



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report

August 3, 2007

Col. Lee Becomes New Orleans District Commander

"I know the eyes of America and the people of New Orleans are focused on everything we are doing here in southern Louisiana."

- Col. Alvin Lee

By Susan Spaht

On July 20, Col. Alvin B. Lee assumed command of the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers in a ceremony attended by Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp; Chief of Engineers; Brig. Gen. Robert C. Crear, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division; other military officers and Corps leaders; members of the local levee boards; numerous local and state dignitaries; as well as employees of the New Orleans District.

Col. Lee is the 60th District Engineer and Commander since 1804 when the New Orleans District was formed.

He succeeds Col. Richard P. Wagenaar who has retired from the U.S. Army after 28 years of service. Col. Wagenaar was the New Orleans District Commander for nearly two and a half years; he assumed those duties only two months before Hurricane Katrina struck the city and the Gulf Coast.

Col. Lee's previous assignment was



Col. Alvin B. Lee gives his acceptance speech on June 20 as he became the 60th Commander of the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers. (USACE Photo by Anne Marino)

as a fellow in the Secretary of Defense Corporate Fellows Program assigned to Caterpillar Inc. in Peoria, Ill. Previous to that assignment he was District Engineer of the Charleston, S.C. district.

Col. Lee is now responsible for a district which is part of a Corps team working on appropriations exceeding \$7 billion for hurricane protection and restoration. It is the largest domestic appropriations in the Corps of Engineers.

The new Commander is a distinguished military graduate of Georgia Southern University and holds a masters degree in Engineering Management from St. Martins University. His military schooling includes the

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CHANGE OF COMMAND

In keeping with time-honored military tradition...

Brig. Gen. Robert C. Crear, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, presided over the change of command ceremonies which took place June 20 at the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers.

The formal "change of command" ceremonies began with Unit Colors being presented to outgoing commander Col. Richard Wagenaar by Ed Watford, Deputy District Engineer for Project Management.


Watford, the civilian leader of the District, took part in the Army ceremony to symbolize the continuity and important role that civilian employees play in the daily operation and success of the Corps of Engineers' missions.

Wagenaar then handed the "flag of command" to Brig. Gen. Crear symbolizing his relinquishing of command. Brig. Gen. Crear handed the Unit Flag to Col. Lee,

signifying the passing of authority, responsibility and trust to the new commander. Both held the Unit Flag while the official orders were read.



Ed Watford, left, accepts the Unit Flag from Col. Alvin Lee during "change of command" ceremonies. (USACE Photo by Anne Marino)

Finally, Col. Lee handed the Unit Flag back to Watford (see photo above) which completed the formal "change of command". 

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Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College.

In his acceptance speech, Col. Lee said, "I know the eyes of America and the people of New Orleans are focused on everything we are doing here in Southern Louisiana.

The opportunities ahead are many:

100-year elevation levels for the hurricane protection system, tropical storm readiness, and rebuilding the trust of the citizens of Southeast Louisiana.

These are the opportunities that our team in New Orleans is focused on and I am ready to lead them in accomplishing these critical missions.

My family and I are excited to be here and look forward to becoming a part of this historic community."



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**Status Report Newsletter**

Task Force Hope

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PUMP CAPACITY REPORT

17th Street Canal.....approx. 5,200 cfs
London Ave. Canal.....approx. 2,800 cfs
Orleans Ave. Canal.....approx. 2,200 cfs

As of August 2, 2007

Note: The Status Report Newsletter will give regular reports on the pump capacity of the three temporary outfall canals under construction. For more details, please visit: www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps



Armoring: a Critical Element of HPS

New techniques being studied by Corps' armoring team

By Susan Spaht

Congress passed the 4th Emergency Supplemental Appropriations in June 2006 which earmarked \$3.1 billion for the hurricane protection system (HPS) in the greater New Orleans area. Of that amount, \$170 million was set aside for armoring of critical elements within the HPS.

Armoring was one of the preliminary recommendations of the Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force (IPET) report, an independent study of the HPS following Hurricane Katrina.

As defined for use in the HPS, armoring is *natural or artificial material placed on or around a levee, flood-wall, or other structure to reduce damage to that structure when confronted by overflow or overtopping from a storm event that exceeds design intent.*

Soon after the 4th Supplemental was passed, the Corps of Engineers formed an armoring team to determine which areas of the HPS require armoring, to prioritize these areas, and to decide which type of armoring is appropriate for each area. Critical areas of the HPS include transition points where levees and floodwalls meet; where pipelines cross levee alignments and where levees are deficient.

