



US Army Corps
of Engineers
New Orleans District

Riverside

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August/September 2006

Pinpointing Joyce Hamilton

**Canal closures -
What happens if another storm hits?**

Baummy receives Wheeler Award

THE NEW NORMAL *This Mold House*

ONE YEAR RENEWED SPIRIT

Dredging can free up navigation

Plan for rebuilding coast



Carrollton Gage

Imagine it's mid-August 2005 and this ad runs in the newspaper:

Urgent need for a team of about 1200 with an ability to deliver expertise in a range of engineering, scientific, technical and support areas. Must be committed to a mission that will transform an area devastated by the worst natural disaster in this nation's history. Ability to excel under intense pressure and withstand a barrage of criticism individually and collectively without losing focus. Capable of demonstrating high energy despite long hours and personal burdens; diverse backgrounds welcome; ability to mobilize quickly, adapt to change, take responsibility, and work with others. Skilled in recognizing when a coworker needs a boost. Ability to keep a sense of humor despite adversity. Must remain appreciative of family and friends who tolerate absences and distractions. Must never give up, lose the sense of urgency in advancing forward or lose sight of the overall mission. Must remain passionate about contributing to a defining moment in an organization's existence.

We got the job. It's more of a calling than winning a competition. It changes almost everything. We now have a new compass by which we filter, measure and gauge the events of our lives - what happened pre-Katrina and what is happening post-Katrina. With post-Katrina eyes, we wonder why some things were important to us before the storm - why we worried about things that now seem trivial.

We've learned much - how those who lost everything can inspire those who did not; how personal struggles are bearable because of the compassion of others; how dedication to duty breeds heroes; how people we've never met want to help us and people we don't know want to blame us; how a support system at work can make the difference in trudging through a tough day; how life's complications keep beleaguering coworkers who could use a break; how sheetrock has attained treasure trove status in our eyes; how knowing the mission seems innate and from the heart, rather than the result of a written statement.

Now imagine that you have received a voice mail from someone you know who has seen very little of you since Katrina and the message is: "Thanks for all the work you are doing. I know things must seem overwhelming at times. But you are supposed to be in the job you are in at this time in your life, so keep doing what you are doing. We're depending on you." No need to imagine - that was an actual message. Pass it on!

When you feel yourself getting overwhelmed, just remember the words of the wise Joe Klock Sr., who wrote, "The measure of our future success and happiness will not be the quality of the cards we are dealt by unseen hands, but the poise and wisdom with which we play them. Choose to play each hand to the best of your ability without wasting the time or energy it takes to complain about either the cards or the dealer or the often unfair rules of the game. Play both the winning and the losing hands as best you can, then fold the cards and ante up for the next deal!"

Denise Frederick

Denise Frederick, chief of Office of Counsel



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Chief
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Winner: The "J" Award, the highest Department of Army journalism honor, 2000 and 2003.

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Though Katrina is long gone, its lasting affects can still be seen in newspapers every day.



Command message

It's been just over a year since South Louisiana and the Gulf Coast took the one-two punch of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita! It's also been an emotion-filled year with an immense number of personal and professional challenges that each of you have met. Thank you for your sacrifice! Many of you are back on your feet as we head into this second year post-Katrina. (Keep those who still must endure challenges always in your thoughts and prayers!) Looking back, would you have ever believed it to be possible - especially considering the vast devastation throughout the city and the region? Some of you still live in trailers and others have moved to new neighborhoods, but the one constant is your dedication as members of the USACE team and as outstanding public servants.

Your efforts and those of the team are historic. History will tell the story of your dedication, perseverance and professionalism! And your dedication to the Corps hasn't gone unnoticed. Task Force Guardian did five years of work in less than 10 months. The Guardian Team and all who supported its mission, as well as the district and all of its supporters, executed almost a \$1.5 billion program since Katrina. Typically it would take us four to five years to execute that program. And the execution of that mission was completed under less than ideal conditions in an extremely difficult operating environment. But it got done! We were also able to execute MVN's normal civil-works program and restore the hurricane protection system to pre-Katrina levels to provide protection for the 2006 hurricane season. Your efforts were acknowledged by the President during the Katrina



anniversary events. That's a big deal - be proud!!

The term "post-Katrina" is now part of the vocabulary! Well, we are post-Katrina - at somewhere around phase four or five in regard to the response and recovery. The District operating environment has been forever changed and in a few years y'all will be starting sentences with "Back when I was young ...right after Katrina that is..." and the District will have adopted

a new "normal." It'll take a few years, but it will happen. We have to accept the new normal and move forward, regardless of the challenges it puts in front of us.

The District is now operating in an environment where most districts don't usually operate, and I hope each of you applies that to the business at hand.

"Pre-Katrina" we typically had a defined process for planning and execution, plenty of time to get something done and very limited resources. The post-Katrina environment is one of planning on the go with very short deadlines and a much-improved resource base. But today's environment is also one of disorder. We're working through the Task Force Guardian close-out and the formation of Task Force Hope (TFH) and the Hurricane Protection Office (HPO). There are many hiring actions in the works, which brings the added challenge of determining who you will work with when there are so many new people

– not just in the district but in HPO and TFH as well.

But we are up to these new challenges, just as we were able to meet the challenges Katrina and Rita blew at us. We're redefining processes daily and will continue to do so as we move toward 2010 and beyond. This new, post-Katrina world is indeed a new world, but it is one in which the New Orleans District and you will make history. I am confident you will make the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers the foremost district within the Corps of Engineers. I am proud to be your commander.

Searching for answers

The Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force (IPET) final draft report provides recommendations for the hurricane protection system

by Eric Hughes and Melanie Marcec

“One thing made clear to us from the investigations was that we were wrong about the system’s performance during the hurricane, and that leads me to an issue that has weighed heavily on our minds. The Corps is responsible for the projects we build and manage. And, we are accountable to the American people. We continually strive to improve and to ensure all projects are accomplished with the highest standards.”

These were the words from Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, the Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during a June 1 press conference in New Orleans. Strock’s comments coincided with the release of a final draft report outlining what went wrong with the hurricane protection system (HPS) during Hurricane Katrina.

After Katrina made her claim on the Gulf Coast, she left behind miles of devastation and many unanswered questions. There were 50 levee breaches around southeast Louisiana that caused 169 miles of damaged levees. For days and weeks following the storm, 80 percent of the Big Easy was underwater. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers faced one of its worst calamities ever imagined – a damaged levee system.

As quickly as the storm left, the Corps sought out answers to what caused sections of the hurricane protection system to fail.

On October 10, 2005, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commissioned the Interagency Performance Evalua-

tion Taskforce (IPET) to provide scientific and engineering answers to questions about the performance of the New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana hurricane protection system during Katrina. On June 1, IPET released the nine-volume draft final report on the performance evaluation of the system. The report’s mission was to determine the status of the system before Katrina, how the storm forces affected the system, how the system performed during the storm, what were the societal consequences due to the system damage, and the risks and reliability of the system after June 1.

According to IPET project director Dr. Edward Link, who is also the senior fellow and senior research engineer at the University of Maryland, the hurricane protection system was a system in name only. Dr. Link stated at the June 1 press conference that the system did not perform as one due to incompleteness, inconsistent levels of protection and lack of redundancy. The system had maintained use of the standard project hurricane (SPH) design initiated after Hurricane Betsy struck New Orleans in 1965, yet the SPH standards were updated in 1979.

