

## Mississippi Valley Division gets ready for 2014 Hurricane Season

By MVD Public Affairs

Hurricanes happen about 40 to 50 times worldwide each year, and this year's North and Central American season started June 1. History shows that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters.

This year, the Mississippi Valley Division conducted an interagency hurricane rehearsal to practice its response and recovery activities should a hurricane strike Louisiana and/or Mississippi.

The drill was conducted June 11 at the Vicksburg



The Mississippi Valley Division conducted an interagency hurricane rehearsal June 11, 2014, in Vicksburg, Miss., to practice its response and recovery activities should a hurricane strike Louisiana and/or Mississippi. Pictured are Karen Durham-Aguilera, Headquarters USACE Director of Contingency Operations, and MVD Commander Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca discuss plans for such an event. The exercise also helped MVD to strengthen existing relationships with key stakeholders and partners to ensure synchronization of its planning efforts, while also improving coordination, communication and collaboration with federal, state and local government agencies.

(Mississippi), FEMA Region VI (Louisiana), U.S. Coast Guard, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Louisiana and Mississippi Army National Guard Dual Status Commanders, members from the U.S. Army Reserve 412th and 416th Theater Engineer Commands, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, and Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority East and West.

Because of the threat to the United States' coastal states, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepares annually for

potential hurricanes by conducting exercises with its federal, state and local partners. Four of the eight USACE divisions are along the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean. Each division provides planning and coordination with those states, as well as with the Federal Emergency Management Agency regions within their area of responsibility.

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District headquarters building, Vicksburg, Miss. The media was also invited to attend and interview key Corps leaders.

The exercise also helped MVD to strengthen existing relationships with key stakeholders and partners to ensure synchronization of its planning efforts, while also improving coordination, communication and collaboration with federal, state and local government agencies.

Participants in the drill included the FEMA Region IV





## Around the Bend



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

MVD Team,

Thank you all for making the Corps stronger with effective engagement strategies and for building an organizational culture based on communication, collaboration and cooperation every day.

We had powerful engagements in Illinois and Iowa this month. Iowa is now pursuing innovative approaches to generate greater investments for the inland waterway system, For example, the Iowa Department of Transportation is seeking an M-35 Transportation corridor designation from the U.S. Department of Transportation. If the Mississippi River's main stem receives this designation, Iowa will qualify for additional federal funding. The smart folks in Iowa con-

sider the inland waterway system as the only commercial transportation system with enough spare capacity to move the state's products (both agriculture and manufacturing) more cost effectively.

In Illinois, interest is high in the recently signed Water Resources Development Act and the new funding authorities for Public-Private Partnership opportunities (P3). This new authority may also help us to gain more attention for the plight of the inland waterway system's aging infrastructure, and perhaps allow us to develop a bold initiative to do a major P3 type of project for an entire system like the Illinois Waterway or upper Mississippi River.

An important topic of discussion in our recent engagements, including Mississippi River Commission and non-government organization engagements, is the four revolutions impacting America today. These four revolutions all call for greater national investment to secure future economic growth and power:

1. Explosive growth in U.S. agricultural productivity (revolution)
2. Unconventional hydrocarbon energy production (oil and gas production methods including horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing of shale)
3. Return of manufacturing (U.S. manufacturing output, compared to People's

Republic of China, has increased)

4. Accelerating impacts of climate change (weather and watershed functioning changes have impacted the climate, such as increased runoff and higher river stages)

Ultimately, what will the U.S. do about these four revolutions? Our infrastructure makes delivery of domestic stability and security possible. And since our infrastructure is degrading and underperforming, is under-invested and lags other developed nations in its maintenance of prior investments, we stand to lose hard-fought ground earned by prior generations through their financial and personal sacrifices. Our economic prosperity, standard of living and environmental quality are at risk. Our infrastructure is not disposable and should not be treated as such. Our sense of resolve to secure a sound economic and environmental footing for future generations should be no less than that of those who sacrificed to provide us with the same. Our glide path is unconscionable - particularly when you consider the infrastructure has provided our nation with a 10 to 1 return on investment - we can definitely do better.

Another critical piece of our engagement activities includes our work with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Our future depends





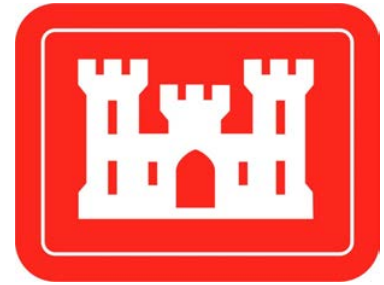
### *Around the Bend.. (continued from page 2)*

on exposure and our continued persistent, face-to-face work with students at every level (elementary, high school, university and graduate levels).

Finally, in preparation for this year's hurricane season, which began June 1, Mississippi Valley Division conducted an interagency hurricane rehearsal to practice its response and recovery activities should a hurricane strike Louisiana and/or Mississippi. The drill, held

June 11 at the Vicksburg District headquarters building, also helped MVD strengthen existing relationships with key stakeholders and partners to ensure synchronization of its planning efforts, while also improving coordination, communication and collaboration with federal, state and local government agencies. History shows that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters.

Essayons, Building Strong and... Army Strong!



### *The Mississippi Valley Division celebrates the Army's 239th Birthday*



In military tradition, Mississippi Valley Division employees, from the youngest to the oldest, celebrated the U.S. Army's 239th birthday, which included a cake-cutting ceremony, June 16. Pictured are Cpt. Timothy R. Tracy, aide-de-camp, and Joe Lemons, director of the Business Resource Division, cutting the Army's birthday cake. The Army continues to demonstrate its incredible competence, enduring commitment and extraordinary character in defense of our nation. Happy birthday, Army!





