configuration is created by reversing and re-reversing the pieces so they form a continuous interlock. The “web” is one-half-inch thick for this specification of steel. Length, actually 60 feet for each sheet, is front to rear in the graphic. The width is 22.6 inches and the height 15.1 inches. (USACE Illustration)

Installation of deeper and stronger sheet piles to protect two pump stations on Lake Pontchartrain from hurricane storm surges is expected to begin this month.

Two contracts to improve 1,406 feet of floodwall tie-ins connecting the hurricane levees to pump stations in East Jefferson parish were awarded on Sept. 20 to these small, disadvantaged builders:

- Pump Station 2, at the mouth of Suburban Canal, \$1.1 million to Buck Town Contractors & Co. of Kenner for \$1.1 million.
- Pump Station 3, at the mouth

of Elmwood Canal, \$1.3 million to Progressive Construction Co. of Alexandria.

The steel sheet piles will be 60 feet long, three times the length of existing piles,” said Mervin Morehiser, the Corps project manager.

“The existing piles are a legacy inherited by the federal project, and they need to be replaced by new, stronger steel.”

The longest single section of sheet pile will extend 600 feet westward from Pump Station 2 on Suburban Canal.

Each section of sheet pile is 22.6 inches wide and one-half inch

thick. That works out to almost two tons or 3,960 pounds per 60-foot section.

Angled shapes and interlocking pieces give the sheet pile structures strength by endowing it with corrugated design.

Each piece is identical and looks like a “Z” stretched and elongated by pulling its horizontal elements in opposing directions.

The construction will be done in coordination with the East Jefferson Levee District, the non-federal sponsor. However, under post-Katrina legislation, the federal government will pay 100 percent of the project cost. 