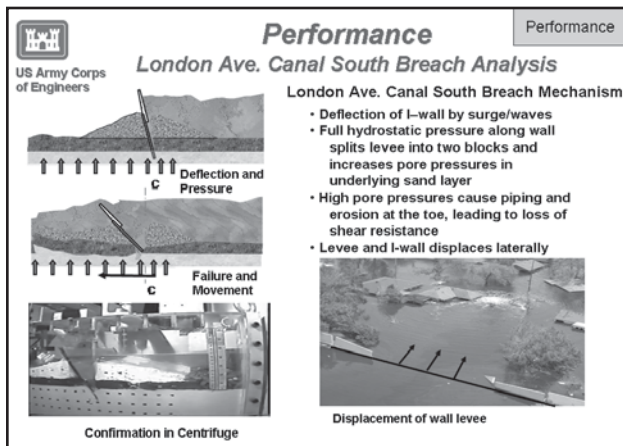
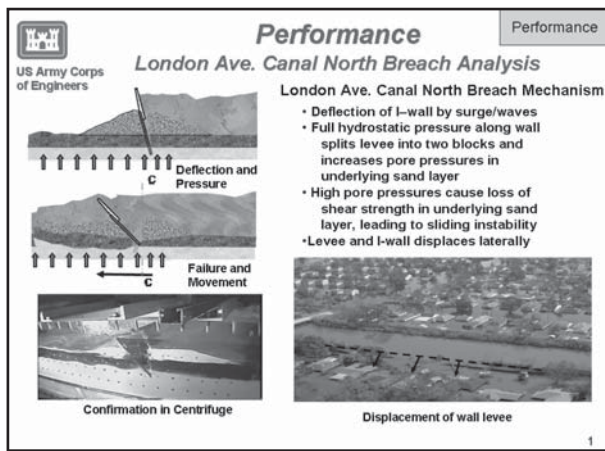
IPET findings also indicated that Katrina’s record surge and long wave period exceeded the design criteria resulting in the levee breaches. The report found that levee overtopping and extensive flooding were inevitable, but the loss could have been reduced had the system been complete and at authorized elevations.

About IPET

IPET was established following Katrina on October 10, 2005, by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide scientific and engineering answers to questions about the performance of the New Orleans hurricane and flood protection system during Hurricane Katrina. The task force was comprised of some of the nation’s leading engineers and scientists from all levels of governments, academia and private industry. The team included approximately 150 engineers, scientists and other professionals, representing more than 50 organizations. There were 10 analysis teams that used some of the most advanced scientific and engineering methods and tools in their comprehensive study.

IPET investigated five elements of the HPS and its performance:

- 1) The System: documenting the pre-Katrina characteristics of the HPS and comparing them to the original design,
- 2) The Storm: understanding the surge and wave environment created by the storm and the forces that hit the levees and floodwalls,
- 3) The Performance: understanding the performance of the levees and floodwalls and assessing the residual capability of the reconstituted HPS,
- 4) The Consequences: understanding the resultant flooding (including the role of the pump stations) and the losses due to flooding from Katrina, and assessing the extent of flooding and losses if no catastrophic breaching had occurred, and
- 5) The Risk: determining the risk and reliability of the HPS prior to Katrina and after repairs were completed on June 1, 2006.



17th Street Floodwall: What went wrong?

IPET announced that a combination of weak clay soils and a deflection of the sheet pile combined to play significant roles in the breach of the 17th Street Canal floodwall. The analysis was part of the IPET report released March 10.

According to the preliminary analysis, the failure mechanism of the I-wall breach at the 17th Street Canal involved both the sheet pile and the clay layer, not the clay-peat interface as many theories had suggested. The clay layer was much stronger at the center of the floodwall levee since the levee's own weight had helped consolidate the clay.

However, toward the landward side toe of the levee, the clay layer was relatively weak. The water forces on the sheet pile initiated a deflection of the floodwall – basically the sheet pile pushed landward, but the canal side of the levee stayed in place, in essence splitting the levee into two parts.

This left a gap or crack down the canal face of the sheet pile that allowed full hydrostatic pressure, or weight of the water, to push down the face of the floodwall sheet pile. This enormous pressure went down the sheet pile to its bottom. This force, coupled with the relatively weak shear strengths in the clay layer, allowed the whole landward side of the levee to move laterally within the clay layer, and the levee section slid backwards towards the neighborhood.

This breach mechanism was not anticipated in the original floodwall design. IPET evaluations indicate that it was the combination of the two factors, the weak clay layer and the sheet pile deflection, that caused the breach mechanism at the 17th Street location. The floodwall would have maintained its integrity had it faced either condition individually, but the combination of the two conditions initiated the failure.

IPET analyses were also presented for the London Avenue Canal, Inner Harbor Navigational Canal (IHNC), Gulf Intracoastal Waterway/Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) and the Plaquemines levees.

During the months following Katrina, IPET's lessons learned and findings were delivered to Task Force Guardian (TFG), the Corps cadre of St. Louis and New Orleans District employees handling the ongoing levee repairs damaged by Katrina. "IPET made a point to immediately share any recommendations with TFG," said Wayne Stroupe, the IPET public affairs spokesperson.

IPET recommendations to TFG included numerous significant findings, such as using deeper sheet piles to provide stronger floodwall stability and armoring floodwalls to protect against scour and erosion if the wall is overtopped.

"Besides input to TFG for repairs, IPET lessons learned will be incorporated for use in future design guidance for protection projects around New Orleans. IPET results are also being used by the Corps as we look at flood protection projects around the country," said Stroupe.

An independent panel from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) provided continuous review of IPET's findings to assure objectivity. Furthermore, both IPET and ASCE's findings are being analyzed by the National Research Council (NRC).

Currently IPET is finalizing the risk analysis and methodology, to offer a more comprehensive look at the hazards, conditions and consequences confronting a hurricane protection system. The results to this portion of the report will assist decision makers in planning for future

protection projects, including the Cat-5 Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Project (LaCPR) and other coastal area hurricane protection projects seeking protection against hurricanes. Both ASCE and NRC final reviews are anticipated by September. IPET will address the results and deliver a final report in October.

For more information on IPET, please visit <https://ipet.wes.army.mil>.

Outfall canal *(part one of a three part series)*

Newman new canal captain

by Leo Skinner

Everyone in New Orleans has a story to tell about where they were when Hurricane Katrina hit last August. About a year later, nearly everyone knows where they will be in the event of another hurricane or tropical storm. Ray Newman is no exception.

Newman of Operations Division, knows exactly where he will be if and when the next storm hits the area. "I'll be in the city of New Orleans directing my team's work from the 17th Street Canal pumping station, making sure the floodgates are closed and rain water is flowing out of the city into Lake Pontchartrain."

