

Hurricane and storm damage risk reduction system reaches \$3 billion in small business contracts

By Susan Sphat
New Orleans District

On October 7, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reached \$3 billion in small business prime construction contract awards for the hurricane and storm damage risk reduction system. This includes all construction contracts awarded since the Corps began work on the HSDRRS eight years ago. More than 50 percent of those contract dollars went to Louisiana-based small businesses.

“This is a huge milestone for the Corps,” said Mike Park, chief of Task Force Hope. “We are very proud to announce that we’ve reached the \$3 billion mark in small business contracts for the hurricane and storm damage risk reduction system, and to have so



many of those contracts go to Louisiana-based companies – the people and businesses who were most affected by the 2005 hurricanes.”

The HSDRRS is a \$14.6 billion repair and construction mission that the Corps began immediately after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The system includes levees, floodwalls, gated structures and pump stations that form the 133-mile greater New Orleans perimeter defense system as well as approximately 70 miles of interior defense structures. The system was designed and constructed to withstand the surge from a 100-year tropical event.

In April 2010, the Corps reached the \$2 billion mark in small business HSDRRS contracts; and just three and a half years later it has reached the \$3 billion mark. Over the past eight years, that is an average of approximately \$375 million a year in small business contracts. To

put that in perspective, in 2004 (the year prior to Hurricane Katrina), the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers awarded \$65.3 million in small business contracts.

That \$3 billion figure is only for HSDRRS contracts, it does not include the district’s other small business contracts (i.e., normal District business). When all Small Business contracts over the past eight years are added in, that \$3 billion figure

jumps to more than \$4 billion. This figure does not include subcontracts that small businesses receive from large businesses working on the Corps’ larger projects. Those sub-contract dollars add another nearly \$2 billion over the same period.

“The Corps of Engineers has a commitment to small and disadvantaged businesses,” said Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca, commander of the Mississippi Valley Division. “This \$3 billion mark clearly shows that the Corps is executing on its commitments and is determined to promote and include small, small-disadvantaged, women-owned, HUB zone, veteran-owned, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses in the construction of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System work, as we do in all other Corps contracts.”

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Around the Bend



Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca
Commander
Mississippi Valley Division
President-Designee
Mississippi River Commission

MVD Team,

Hello to everyone from me and my wife Marianne. Although the plan for the first few weeks on the job was meant to be one of getting to know my MVD team and for them to educate me on the scope and depth of activities and challenges in the region – well, it got filled with other interesting events thanks to the chaos in the national capital region. Pretty sure the government shutdown had no relationship to my MVD assignment – to have such an influence on events would be a great gift that I would leverage everyday if I could!

Obviously, we are excited to be here. This is one assignment my wife and I definitely wanted to take

on, and we are ready to go now that we are officially reopened for government business (and all the boxes are out of the house and the pictures hung – typically the last step when a military family lands somewhere).

A man named Viktor Frankl, an Austrian neurologist and psychologist, survived the death camps of World War II and went on to write a short but hugely influential book called *Man’s Search for Meaning*. It demonstrates that all people (including USACE public servants) need a purpose in life to feel contentment and worth. My number one purpose as commander is to help the MRC and MVD succeed, to help each of the regional teams succeed and to help our partners succeed (that also means to help you succeed) now and in the long-term future.

We can begin our road to success together by talking about our vision for the future. I am sure you have some strong views on this, and I need to know them. It will be necessary to be certain that I am seeing the same thing you are and vice versa, or at least that we understand each other’s vision even if they emphasize slightly different features. It is ok if we discuss and debate alternative futures, so long as we all understand each other and don’t think we have consensus if we really don’t. Warning, I enjoy the debate – so please call everything like you see it and we

will forge a common approach based on enhanced understanding through dialogue.

We can succeed in working toward that shared vision with a comprehensive planning approach to watershed projects. We will also succeed by communicating clearly with everyone, by fulfilling our commitments to our customers and stakeholders and by delivering our projects on time and within budget. These are “must do” things to lay the foundation for success but even if we do them, we might not achieve all that needs to be achieved in the region. This is the other role that I must work on as commander – educating citizens, stakeholders and leaders on the status and risks in the region and the ways we can and should address them, including the resources needed.