The mission of the Corps' armoring team is to research, identify and evaluate the most appropriate and cost-effective solution for strengthening critical areas of the HPS levees



Bayou Dupre floodgate at the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, above, was heavily armored following Hurricane Katrina. (USACE Photo)


and transition points.

Armoring generally refers to levee back slope protection, front side protection and/or bank stabilization. There is a wide variety of available materials and techniques for use as armoring. The most basic method is grass (e.g., the Mississippi River levees). Other armoring materials include: rip-rap (large chunks of concrete), concrete slab, gabions (wire baskets filled with rock), turf reinforcement mats, articulated concrete mattresses (interlocking blocks), asphalt, and numerous types of geotextile materials (generally made of synthetic material such as plastic or polyester and show a pattern close to a grid or weave).

The armoring team is evaluating new techniques for armoring, testing those materials, and looking for new and innovative methods and materials to use for armoring.

Not all materials and techniques are appropriate for all locations. In some areas, grass would not be sufficient to prevent erosion from a storm's wave surge. In other areas, a heavy material such as concrete would be inappropriate because it could cause a levee to subside due to the weight.

Armoring is already underway or complete in some areas. For the most part, however, armoring will be the last phase of construction after achieving the 100-year elevation for the hurricane protection system.

According to April Villa, the Senior Project Manager on the Corps' armoring team, "Our number one concern in armoring the levees – and this applies to the entire concerted efforts of the Corps of Engineers - is **public safety**. We want to build the safest hurricane protection system we can, and armoring will be an integral part of that protection." 

Faces of Hope

By David Mack

If you want a pre-, during and/or post-Katrina view of the New Orleans District, you want Nancy Mayberry. Not only is her memory nearly photographic, but her files definitely are. As the District's unofficial archivist – actually, a Visual Information Specialist – Nancy maintains a library of hundreds of thousands of photographs, some dating back to the 1800s.

She's been doing so since 1982 when she joined the Corps' Public Affairs Office and was charged with getting a collection of slides in order. Over the following 25 years, she's lent her graphic talents to briefings, presentations, exhibits, brochures, pamphlets, posters, coloring books – you name it.

Those talents have been much in demand since Hurricane Katrina. She's put together countless presentations for Task Force Hope, some for internal consumption, others to take to the public, still others to be used by policymakers to evaluate progress or even to make funding decisions.

"I was able to put together some photos for the Louisiana Coastal Area Study," says Nancy. The Corps was going after Congressional funding and they wanted photos that would show how serious the situation was.

"I suggested using a chronological view of different areas. The most dramatic was the Empire jetties. The photos began in the 1930s and in

10-year increments – to 2004 – they went from solid land to open water. All that land was gone."

She also supplied photos used by director Spike Lee in his film "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts," provided historic images to the new Mississippi River State Museum and is helping the Port of New Orleans restore some of the files they lost in the storm.



Nancy Mayberry

Not only can Nancy locate the photos necessary to illustrate a particular point – "I think there's a 1986 photo of that canal," she tells one client – but she has the design know-how and artistic skill to make the product visually appealing. A graduate of the University of New Orleans with a degree in Fine Arts, Nancy spent five years as an art teacher before joining the Corps.

She thoroughly enjoys her work, most of it anyway. Loves the research, enjoys graphic design, says it's "fun" to solve a photographic puzzle. Nancy's not big on re-filing photos, and with the collection amassed in the New Orleans District – a col-

lection that ranges from glass negatives to slides, traditional plastic-coated negatives to digital images – it's hard to blame her. On her "to do" list are 14 DVDs of photos taken by Task Force Guardian. The Corps archivists would like her help with identification and logging, when she has the time.

It helps that she has what she calls "very good visual recall" – not technically a photographic memory, but a pretty keen ability to remember what she's seen (and for that matter, read or heard) before. It's a blessing when she's asked to come up with a particular photo from a particular time, a curse when her head starts playing some of those bad tunes and obscure song lyrics that reside in there.

She's also a speed-reader, which helps when she's pouring over photographic logs – some computer print outs, many handwritten – in search of a requested image.

Outside of work, Nancy's a fly-fisher (ties her own flies), woodcarver, jewelry maker and sculptress for Mardi Gras floats. Last December, at the urging of a co-worker, she started her own "hat of the month" club. Seems the overhead lighting puts a strain on her eyes, so Nancy wears a hat to cut down some of the glare. She makes her own, of course.

"I love what I do," Nancy says. "There's a lot more of it since the hurricanes, but that's okay. It's all good."