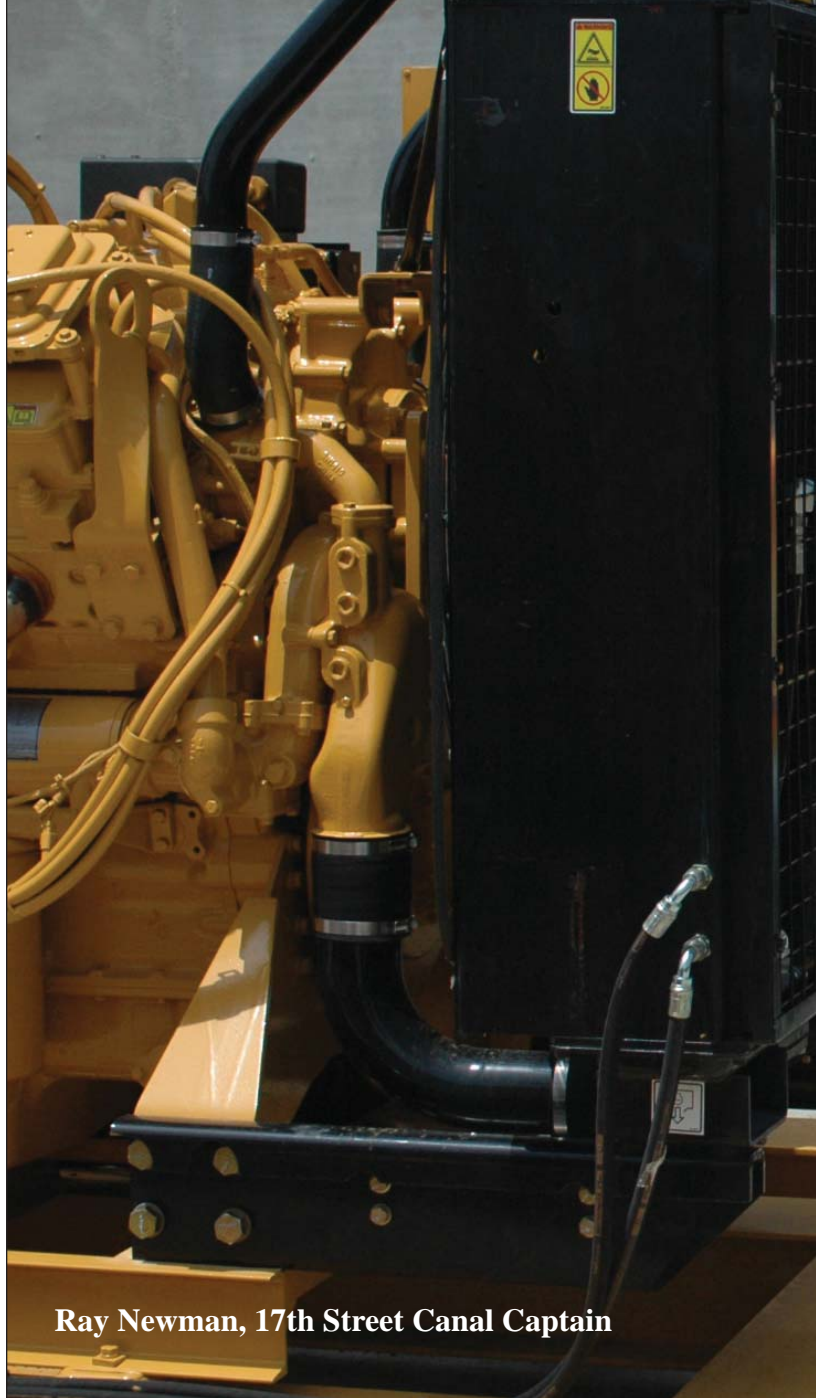
Newman has been visiting his team's home away from home on a weekly basis, at the same time reviewing and rewriting gate closing and pumping procedures with his staff. Although the pumping system will be fully automated, USACE staff will be on-site at all three locations to monitor pumping activity and assure the flood protection system continues to function properly.

Having grown up in the Lakeview area of New Orleans, Newman says he feels connected to the city. "This is the most exciting work I've been involved in, and I understand the responsibility of restoring the public's faith in our flood protection system. This is an important assignment, and I take a lot of pride in it."

Newman is one of three canal captains assigned to manage operations at the three outfall canals on Lake Pontchartrain during times of tropical storm activity. The other two captains are Carl Robinson and Donald Constantine. Each captain has a four-member support staff. In case a tropical event has enough surge to require gate closures, teams will be at the 17th Street, London Avenue and Orleans Avenue sites, and canal captains will be at nearby pumping stations with the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board personnel.

According to James St. Germain, project manager in the Hurricane Protection Office (HPO), crews are working 24/7 to get the interim pumping structures ready at the three outfall canals. Once completed, the interim floodgates and pumping system will maintain water levels within the canals and lower the risk of floodwall failure.

However, Ray Newman is ready now. He knows that every day that passes without a tropical storm brings him closer to the end of the 2006 hurricane season. He understands that protecting residents from hurricane flooding is a team effort and he is ready to play his part. "We have to work as a team; it all has to come together at the right time," said Newman. "I know we can do it!"



Ray Newman, 17th Street Canal Captain

What happens if another storm hits?

"This has been an unprecedented operation with activity around the clock," said St. Germain. "Our contractors have been very good and have really stepped up the pace to get these structures operational."

St. Germain added, "When a tropical storm is detected in the Gulf and might impact New Orleans, the Corps district commander can decide to begin gate closure and notify local officials prior to lowering the gates. The decision to close the gates is based on water surge." Cranes will be used to raise and lower the gates until they are fitted with electric winches.

Massive pumps about the size of a train engine are being installed to help pump water from the city through



Scott Ritcke

the canals and into Lake Ponchartrain. The capacity of the pumps at the closure structures is less than the city's drainage stations; therefore, pumping operations at the city's pump stations will be limited to the capacity at the closure structure to maintain the safe water level in the canal.

Gates and pumps are operational at the Orleans Avenue and London Avenue canals, with capacities of 2,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) and 2,800 cfs, respectively. The capacity of the city's pumps is 10,000 cfs at the 17th Street Canal; 2,700 cfs at Orleans Avenue Canal and 8,000 cfs at the London Avenue Canal.