On the topic of budgets and funding, I must send a hearty congratulations to the Task Force Hope Team for reaching the \$3 billion mark in small business prime construction contract awards for the hurricane and storm damage risk reduction system. What a huge milestone for the Corps’ number one domestic project and for the entire MVD team. The achievement includes all construction contracts awarded since the Corps began work on the HSDRRS eight years ago, with more than 50 percent of the contract dollars awarded to Louisiana-based small businesses –

(Continued on page 3)



Around the Bend *(continued from page 2)*

the people most affected by the 2005 hurricanes.

The \$3 billion in contract awards also demonstrates the Corps' commitment to promoting and working with small-disadvantaged, women-owned, HUB zone, veteran-owned and

service-disabled veteran-owned businesses. I will definitely tell this success story during the upcoming USACE Small Business Conference in November.

Marianne and I are excited to meet as many of our team members as we can, to get to know you and

a region that is a new adventure for us. Thank you for the service you provide the nation as a member of USACE and thanks for the warm welcome!

Building Strong!

USACE Retiree publishes 5th Novel

By Bernard Tate
USACE Headquarters

Many federal employees dream of retiring to a house by a lake and writing the great American novel. Joe Woods actually did it. His fifth novel, "Secrets of the Spiral Tower," was published Oct. 15.

Joe Woods, a Mississippi native, worked for the U.S. Forest Service in the Tahoe National Forest for two years. Then he returned to Mississippi and worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District for 38 years, retiring in 2003.

Woods' lifelong passion for writing was rekindled after a severe heart attack in 1992.

"As I came out of the anesthetic, the doctor said, 'Mr. Woods, if there's anything that you want to do in your life, I recommend that you do it,'" Woods said. "I guess that meant he thought I didn't have much time left. Well, that was 21 years and five novels ago."



Joe Woods, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District retiree, publishes his fifth novel. *(Photo by Bernard Tate)*

Woods' recuperation from the heart attack included resting quietly in a recliner for half of each day. Woods used the time to write a novel that he had been thinking about for years. Woods wrote "Where the Ferry Crosses" on legal pads with a ballpoint pen while sitting in his recliner.

Woods went back to work as branch chief of Operations Division in Vicksburg District, but he didn't stop writing. He wrote "Where the Ferry Crosses," "The Trial" and "Old Main Burning"

while working for USACE, and "An Unexpected Flight" and "Secrets of the Spiral Tower" since retirement.

The novels are the story of the McKenzie clan of Mississippi, focusing on Woods' main character, Woodrow "Woody" McKenzie. In "Secrets of the Spiral Tower," when Willow McKenzie's Jaguar is pulled from the Mississippi River and her body found in the trunk, Woody vows to find his cousin's killer and investigates the 10-year-old cold case.

Woods says that "Secrets of the Spiral Tower" is the final installment of the series he calls "The McKenzie Chronicles," but it definitely won't be his last book.

"Since I've moved to a new house with a front porch that overlooks my five-acre lake, I'm thinking of sitting on the porch and reflecting about growing up in the United States and living and working in several locations across our beautiful country," Woods said. "The working title is 'Front Porch Reflections.'"



R5 meeting reviews past performance, sets future direction for MVD

By Bob Anderson
MVD Public Affairs

More than 100 current and emerging Mississippi Valley Division leaders gathered in Vicksburg Oct. 29 – 31 for a regional ‘super summit’ affectionately called the ‘R5’ to encourage them to think and behave more corporately when developing regional engineering solutions.

“When districts work together as a regional team, we are better able to solve difficult challenges by employing a more corporate discipline,” said Joni Nichols, chief of the business management division and R5 coordinator.

Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca, MVD commander, Al Lee, regional business director, and Eddie Belk, regional programs director, set the stage for the meeting by leading the review of FY13’s historic program and project achievements. Highlights from FY13 included the execution of 101 percent of all scheduled budgets, while meeting MVD commitments for 97 percent of deliverables.

“The world turns on relationships, and we build strong relationships by keeping our commitments,” said Belk.

The meeting also covered detailed financial and performance information, with R5 attendees committing to future goals.

