



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New Orleans District

# News Release

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504-862-2201

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

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## Corps hosts Blessing of the Fleet May 13

*Former New Orleans Archbishop Hannan to say the blessing*

**What.** New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will host its 2005 Blessing of the Fleet ceremony.

**When.** Friday, May 13, 10-11 a.m.

**Where.** Corps of Engineers' wharf on the Mississippi River, 7400 Leake Avenue, New Orleans.

**Why.** The time-honored maritime tradition is celebrated annually around the globe. Its historical roots come from our ancestors' awe of the most powerful force in nature, the ocean. Understanding the perils of navigation, seafarers for thousands of years sought divine intervention to stay afloat and survive. The ceremony will also give New Orleans District employees an opportunity to meet the captains and crewmembers, and learn more about the vessels.

**Who.** New Orleans District Engineer Col. Peter J. Rowan and former Archbishop Philip M. Hannan of New Orleans. In Europe during World War II, Hannan served as the U.S. Army chaplain of the 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regiment, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.

**Attendance.** The Blessing of the Fleet is an internal Corps of Engineers ceremony. Media are welcome. Contact 862-2201.

**What's to see?** Participating vessels forming a single line and sailing upstream past the reviewing officials. 25-30-member concert band, American Legion Post 175, Metairie. Corps boats will provide media with on-water camera shots (female reporters – no heels or dresses, please). Crewmembers will conduct tours and explain vessels' equipment.

**Driving directions.** [www.mvn.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil), scroll to bottom of page.

Some of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer vessels forming the flotilla:

**Dredge Wheeler** - The *Wheeler* is the largest hopper dredge of the Corps of Engineers' government fleet. Built in 1982, this 410-foot, 10,400-horsepower twin propeller diesel ship is used to maintain deep-draft navigation channels throughout the Gulf Coast.

**Launch Wheeler** - Carried aboard the Dredge *Wheeler* and launched as needed, the *Launch Wheeler* is a 44-foot crew and survey boat used to transport personnel and supplies to and from the mother ship as well as conduct on-site hydrographic surveys.

**M/V Kent** - The M/V *Kent* supports the in-house maintenance work at our navigation and flood control structures through out the district, and is the primary mover of the Derrick Brownlee.

**M/V Bienville** - The M/V *Bienville* supports the in-house maintenance work at our navigation and flood control structures throughout the district.

**OB-109** - This vessel was modified to assist with dive operations. The vessel is mostly used for general work around IHNC Lock and to investigate marine accidents and damage.

**OB-164** - Placed in service in 1997, the vessel is used for aquatic reconnaissance and contract inspection work.

These vessels are used for reconnaissance and hydrographic surveying: **M/V BOPP** (built in 1985), **M/V BRETON** (built in 1984), **M/V GRETNA** (built in 1993), **M/V LABORDE** (built in 1987), **M/V LAFOURCHE** (built in 2002), **W-46** (built in 1968), and the **OB-167** and **OB-169** which perform single-beam and sonar hydrographic surveying.

Other government and commercial vessels have been invited to participate.