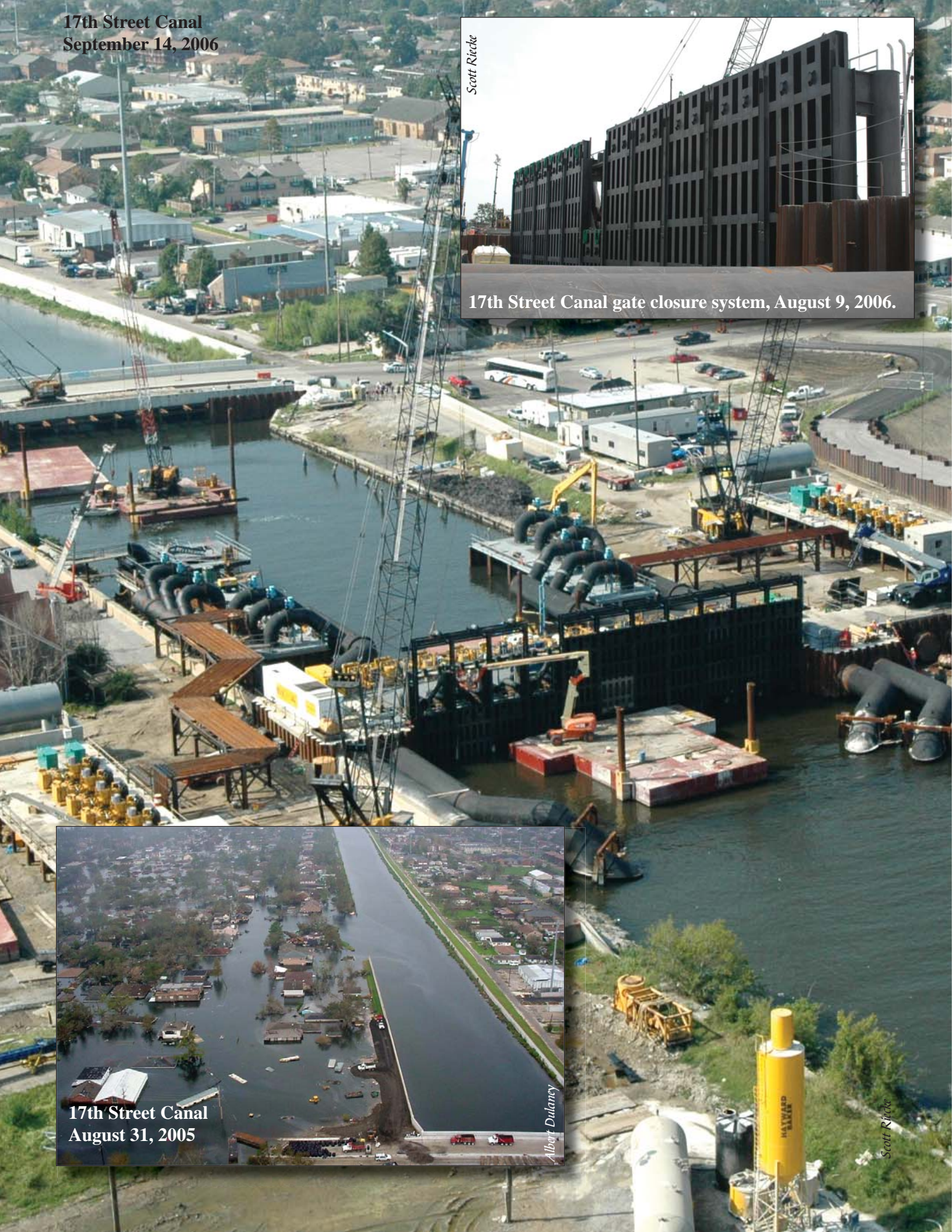
Following gate closure, pumps will be used to maintain safe water canal elevations according to the following specified levels: 5 feet for 17th Street. and London Avenue and 8 feet at Orleans Avenue.

Because installation of the temporary pumps is not complete, an emergency operational plan has been developed and will go into effect if a tropical storm threatens the area.

Current plans are to build permanent pumping stations at each one of the three outfall canals. HPO is overseeing these projects and has started work on options for placement of these permanent stations. HPO will seek public input on the options.

St. Germain noted that construction on the interim outfall canals and pumps should be completed later this year, but he emphasized that construction schedules can change. "Considering the size of the project and the short time frame for completion, we always have to allow for construction and manufacturing delays," said St. Germain.

17th Street Canal
September 14, 2006



Scott Riecke

17th Street Canal gate closure system, August 9, 2006.



17th Street Canal
August 31, 2005

Albert Dulany

Scott Riecke

Safe Haven not a guarantee

Guidelines that may make a difference in evacuation plans

by **Melanie Marcec**

If a storm threatens the district this hurricane season, expect the normal procedure. Select teams will be ordered to evacuate and the district will probably close. When the storm passes, all employees should return to work. This is how the district usually deals with hurricanes. However, Katrina was not a usual storm. Before Hurricane Katrina hit on August 29, 2005, District Commander Col. Richard Wagenaar ordered an evacuation and authorized Safe Haven benefits for district employees and their families. This was the first time in the contiguous United States that an evacuation opened the Safe Haven Program.

Safe Haven is a Department of Defense (DOD) program established by Congress to cover pay, travel and lodging expenses for DOD employees forced to evacuate from their normal duty station. And according to Rich Flores, chief of Resource Management, although most district employees received Safe Haven benefits for Hurricane Katrina, these benefits are not automatic for every evacuation situation.

There are two basic requirements for district employees to receive Safe Haven coverage. "First," Flores said, "the evacuation must be ordered by the installation commander or anyone above the commander with proper authorization." The order to evacuate may also come from the MVD commander or the commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Flores stresses that only persons occupying specific positions in DOD can authorize an evacuation. Before Hurricane Rita, some section supervisors advised their employees to evacuate. Unfortunately, these could not be considered official evacuation orders. The second requirement to receive Safe Haven coverage is that whoever orders the official evacuation must also authorize Safe Haven.

While Safe Haven is not an automatic benefit for most evacuees, the program does offer guaranteed benefits for families of emergency team members. In an emergency, specific team members will receive evacuation orders and authorization for their families to leave the area. Because designated employees must work during a storm event and can't assist their families, Safe Haven benefits are guaranteed for these family members.

Other important points to remember are—

- Even when the district commander directs employees to comply with local government evacuations, it does not guarantee Safe Haven allowances.
- Employees who choose not to follow the commander's official order to evacuate or evacuate



Many New Orleans District employees worked tirelessly in Vicksburg during and after Hurricane Katrina

after the storm has passed will not receive Safe Haven allowances.

- There are authorized evacuation locations, but employees and their families may evacuate to any location in the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii).

- Safe Haven benefits will be either the actual cost or the rate at the authorized location—whichever is less.

- Employees are advised to remain within 550 miles of New Orleans in case they are directed to report to work.

- Any employee may be directed to return to work any job—not just the job for which they were hired—at any district location.

- When directed to work, employees must report within two calendar days.

Safe Haven payments may be authorized for up to 180 days, but the benefits will most likely end before then. Safe Haven coverage for Hurricane Katrina evacuees ended well before 180 days. "By November 20th, most Safe Haven payments were stopped," Flores said. "The early end of benefits was not to seem heartless or cruel, but to give folks that extra push to put their lives back together." Plus, getting employees back to work and reconstituting the district is always a high priority.

While Hurricane Katrina did her best to change our landscape, she didn't change district Safe Haven procedures. As in the past, most storms won't require an official evacuation or a Safe Haven allowance. But when a storm bears down on New Orleans, just remember the old saying, "Better safe, than sorry." Take care of yourself and your family by getting the latest emergency information. Check the district website at www.mvn.usace.army.mil or call the district emergency information line, 1-877-533-5224. Contact Gloria Reeves of the Resource Management Office at 862-1140 for answers to your questions about Safe Haven.



Joyce Hamilton

by Eric Hughes

Through war zones and flood zones, Joyce Hamilton has seen the spectrum of both worlds in a matter of six months. Hamilton, a program assistant in Engineering Division, Control Branch and part of the CEFMS Support Team, was stationed in war-torn Iraq only to return to the harsh reality of starting over in a flood-ravaged New Orleans.

Like so many others, Hamilton sang the recovery blues of a new New Orleans. The city, known as the Big Easy and synonymous with the carefree attitude of Mardi Gras, is now acquainted with piles of debris, empty neighborhoods, trailer lots and long lines of desperation. Hamilton endured the loss of her home, her neighborhood, and family and friends, who were displaced all over the country.