Additional topics covered during the meeting included small business successes, safety challenges, planning advances, real estate innovations, operations



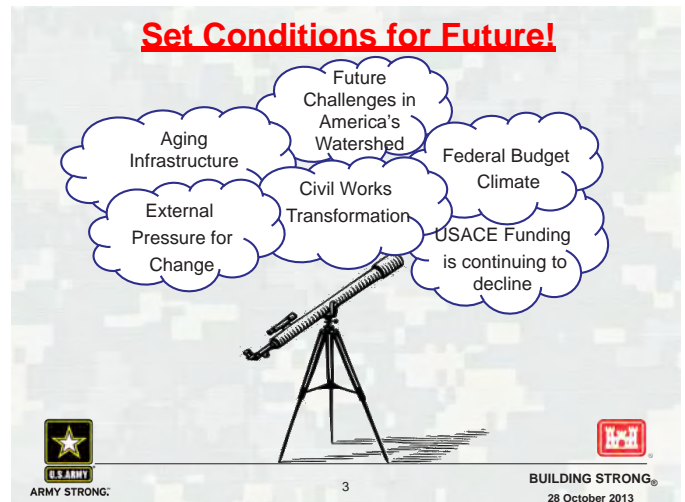
(L to R) Al Lee, MVD regional business director, Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca, MVD commander, and Eddie Belk, regional programs director, kick off the annual regional leadership gathering in Vicksburg, Miss., Oct. 29. The annual leadership meeting sets the course for the future of the division. (Photo by Alfred Dulaney)

improvements, innovative maintenance practices, a new MR&T infrastructure strategy, strategic campaign and implementation plan updates and metrics as well as district operation plan progress.

DeLuca closed the meeting by emphasizing the importance of involving all employees in the strategic improvement initiatives by showing how their day-to-day work impacts the success of the organization.

“If the strategic campaign plan has any chance of being successful, our leaders and supervisors must engage our workforce,” the division commander said.

DeLuca added that we must also inform, develop, mentor, train and certify our workforce if we are to remain a top performing organization. “We’ve got to teach our workforce how to be capable and durable,” he said.





Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh Retires, Has Two Messages for USACE

By Bernard Tate
USACE Headquarters

One of the nicest guys in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will retire Nov. 30, 2013.

Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh gives a self-deprecating chuckle. “Well, I don’t know about being the nicest guy in USACE. I just believe that everybody brings something special to the office. Many times being a leader means finding that specialness in everybody, and bringing their talents forward. That’s what I try to do.”

Walsh is the USACE deputy commanding general for civil and emergency operations. He provides executive leadership and strategic direction to eight divisions and 38 districts to execute a multibillion dollar program for civil works -- flood risk reduction, navigation, ecosystem restoration and five smaller programs.

“I also direct our extensive team of government and contractor personnel to execute large public works infrastructure planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance,” Walsh said. “These projects include the Everglades, Puget Sound, the Mississippi River & Tributaries Project, the Los Angeles River and Hurricane Sandy Recovery.”

Walsh has held this position since December 2011. His other USACE commands have been Mississippi Valley Division, Gulf Region Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom, South Atlantic Division, Sacramento District and San Francisco District.



Maj. Gen. Micheal Walsh, deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, will retire Nov. 30, 2013, after a 36-year career in the U.S. Army. (Photo by F.T. Eyre, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

Anyone who believes that civil works engineers don’t have war stories should hear Walsh talk about his career highlights. At Fort Belvoir, Va., he was project engineer for a four-story building -- two stories above ground, two underground. In Iraq he watched the transfer of power between Department of State generals and DoD ambassadors in a country at war.

The 2009 Fargo/Moorhead, N.D., flood is a special memory.

“We were fighting a riverine flood in a blizzard,” Walsh said. “Giant snowflakes were coming down and we’re helping move sandbags to the river. They were filling sandbags in the basketball dome in Fargo, and running them out to the levees as fast as they could. If the sandbags froze it was like trying to stack frozen turkeys.”

Walsh joined the Army on June 6, 1977, with a direct commission through the ROTC program at the Polytechnic Institute of New York University in Brooklyn, N.Y.

“I thought that military service would be a good way to adapt my skills and education in engineering,” Walsh said. “I also thought it would be a good way to develop leadership skills, learning to command platoons and companies. I thought I would stay four or five years, command an engineer company and then leave the Army.

“But I’ve been doing this for 36 years,” Walsh said. “I decided to stay because I enjoyed serving with great people on challenging missions in diverse locations.”

Walsh is leaving the Army, but “I’m not retiring,” he said. “I’ll transition out of the military and go do something else. ‘Retirement’ has the connotation that you’ll sit on the back porch drinking adult beverages and smoking a cigar. I’m not doing that. I’m going to another job where I can build upon my knowledge of water resources and water resource management.

“The water resources of our nation are still immature and we need to continue working on them. I’ve been doing that in the Army for 20 years, but at a certain point you need to go do something else. So I’m not retiring, I’m transitioning to something else. I’ve got another 20 or 25 years left in me to continue working with water resources.”

So Walsh sees a bright future for himself, and his experience with USACE makes him optimistic about the agency’s future.

(Walsh continued on page 6)



Walsh...(continued from page 5)

“I have two messages for USACE,” Walsh said. “First, I think the better part of the Corps of Engineers’ history has yet to be written and, second, remember the true meaning of our motto ‘Essayons’.

“In the next 10 years, a lot of water issues are going to become acute,” Walsh said, “the water wars between Florida and Georgia and Alabama; the water issues between Northern California and Southern California; the dams on the Upper Missouri River; and the droughts in the Southwest. As our nation tries to address those, there is only one federal agency that plans, engineers and builds water resource projects. In another 10 years our nation will turn to USACE and ask ‘How do we address these water problems?’”

Walsh’s second message stems from an incident in Iraq. While there, Walsh mentioned to a French-speaking ambassador that the USACE motto is “Essayons.”

“Do you know what that means,” asked the ambassador. “It’s French for ‘Well, give us a shot at it. We’ll try.’”

“No sir, that’s French,” Walsh replied. “‘Essayons’ is an American Army term. It means ‘Let us try.’ When others have failed, let us try. When others don’t know what to do, let us try. When the mission must be accomplished, ‘Essayons!’

Dr. Lowe-Fisher receives Commander’s Award for Civilian Service



Dr. David Pittman (left) and Dr. Larry Lynch (right), both with the U.S. Army Engineer and Research Development Center’s Geotechnical and Structures Laboratory, present Dr. Toni Lowe-Fisher (center), MVD training officer, the Commander’s Award for Civilian Service for her stellar performance while on a 120-day developmental assignment with the Engineering Systems and Material Division, GSL, ERDC. Lowe-Fisher showed professionalism and initiative in helping develop a strategic plan to provide GSL’s decision makers the information needed to plan for recruitment, training, facilities and program acceptance. The award was presented October 30, during the annual R5 meeting at the Vicksburg District. *(Photo by Alfred Dulaney)*



Rock Island District Engineer Paul C. Holcomb receives Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal

By Alice Embrey
Transatlantic Division

Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan – Paul C. Holcomb, Rock Island District area engineer, was awarded the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Division Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre during an awards ceremony Sept. 26, at Engineer Village, Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.

On behalf of the Engineer Regiment, Eyre presented Holcomb the medal in recognition of his exceptionally meritorious service and support while serving as the Kabul North Area Office, Afghanistan Area Engineer and for his 24-year civil servant career.

Holcomb has proudly served the Engineer Regiment and the federal government serving at Charleston Naval Shipyard, USACE Savannah District, U.S. Agency for International Development, USACE Gulf Region North-Iraq, USACE South Atlantic Division and USACE Afghanistan Engineer District-Afghanistan.

Throughout his career, while in positions of increasing responsibility, Holcomb has rendered significant service or support to more than one element of the Engineer Regiment. His consistent willingness to step forward and accept difficult and demanding assignments, whether located in the United



Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan – Paul C. Holcomb was awarded the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Division Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre during an awards ceremony Sept. 26, at Engineer Village, Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan. (Photo by Alicia Embrey.)

States or in austere forward deployment environments, clearly set high standards

Holcomb’s leadership, professionalism and technical competence are in keeping with the finest traditions of service and reflect great credit upon him, the Transatlantic Afghanistan District, the Transatlantic Division, the Engineer Regiment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Army.