In less than a year's time, Joyce experienced two different worlds, both facing unique disasters of their own. She embarked on the dry, sandy environment of a battered and violent

Lt. Gen. Carl Strock thanked Joyce Hamilton for her work in Iraq last summer.

Baghdad in November 2004. Her goal was to be a part of a historic international mission. "I felt I needed to do something significant," said Hamilton, "It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of history."

As a program analyst, Hamilton worked in Construction Division, Construction Services Branch for the Gulf Region Central (GRC). She was the Assistant to the Administrator of the Resident Management System for GRC, which included GRD (Green Zone) and other outlying camps, such as Fallujah, Al Asad, Camp Loyalty, Blue Diamond and others. Her duties included inputting information and assisting others with construction contract databases, updates and payments, time and attendance for Iraqi



employees and assigning common access cards to GRC employees.

Iraq was a whole new world for Joyce. During her time there, she described the living conditions as unique but acceptable. She endured living in tiny quarters, working long hours, harsh sandstorms, and the constant reminder of being in the most dangerous part of the world. "There were sandbags that covered our windows," said Hamilton, who remembers hearing bombs and darting to the center of the room with her coworkers on a few occasions, "but nonetheless, we felt safe there."

Hamilton is one of many district employees to venture into the Middle East to support the Corps' mission. "You cannot go there and not come back changed," said Hamilton, describing the knowledge and friendships she gained during her experience. She explained how her fellow Iraqi employees provided her a broader sense of a global society. "There is so much out there to be learned. The Iraqi people have so much knowledge, but they just don't have the resources."

Amid the chaos of Iraq, Joyce ventured back for a short trip to her beloved and peaceful New Orleans a few days prior to Katrina, blissfully unaware of the events to come. "I came back to continue renovating my home," said Hamilton, whose house is located a half-block from the 17th Street Canal near the Carrollton-Hollygrove section. When Hurricane Katrina plowed ashore with its mighty winds and water surge, Hamilton's life, like so many others in the area, turned upside down. Normal soon became a vague memory.

After the storm, Joyce relocated to San Francisco with friends, anxiously awaiting word on her home and two family members, including her brother who stayed behind. She remained glued to the news, fearing that all that she knew would be lost.

"I knew it when they said that the water levels overflowed the 17th Street Canal, but I didn't want to accept it," said Hamilton, "I felt some kind of way the water didn't get that far, and we didn't get that much water in my neighborhood."

Much to her dismay, Joyce did not find out about her home and family before returning to Iraq in early September 2005. A few days after arriving she finally heard from her brother, who had to break

a hole through the roof to be rescued amid raging floodwaters in their neighborhood.

"He sounded so hysterical about how I should have seen the water," said Hamilton, "It was a funny thing because where I lived and where there was dry land was a difference of just a few blocks. My brother said neighbors managed to come together and rescue others with boats."

Back in Iraq, Joyce remained anxious and uncertain about her home and the city she loves. "I really couldn't deal with it. I couldn't eat, sleep or speak. All I could envision was my neighborhood under water. This is the neighborhood I grew up in and my children grew up in. I went to counseling sessions once a week for a while but the church played a tremendous part in helping me hang in there," said Hamilton, who finally returned to New Orleans to see her home in November 2005, expecting to stay only two weeks to clean up.

"I didn't know how I would react. There was no one in the neighborhood," said Hamilton. "I took a deep breath. I didn't actually cry until I saw my photo albums. I felt I could replace my furniture but when I saw my photo albums and home videos in mush and all the pictures had dissolved, I really started crying."

Joyce's home received almost 7 feet of water and her clean-up process took longer than she anticipated. Thus, she left one battle in Iraq for another in New Orleans and faced a new normal: gutting her home, filing insurance and FEMA claims, searching for contractors, waiting for a trailer and trying to adjust to a less festive New Orleans.

"When you are in Iraq, you always have home to look forward to; in this case, there was nothing to look forward to," said Hamilton. After dealing with her home situation, Joyce decided to explore a different environment by deploying to Afghanistan this past July.

"It was really hard for me to see my home and all the people I love suffer. To see my neighborhoods where I frequently visited in such a disastrous state was overwhelming for me," said Hamilton, who remains optimistic despite all the heartache and pain. "I know the Lord is in control. We will get through this. It's the only thing to do."

Taking one for the team

Wheeler Award recipient Walter Baomy credits team effort

by Roger Cawley

For Walter Baomy, the clock never stopped. "I could always hear it going tick tock, tick tock," he said.

Baomy, chief, Engineering Division, was the senior civilian and engineer assigned to Task Force Guardian after Hurricane Katrina slammed into southeastern Louisiana. What stands out in his memory is the relentless sense of time ticking away and the countdown reminders at Task Force Guardian Headquarters of how much work had to be done and how little time they had.

Their challenge was formidable: restore the hurricane protection system's

169 miles of damaged earthen levees and concrete floodwalls, and repair most of its existing pump stations before the onset of the next hurricane season.

Teaming with Task Force Guardian Commander, Col. Lewis Setliff, Baomy said the priorities of the task force were clear from the start: "We were to restore the system and rebuild confidence."

Day after day for nearly nine months he and his teams shouldered 75-hour plus work weeks creating the processes for handling decision-making and then executing the details of a huge array of projects, each of

which was crucial to achieving Task Force Guardian's mission by June 1, 2006. "We needed to build a quality product and demonstrate that we had. We knew it was a good product," Baomy said.

In doing just that, and in recognition of his leadership in achieving the goals of Task

Force Guardian, Walter Baomy was awarded the Wheeler Medal by the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) May 31, 2006. The award is presented to SAME members for "outstanding contributions to military engineering by a civilian or uniformed member of the Army."

In remarks to the presentation audience, the Society's Executive Director, Robert D. Wolff, noted, "Baomy's demonstrated leadership, technical competency, strategic engagement and engineering wisdom enabled production

of 59 distinct construction projects in an unprecedented accelerated time-frame."

While personally honored by the award, Baomy prefers to credit his team. "What was asked of us was a huge job," he said. "The magnitude of construction and level of protection required would ordinarily take years to design and construct. We did it in months. Our team possessed such a high level of skill, energy and teamwork combined with a tremendous sense of duty and pride that I consider it an honor to have served with each and every team member."

Baomy took three days off during

"Our team possessed such a high level of skill, energy and teamwork combined with a tremendous sense of duty and pride that I consider it an honor to have served with each and every team member."

Walter Baomy



Walter Baomy and his Wheeler medal

that nine-month stretch: Mother's Day, Easter and a college-awards event recognizing his daughter, Rachel. "A mandatory three-day shutdown at Christmas and at New Year's was ordered" he remembers, "because everyone on the team was working so hard and needed a break. We knew it was going to be a tough finish."

In the high-profile, deadline-driven pressure cooker he called work, where there was no typical day except for its length, Baomy says the real source of his strength those days was his family, especially his wife, Ami. "When every day was a countdown, she kept me straight and kept me going," he said.