The Army Engineer Association on behalf of the Engineer Regiment awards the medal to honor individuals who have provided

significant contributions to Army engineering. There are four levels of the de Fleury: Steel, Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Engineer Regiment adopted the de Fleury Medal as an award because of the values demonstrated by the man for whom it was struck -- French Engineer Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury, who in 1777 volunteered to serve with the American Army in its fight for independence from Britain.



Mississippi Valley Division helps develop future leaders

By Pamela Harrion
MVD Public Affairs

Mississippi Valley Division and district employees interested in developing their regional perspective and gaining insight into effective leadership traits should consider participation in the MVD Emerging Leader Program.

Established in the early 1990s, the MVD ELP is a two-year program that allows employees to broaden their professional horizons through training; mentoring and shadowing senior leaders; developmental assignments; self-evaluation; and active participation in the program.

The MVD ELP offers participants the opportunity to expand and enhance their regional leadership perspectives to incorporate regional issues and challenges across district boundaries. Participants develop and expand collaborative relationships to help team members and customers succeed. The program provides employees across all functional areas and career programs the opportunity to refine their leadership skills through peer evaluation, and to gain a broader perspective and insight into command responsibilities and issues being addressed at the executive level of the Corps.

Since its inception, roughly 123 employees have graduated from the ELP. Participation in the program does not guarantee promotion. However, approximately 75 percent of these employees currently hold middle management or senior management positions within the Corps of Engineers. The program includes opportunities to attend senior level meetings such as the Headquarters Emerging Leaders Conference/Summer Leaders Con-



Brig. Gen. Peter A. DeLuca (center) greets the 2013 class of Emerging Leaders at the Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Pictured are (front row, l. to rt.) Ben Robinson (MVD), James Homann (MVR), Dana Ray (MVN), Andrea Day (MVD); (back row, l. to rt.) Richard Nickel (MVR), Sara Paxson (MVR), Yojna Calix (MVN), Brad Guarisco (MVN), Toni Lowe-Fisher (MVD), Jason Allmon (MVM), Christ Koeppel (MVD), Joel Brown (MVK) and Sarah Palmer (MVD). (Photo by Pamela Harrion)

ference, the MVD Senior Leaders Training Conference, the MVD Regional Management Board and other regional meetings.

The MVD ELP develops and challenges its participants through participation in regional initiatives, team projects and opportunities to shadow and be mentored by senior leaders. Leadership development occurs through courses and opportunities such as Washington Week (Congressional Briefing Conference), leadership-focused prospect courses and team strength-building opportunities.

The MVD ELP is open to MVD employees who meet the following requirements:

1. Career employee with a minimum of two years of service occupying a full-time position at a GS-09 through GS-13, WG-09 and above and officers O-4 and below.
2. Exhibit an interest and potential in leadership assignments.
3. Show a desire to further develop and refine their leadership, organizational development and management skills.
4. Currently participating in or have graduated from a district-level 2 leadership development program. This criterion may be waived at the discretion of the district commander.

(ELP continued on page 9)



ELP...(continued from page 8)

The three possible methods for nomination to the MVD ELP are: (1) self-nomination, (2) supervisory nomination or (3) nomination by a senior district or division leader. The appropriate supervisory chain will approve all nomination packages. The process begins each year on/about August 15 when the MVD commander requests nomination packets for two ELs from each district commander.

Each district establishes an emerging leaders selection board to select district representatives for the MVD ELP. Two new ELs will be selected annually by each district and two may be selected by the major subordinate command. The ELSB establishes and communicates the nomination application suspense dates.

An EL completes the MVD ELP when one of the following occurs:

- Graduation: When an EL has been in the program for two years and completed all program requirements, they will graduate at the MVD R5. Upon graduation, the EL will become an MVD EL Alumnus and will be called upon to help mentor active ELP participants.
- Promotion: An employee will emerge at the subsequent R5, when promoted to a GS-14. For military personnel in the MVD ELP, promotion to Lieutenant Colonel or above would qualify that person to emerge from the MVD ELP. The "emerged" leader will be allowed to attend any scheduled training and will be recognized as an MVD ELP Alumnus.

There are 10 (with one op-

tional) major program elements that all ELs are required to attend and accomplish. These include the following:

- MVD Senior Leaders' Training Conference each year.
- Regional Management Board meetings.
- MVD Joint Regional Governance Board meetings.
- Career path succession training.
- Leadership training.
- Deployment and/or development assignment for at least 120 days.
- ELP awareness and outreach.
- A journal and a reflective essay on the EL experience.
- EL communication via teleconferences and planning meetings.
- USACE Headquarters' Emerging Leaders'/Senior Leaders' Conference (optional).
- Washington Week (Congressional Briefing Conference).

MVD employees Sarah Palmer and Christopher Koepfel successfully graduated as Emerging Leaders during the annual regional leadership gathering (or R5) in Vicksburg, Miss., Oct. 31. They both expounded on their experiences in the program.

"The Emerging Leaders program has proven to be a significant asset within my career," said Palmer, MVD program manager for the Memphis district support team, continuing authorities program and support for others. "I have become more knowledgeable about the opportunities and challenges the Corps faces, not only for the MVD region but from a national level. I have gained more confidence in my abilities as an emerging leader to effectively help shape the organization through enhancing my

team building skills and networking with senior leaders. And lastly, the friendships gained through the program are priceless."

"The EL program has been an invaluable experience in my professional development," said Koepfel, MVD program manager for the New Orleans district support team. "The program has given me opportunities to meet with senior leaders, gain mentors at district, division and HQUSACE levels, and learn through developmental assignments and targeted leadership training. The program has allowed me to see how program and enterprise decisions are made across multiple business lines and vertical levels. Ultimately I am a better supervisor to my staff, a better participant on PDTs and a better communicator and partner to stakeholders because of the experience I gained in the MVD EL program."

The request for nominations for the 2014 class is coming soon! More details to come. For more information on the ELP and how to become an emerging leader, you may contact MVD Emerging Leaders Champion Mr. Terry Smith, MVD Business Operations Consultant, Regional Business Directorate, Business Management Division, at 601-634-5840, or Ben Robinson, EL president, at 601-634-5310.



Vicksburg District Team Member Returns From Deployment

By Alice Bufkin
Vicksburg District

Brad Brady, civil engineer with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District, recently returned from a three-month deployment in Kabul, Afghanistan, in support of Overseas Contingency Operations.

He was based at Camp Phoenix where he worked for the Kabul area office, Northern District, as a project engineer for construction of the Ministry of Interior complex, an 88-acre project that will be headquarters for Afghan National Police and Intelligence. His duties included contract compliance, submittal and modification review and contractor coordination. Brady was awarded the NATO Medal, the Commander's Award for Civilian Service Medal and the Secretary of Defense Medal for the Global War on Terrorism.

"This deployment was by far the most rewarding thing I've done so far in my career with the Corps. I was very fortunate to work alongside the men and women of our armed forces as well as a very dedicated group of civilians and Afghans. The Corps is

doing important work there, and the projects I was a part of will have a real impact on the future of Afghanistan," Brady stated.

As a civil engineer in the construction services branch of the engineering and construction division, he is heavily involved in numerous construction contract administration activities for projects throughout the district. Prior to deployment to Afghanistan, he served as a project engineer on the Lower Mississippi Riverfront Museum and Interpretive Center in Vicksburg.

Brady is a native of Hattiesburg and earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Mississippi State University.

The Corps supports the U. S. Army by deploying civilian volunteers to support the Army's mission worldwide. This civilian workforce provides a unique expertise to the fighting forces, including a reach-back capability that taps the expertise of the Corps of Engineers as a whole. The Corps continues to play a key role in defense operations and responds to natural disasters, at home and abroad.



Brad Brady, a Vicksburg District civil engineer with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District, recently returned from a three-month deployment in Kabul, Afghanistan, in support of Overseas Contingency Operations.

Jackson returns from deployment, receives Commander's Award



Lt. Col. John Dvoracek, MVD deputy commander, presents Robert Jackson, MVD deployee who recently returned from Afghanistan, with the Commander's Special Emphasis Award, which recognizes his selfless service and dedication for exceptional achievement in the performance of assigned duties in support of Overseas Contingency Operations. He voluntarily deployed as a member of the Corps team to help fight the war on terrorism and improve the quality of life for so many people. Hooah! (Photo by Bob Anderson)



Welcome Aboard!