He also points to the inspiration of people around him, like Col. Setliff. Of the many meetings they both attended, Baomy recalls one in particular when a local resident named Henry took the microphone and angrily questioned whether the Corps was up to the task of protecting them. Baomy said Col. Setliff listened carefully and then responded by inviting Henry to tour some Corps construction sites and projects. A few weeks later, back at the meeting hall, there was Henry again. "This time," Baomy recalls "Henry had a different message. Holding onto the microphone, Henry now told his neighbors: 'You people have nothing to worry about'."

\$4 billion in aid for Southern Louisiana

by Roger Cawley

When President Bush signed legislation June 16, 2006, containing authorized supplemental funding for additional improvements to the hurricane protection system, he unlocked nearly \$4 billion in aid for New Orleans and southeastern Louisiana recovery efforts. While good news for the Corps, for many people the authorization raised the question: What's the Fourth Supplemental?

The size of the appropriation reflects the increased responsibilities of the New Orleans District for rebuilding the region's hurricane and flood control systems shattered by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The damage to the hurricane protection system by Hurricane Katrina was calamitous, including 60 percent (169 of 325 miles) of the earthen levees and concrete floodwall systems and 87 percent (68 of 76) of the existing pump stations.

"The expansion in our scope of work required additional authorization and funding," said Marcia Demma, chief of the Programs Management Branch for the New Orleans District. "So much has to be done to improve the existing hurricane protection system, such as adding gate closures at the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, armoring and hardening of levees, repair of non-federal levees in Plaquemines Parish, inclusion in the federal levee system of non-federal levees in Plaquemines Parish, and flood-proofing pump stations in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. The list is incredibly large."

This funding, the latest in a string of aid packages from Congress and the President in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, was sought by the Administration in April 2006. It followed earlier emergency funding requests in September and December 2005 totaling \$2 billion to underwrite the unwatering efforts, emergency repairs on the hurricane and flood-protection system and advance completion of existing hurricane protection projects, previously scheduled for completion in 2017.

The Fourth Supplemental, so named because it is the fourth bill to provide emergency funds for the New Orleans District after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, represents the

largest dollar amount the district has ever received. The budget of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is approximately \$5 billion for the hurricane protection system. Pre-Katrina, the district's civil works budget was \$400 million.

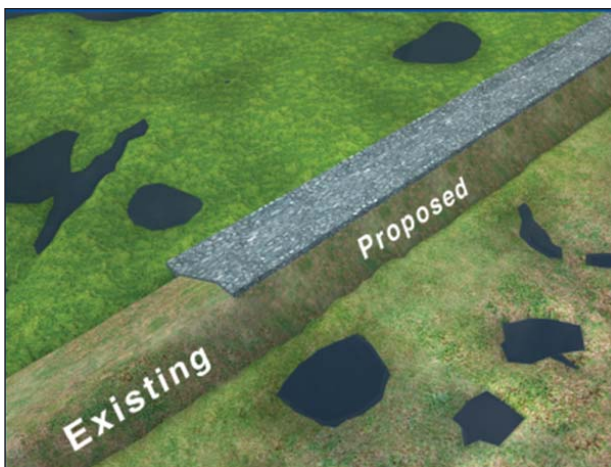
Project analysis and ongoing evaluation studies helped determine which projects were to be funded and how much money was needed to complete them. Once authorized and approved, these projects were incorporated into the overall rebuilding and restoration of the hurricane protection system. These recent projects are expected to be completed by 2010.

While critically important to the work of the New Orleans District, the recent appropriations should be seen in light of the testimony of John Paul Woodley, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In presenting to Congress the Corps' appropriation request last April, Secretary Woodley submitted this statement:

"...the rebuilding and redesign of the greater New Orleans hurricane protection system is one of the most ambitious civil works projects ever undertaken, and I applaud the efforts of the men and women of the Corps of Engineers, many of whom were personally impacted by the hurricanes that devastated the Gulf Coast. The commitment and selfless service that they are demonstrating ... is a testament to the dedication of this organization. The amount of work underway is immense. It would ordinarily take years to do what we are doing in months. Work is being accelerated and compressed without jeopardizing the science, the engineering or the best construction practices."

Among the specific provisions in the act for the New Orleans area are:

- \$1.584 billion to reinforce or replace floodwalls in the New Orleans metropolitan area
- \$530 million for permanent pumps and gated closures at the three outfall canals
- \$495.3 million, to be cost shared with Louisiana, to raise levee heights for Lake Pontchartrain and West Bank levee projects
- \$350 million for construction of navigable closures on the Industrial Canal
- \$250 million to floodproof interior pumping stations



Levee armoring is one of the provisions of the Fourth Supplemental.

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Staying healthy pays off

Another Active for Life season came to an end July 25. One hundred ten participants collectively reduced their cholesterol by 228 points, lost 47.5 inches and 71 pounds and exercised 402,216 minutes.

Individual awards

- most minutes exercised: 11,935 by Dave Pavur
- second most minutes exercised: 9,390 by Richard Radford
- third most minutes exercised: 8,520 by Charlotte Cook
- highest cholesterol reduction: 58 points by Mike Dupuy
- highest inches loss: 6.5 inches by Susan Mabry
- biggest loser: 13 pounds by Ree Anderson

Team awards

- highest team average cholesterol reduction: 23.25 points by Silver Streaks
 - Annette Chioma, 28 points
 - Michael Dupuy, 58 points
 - Robbie Serio, 14 points
 - Pete Serio, 0
- highest team average weight loss: 4.25 pounds by Blue Train
 - Scott Riecke, 3 pounds
 - Anne Marino, 9 pounds
 - Susan Mabry, 5 pounds
- highest team average inches loss: 2.92 by Quality Guys
 - Roger Gonzalez, 2.50 inches
 - Ree Anderson, 4.75 inches
 - Jeff Laird, 1.50 inches
- highest team average minutes: 5,632 by Krebs Cyclers
 - Elizabeth Behrens, 6,190 minutes
 - Nathan Dayan, 4,797 minutes
 - Beth McCasland, 4,860 minutes
 - Richard Radford, 9,390 minutes
 - Laura Wilkinson, 7,170 minutes



Lt. Col. Starkel presents awards to:
top left, Krebs Cyclers Laura Lee Wilkinson and Nathan Dayan.
right, Silver Streaks Mike Dupuy, Pete Serio,
Robbie Serio and Annette Chioma.
bottom, Quality Guys Roger Gonzalez, Ree Anderson
and Geoffrey Laird

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The medal and the recognition are a long way from Baummy's first days with the Corps in 1974 pushing soil tubes in the soils lab while a student at the University of New Orleans. The next year after graduation he joined the Corps as a full-time employee. A native of St. Bernard Parish, he's resided with his family in Mandeville since 1989.

Looking back on this period of his career, Baummy admits he didn't realize at the outset how much work would be required to restore hurricane protection levels before the start of hurricane season. The Wheeler Medal Award citation comes close:

"... he oversaw the restoration of more than 169 miles of ravaged hurricane protection systems, 68 pumping stations and four water control structures. This \$800 million construction program was executed in the 276 days between August 29, 2005, and June 1, 2006, when Hurricane Katrina struck and the start of the new hurricane season. Baummy was also personally involved in the engineering of improved designs of the earthen levees protecting the City of New Orleans, and in the stability improvements to miles of floodwall repairs."



A small business 8 (a) firm smooths concrete on the protected side of the Vintage floodwall.