Gerry Hardin
MVD Program Manager
Quality and Process Improvement

My previous assignment was National Program Manager for Continuous Process Improvement / Lean Six Sigma for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, DC. I have also worked at Tooele Army Depot, McAlester Army Ammunition Plant and U.S. Army Garrison, Grafenwoehr, Germany, prior to this assignment.

I've been involved in the deployment of Lean Six Sigma with three different Army organizations and involved with more than 150 documented projects. I was the Corps' first DA Certified Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt, am a certified Lead Internal Auditor and hold a master of business administration degree from American Military University. Additionally, I serve as the certifying official for black and green belt candidates within the Corps of Engineers. I retired from the Army in 1994.

I am originally from Oklahoma; that's where my six children and six grandchildren live. I appreciated the warm welcome that MVD has given me and look forward to many years in this area.



Ben Robinson
MVD Program Manager
Upper District Support Team
St. Paul District

Mr. Robinson, who was recently selected to serve as the MVD Program Manager for the Upper DST, St. Paul District, comes to MVD after having finished a temporary assignment at HQUSACE where he served in the Endowed Chair position for the MVD RIT.

He started his career with the Corps in 2010, with the Vicksburg District where he served as a project manager for the Mississippi River & Tributaries Yazoo Basin Team guiding multiple project delivery teams through the complex civil works process for projects including channel improvement, flood control and ecosystem restoration.

In addition, he is a contributing member and part of the public outreach team for the award winning "Our Mississippi" publication, and is the current vice president for MVD's Emerging Leaders program.



Michael Turner
MVD Deputy Director,
Regional Bus. Directorate and
Chief, Business Tech. Div.

In his new role, Mr. Turner will serve as the division staff expert in all matters related to engineering and construction in the region and have responsibility for independent planning, supervising and providing technical leadership in the division's engineering and construction functions.

A native of Belzoni, Miss., Mr. Turner began his Corps career as a design engineer in the Vicksburg District and has more than 30 years experience in engineering, supervisory and leadership roles.

Mike is married to the former Renee Noe, who also works at MVD and is a native of Clarksdale, Miss., and they have three children.

If you have a new employee in your office, or if you ARE a new employee to the Mississippi Valley Division, please contact the Public Affairs Office at cemvd-pa@usace.army.mil, so that we can introduce you to everyone in Open Channels.



Around the Division



As the only civilian, Ms. Pamela Harrion, MVD public affairs specialist, graduated from the Public Affairs Qualifications Course at Fort George G. Meade Defense Information School in Maryland, Oct. 15, 2013. Harrion acquired skills in several functional areas, including Foundations of Public Affairs, Principles of Communication, PA Engagement Methods, Media Engagements and Crisis Communication, Communication Planning, Public Affairs and Military Operation and Operational Support Exercise. The course also included a visit to the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division



Division Engineer

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Open Channels is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1.

It is published monthly and distributed electronically, by the Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Engineer Division, Mississippi Valley.

Views and opinions expressed in the publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

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MVD, District employees complete ISO Lead Auditor Training



The ISO (International Organization of Standardization) Lead Auditor training, taught by AQS Management Systems, Inc., of Minneapolis, Minn., was a week-long learning event ending with a certification exam September 27, 2013. The certifying body is the Registrar Accreditation Board Quality Society of Australia for this training. This certification allows our employees to lead internal audits in pursuit of our ISO 9001-2008 certification. The training was attended by 17 district employees and three MVD HQ employees. Pictured are Gerry Hardin (MVD), Eric Haliburton (MVD), Shawn Cosgrove (MVD), Victoria Ellis (MVD), Linda Brown (Vicksburg District), Elizabeth Burks (Memphis District), Robert Gambill (Memphis District), Danny Thurmond (New Orleans District), Laura Orwick (New Orleans District), Ray Bender (New Orleans District), Jesse Adams (New Orleans District), Andrew MacInnes (New Orleans District), Ron Chrisp (New Orleans District), Matt Bowman (New Orleans District), Nicole Lynch (Rock Island District), Susan Walters (Rock Island District), Ashley Rasnic (St. Louis District), Todd Busswitz (St. Paul District), Randall Urich (St. Paul District) and Kurt Zacharias (St. Paul District).