Small business work picks up this year

by Amanda Jones

The Corps' Small Business Program set a target this year for each district to contract 43 percent of the total contract obligations to small businesses. So far this fiscal year (FY) we've only procured 24.03 percent. But according to Randy Marchiafava, chief of Small Business, "We've obligated over \$634 million in small business contracts," a significant amount in comparison to the approximate \$65 million and \$85 million procured in FY 2004 and 2005, respectfully.

Our percentages are low because they are based on the total obligated dollar amount for the district, which also includes Task Force Guardian (TFG), the Hurricane Protection Office (HPO), the Protection and Restoration Office (PRO) and the Recovery Field Office (RFO). "The percentages are set for normal situations and we are obviously not in a normal situation," said Col. Richard Wageenaar, district commander.

In the past, the majority of the money was in dredging, which is usually too much for small businesses to handle. This FY we've obligated over \$2.5 billion, including \$1.3 billion for debris removal and \$166 million for the blue roof mission.

"For the debris mission, all of those contracts are large

business contracts from outside the state of Louisiana," said Marchiafava. "Almost all of the construction work that's been done since the storm by small businesses has been local Louisiana contractors. That money stays right here in the state. That's why it's so important to do business with small businesses when you can. But there has to be a balance," admits Marchiafava, "because there's only a certain capacity that small businesses can do. If they could do the large contracts, then they wouldn't be small businesses."

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- \$215 million to replace, modify and incorporate non-federal levees in Plaquemines Parish into the federal system
- \$170 million to armor critical areas of the levees
- \$30 million to repair, replace, modify and improve non-federal levees in Terrebonne Parish
- \$20.2 million for coastal restoration to minimize future storm damage
- \$3.3 million to develop a comprehensive plan to de-authorize deep draft navigation on the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet.

A final farewell to Randy Florent

by Amanda Jones

“There are a few endearing people who come into our lives and leave an indelible mark. Some of those people are surprisingly multi-dimensional, and their effect extends exponentially. That was Randy. The guy with the law book next to a children’s book; the big strapping fellow who was “Mr. Randy” to the toddlers who ran to greet him in the child care center; the devoted Jazz Fest fan who listened to classical music in his car; the cheerful, jovial, fun guy who had the sharpness of an intellectual; the articulate speaker who could size up a long narrative in a simple satirical phrase; the needler who threw zingers with the same teddy bear heart that looked out for other people; the mentor to the youngest of colleagues who garnered the respect of seasoned lawyers across an entire agency; an avid sports fan who appreciated the opera, the symphony and the theatre; the spirited pilot who was grounded in his everyday style. To the untrained eye, those would seem to be contradictory attributes. But that was Randy and it all came so naturally. He was a statesman for diplomacy and an ambassador of good will, who spread a contagious optimism wherever he was. His signature smile, his hearty laugh, the trustworthy voice of reason...that’s the Randy we will remember.”

Truer words were never spoken by best friend, boss and “sister” Denise Frederick, chief of Office of Counsel, at Randy Florent’s memorial service April 11. The Charbonnet-Labat Funeral Home was bursting at the seams, but very few were surprised by the large volume of people.

“He just had a way about him. He was smart, smart, smart with a great personality,” said Denise. “Everyone loved to be around him.”

At work, Randy and Denise were inseparable. In meetings and district functions, they were always side-by-side. “Things were popping so fast. I wanted him to know everything. You can’t get it unless you are there,” said Denise.

But to Randy it seemed that it was more than a job. He actually cared about the people here. “He had an ability to put you at ease and make you feel that he was there for you,” said Cheryl Weber, personnel chief. “There was never a time that I called on Randy and he did not come. There were times he just came because his instincts told him I needed him. I still need him at times and I feel that he is still there for me.”

Terry Chopin, EEO chief, recalls a conference they attended together in St. Louis. He was a pilot and they flew back together in his plane. “I was scared to death, not because I thought we’d crash; I thought I would be sick,” said Terry. “Neither occurred and to thank him for the neat

experience, my dad made Randy a wooden model airplane that was identical to his real plane. He kept it in his office.”

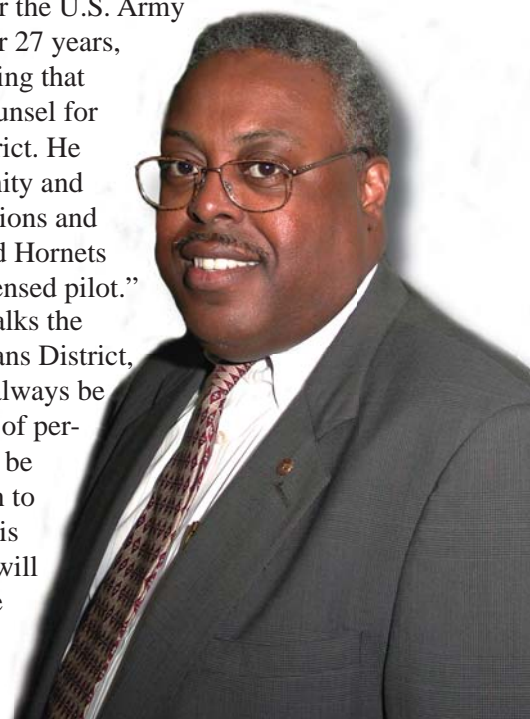
He lost his real plane to Katrina. During emergency operations in Vicksburg, he and Denise sat right next to each other. “Every morning he’d pull up a picture of that plane. We told him to get over it, he had insurance,” Denise said with a smile, as she does every time she tells a story about Randy. He got a new plane and had gone flying the weekend before he got sick.

He never recovered from his illness and passed away on March 29, 2006. For days after, people e-mailed Office of Counsel and posted messages on the funeral home’s online guest book. Condolences came from district employees, past commanders, and people from several different states, including California, Florida, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Texas.

His program read:

“Randy Darren Florent was born on January 6, 1953 to Stanley J. Florent and the late Leola Liggins Florent. He was the brother of Larry Joseph, Alan Jutson, and Dmitri Jay Florent; Cloris Florent Verdin, and the late Carl Jutson and William J. Florent. He was married to Marguerite Rey Florent for 22 years. He graduated from St. Augustine High School in 1971. He attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and briefly served as the head coach of the women’s varsity basketball team. He graduated from Loyola University School of Law. He worked as a lawyer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 27 years, his last assignment being that of Deputy District Counsel for the New Orleans District. He was active in community and professional organizations and was an avid Saints and Hornets fan. He was also a licensed pilot.”

Randy no longer walks the halls of the New Orleans District, but his presence will always be here. He was the kind of person everyone loved to be near and an inspiration to anyone around him. His impact on the district will never be in doubt. “He counted,” said Denise.





Congratulations

to **Steven A. Schinetsky (OD)** whose daughter, Johlee Schinetsky, was the 4th runner-up at the Teen Miss Dance of Louisiana competition in April 7-9.

to **Robert Culberson (ED)**, who received his MBA degree May 20, and DA promotion to Major Jun 29, in the Miss. Army National Guard.

to **Peggy Plaisance (SSO)**, who has completed requirements for board certification as a Certified Occupational Health Nurse.

to **Maj. Dan Hibner** and wife Teresa, on the birth of their daughter Tessa Aug 24, 2006.



Scott Rickie

Lt. Jason Royston was promoted to Captain Aug. 30.

Farewell

to **David Blumer (LM)**, who retired on Mar. 18.

to **Charles Booker (IM)**, who transferred to the Norfolk District.

to **Karen Borne (RE)**, who departed in Apr.

to **Leigh Corcoran (ED)**, who

transferred to the Vicksburg District.

to **Hobert Creasy (RE)**, who retired Apr. 29.

to **Bruce Develle (ED)**, who departed in Apr.

to **Carolyn Earl (PM)**, who departed in Apr.

to **John "Jack" Fredine (PM)**, who retired on Apr. 1.

to **Janet Kleinschmidt (PM)**, who retired on Mar. 31.

to **Beverly Meador (RM)**, who retired Apr. 29.

to **Michael O'Dowd (OD)**, who retired on Apr. 1.

to **David Poynter (PM)**, who retired Sept. 2, 2005.

to **Helen Roberson (CD)**, who transferred to the Stennis Space Center.

to **Kimberly Roberts (PM)**, who transferred to the Galveston District.

to **Steve Roberts (OD)**, who transferred to the Sacramento District in May.

to **Geri Robinson (PM)**, who departed in Apr.

to **Michael Salyer (PM)**, who accepted a reassignment with Minerals Management Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

to **Judy Smith (RM)**, who transferred to the Nashville District.

to **Harold Trahan (OD)**, who retired on Mar 31.

to **Herbert "Joey" Wagner (OD)**, who transferred to ERDC.

to **Jay Wieriman (CEIWR-NDC-C)**, who retired Apr. 29. to **Saleem Majeed (CP)**, who retired May 31.

to **J. Vincent Gonzales (CT)**, who transferred to OAA.

to **Cheryl A. Peranio (ND)**, who departed 1 Jul 06.

to **Daniel H. Hibner (EX)**, who departed Jun. 5.

to **Candida X. Wagner (CD)**, who departed Jul. 7.

to **Clarence A. Burns (CD)**, who retired Mar. 4.



Clifford Farmer (OD-YM), electrician aboard the Dredge Wheeler, was honored on April 18 as the 2005 Crewmember of the Year. This award is presented every year to a crewmember who has demonstrated the abilities, values, work ethic and personal drive to deserve special recognition. Capt. Morehouse presented the award to Mr. Farmer at a crew safety meeting, declaring, "It is rare that we can say that, among a crew as fine as this, one man could make such a difference that the ship could not have succeeded in a mission without his presence. But in 2005, Cliff Farmer was indeed that man."

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Gloria Just opens a parting gift at her retirement party Aug. 30.

- to **Darrel M. Broussard (PM)**, who departed Jul 14.
- to **Gary Herndon (ED)**, who retired May 1.
- to **Gloria N. Just (RE)**, who retired Aug. 31.
- to **Glynn R. Steckler Jr. (ED)**, who transferred to the Navy.
- to **James F. Scott (CD)**, who retired May 31.
- to **James Mark Nettles (ED)**, who transferred to NGA.
- to **Jennifer L. Lefort (PM)**, who departed Jun. 27.
- to **Kate E. Herpin (OD)**, who departed Aug. 18.
- to **Mitchell Bradley (OD)**, who departed Aug. 18.
- to **Kitty Miller (EX)**, who retired Jun 3.
- to **Lane Lefort (IM)**, who departed Jun. 16.
- to **Howard R. Bush (PM)**, who transferred to FEMA.
- to **Lekesha Williams Reynolds (PM)**, who transferred to Kansas City District.
- to **Michael C. Holland (PM)**, who transferred to Jacksonville District.
- to **Nekisha L. Harris (PM)**, who

transferred to Galveston District.

to **Randall C. Merchant (OC)**, who transferred to MVK.

to **Richard W. Bagwell (OD)**, who retired Jul. 30.

To **Veronica D. Balwin (IM)**, who transferred to the Navy.

to **Thomas M. Hall (OD)**, who departing May 26.

to **Francis C. Deboer (RM)**, who transferred Jan. 21.

to **Allen R. Calliham (CT)**, who transferred to NASA.

to **Cassandra Thigpen (OC)**, who departed Feb. 3.

to **James E. Syrdal (LM)**, who departed Feb 10.

to **Jennifer Knowles (OD)**, who transferred to Fort Worth District.

to **David L. Blumer (LM)**, who retired Mar. 18.

to **Bernadine S. Hulbert (NDC)**, who transferred Sep 2.

to **Regina R. Ware (PM)**, who transferred to Dept of Agriculture.

to **Dianne A. Ganious (PM)**, who retired Sep 2.

to **Edwin A Lyon Jr. (PM)**, who transferred to FEMA.

to **Cyril B. Mann Jr. (PM)**, who transferred to FEMA.

to **Tommy L. Lee (OD)**, who retired Jul. 25.

to **Joseph Janis (OD)**, who will retire Jan 31.

to **Glynn R. Steckler Jr. (ED)**, who transferred to the Navy.

to **Becky W. Norris (OD)**, who relocated as military spouse to Tampa at Macdill Air Force Base.

Condolences

to friends and family of **Michael Horn (ED)**, who passed away Apr. 12.



Edward Wrubluski received the John E. Reddoch Regulator of the Year Award, which is named after the former Chief of the Eastern Evaluation Section in Regulatory Branch. Tragically John committed suicide in September 1999. Each year we select a person in Regulatory who, through his or her performance, best exemplifies the values and character of John and honor that person as the Regulator of the Year. Branch employees nominate and managers select a person from these nominees. Each year the award is presented on or near John's birthday, December 7, with his family in attendance.

to friends and family of **Gregory DeBose (ED)**, whose mother, Thelma Moore DeBose passed away Apr. 13.

to the friends and family of **Brad Blanchard**, whose father, Ray Blanchard, passed away Sep. 3.

to the friends and family of **Linda LaBure (RE)**, whose father, Donald M. Carroll, passed away Jul. 8.

to the friends and family of **Ed Usner**, whose mother passed away Aug. 28.

to friends and family of **Randy Florent (OC)**, who passed away Mar. 29.

to the friends and family of **Daniel B. Faulk (OD)**, who passed away Feb 18.

to the friends and family of **Pamela Boutte (PA)**, who's father-in-law passed away in August.

8/29/06

Dear Sirs,

Please withdraw my name from a claim I had made in reference to Hurricane Katrina Flood Litigation.

I was mad and very angry going through this disaster, after hearing President Bush today on television speaking about how hard the Corp is working on the levee, I softened up. Just keep up the good work and keep us safe! God bless you!

Office of Counsel received this letter early September. Names were omitted for privacy.

MR-GO levees will be insurers
armored in key areas raise delc

REBUILDING

The Army Corps of Engineers

Canal
sediment
will go to

forms

landfill

able

Department of the Army
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267
Office: Public Affairs Office
Official Business

2010

NEW ORLEANS
OF OUR LEVEES
INSIDE: **The state of the levees one year after Katrina, A-8**
Struggles to rebuild
Bernard Parish lists
4,000 blighted homes
Storm-hit
blasts corps' levee work
coastal barriers
restore

First Class Mail
Postage & Fees Paid
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
Permit No. 80

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