## Mississippi Valley Division Awards Day

By MVD Public Affairs

The Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, held its annual awards ceremony June 5, 2014, where the following awards were presented:

### ERNEST P. BLANKENSHIP AWARDS

The Blankenship awards are among the highest honorary awards presented to Mississippi Valley Division employees by the local commander. The awards cover three categories: engineer/scientist, professional and technical/administrative. Established in 1987, they remember and honor the commitment, dedication and knowledge of the long-time Mississippi Valley Division Executive Assistant who died in 1973.

#### Engineer/Scientist Award

Mrs. Renee Turner received the Ernest P. Blankenship Engineer/Scientist Award for the superior performance of her duties as deputy chief for the Upper District Support Team (which covers the St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts). During the past year, Mrs. Turner coordinated program execution functions on all projects throughout the planning, engineering, construction, operation, maintenance, repair, replacement and rehabilitation phases. In carrying out staff functions, Mrs. Turner was recognized as an authority and required to apply a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the policies, laws, regulations and procedures involving associated technical elements pertaining to duties of the District Support Team.

Mrs. Turner's technical knowledge  
'MVD Awards Day...' con't on page 5)



Col. John C. Dvoracek, deputy commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, presented awards to employees on MVD Awards Day, June 5. Pictured are Thomas A. Holden Jr.; Renee Turner; Clair Purviance; Susan Ables; Sarah Palmer; Eddie Belk; Dennis Norris; Rayford Wilbanks; Col. John C. Dvoracek, deputy commander of MVD.

of planning, project management, engineering, construction, contracting and operations enabled her to provide outstanding support to the division commander, Programs Directorate, districts and Corps headquarters' Regional Integration Team. Her leadership and communication skills were needed daily for the successful management and program execution of the districts' diverse and complex challenges which required expert knowledge of many disciplines and functions. Mrs. Turner was recognized throughout USACE as a subject matter expert in the fields of planning and project management and was often consulted on unique policy issues.

Mrs. Turner's dedication, initiative and commitment to excellence contributed in a very significant manner to the organizational goals of the Mississippi Valley Division. Her contributions during the past year were significant and resulted in successful execution of the regional program.

#### Professional Award

Mrs. Clair Purviance received the Ernest P. Blankenship Professional Award for her exceptional performance as a program analyst in the Programs Directorate.

During the past year, Mrs. Purviance served as the program analyst responsible for overall regional management of current and projected civil works construction programs. The Mississippi Valley Division has the largest civil works program within the Corps. She also supported programs functions for all other civil works appropriations within the division. These duties

were performed for the complete preparation of assigned Mississippi Valley Division/Mississippi River Commission budgetary funding and work programs. The work included the review of cost estimates, allocation of resources among districts, justification of resources and execution of performance schedules submitted by the six district offices.

Mrs. Purviance exhibited extensive knowledge and understanding of the nature and interrelationships of operating in the programs community as well as supporting communities. She demonstrated a high degree of analytical ability and knowledge of pertinent statistical, accounting, budget and economic principles and techniques. She used this knowledge and ability to present recommendations and seek conclusions based on analysis relevant to the development and/or effectiveness of new or modified programs objectives and operations.

In addition, over the past year,  
Open Channels, June 2014





## MVD Awards Day...(continued from page 4)

Mrs. Purviance coordinated, helped develop and submitted justification sheets in support of the region's construction program. Her efforts and involvement with Corps headquarters, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and the Office of Management and Budget to support all MVD construction projects resulted in additional fiscal year 14 allocations totaling nearly \$40 million for the region.

### Administrative Award

Ms. Susan Ables received the Ernest P. Blankenship Administrative Award for her outstanding efforts as an administrative support assistant in the Programs Directorate during the past year.

In addition to Ms. Ables' significant responsibilities as administrative support assistant, she also served an invaluable role in supporting all Operations Division and Mississippi River & Tributaries project efforts. During the past year, the office's administrative support workload significantly increased and Ms. Ables expertly handled all additional responsibilities she was assigned with professionalism and an outstanding dedication to duty. Her tireless work on the office's operating budget was exemplary as well as critical to the continued performance of the Regional and Middle District Support Team, MR&T, Regional Flood Risk Management and Operations Division at MVD.

Ms. Ables demonstrated initiative, persistence and energy in taking on additional duties and performed them with excellence while still executing her numerous routine responsibilities with professionalism and the same standard of excellence. Ms. Ables' outstanding performance in covering a multitude of tasks during this time-frame contributed greatly to the success of the MVD Programs Directorate and added great value to the many services the organization provides.

### WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mrs. Sarah Palmer was the recipient of the Mississippi Valley Division Woman of the Year Award.

During 2013, Mrs. Palmer served as program manager on the Regional and Middle District Support Team with primary responsibility as the MVD headquarters point of contact for Memphis District program activities. Mrs. Palmer coordinated numerous reviews and served as lead program manager for the Post-2011 Mississippi River Flood repair and restoration efforts within Memphis District, most notably the Birds Point and New Madrid confluence area.

As MVD regional manager for the Continuing Authorities program (CAP), Mrs. Palmer was responsible for managing execution, budgeting and maintaining policy compliance for the program. She supported the division's Civil Works Integration Division and Corps headquarters in getting a large number of projects funded. She maintained coordination with the national CAP team and Corps headquarters on CAP process improvement measures and execution.

In addition, Mrs. Palmer served as the regional program manager for the Planning Assistance to States and Interagency and International Services programs, which included responsibility for managing execution, budgeting and maintaining policy compliance. In this capacity, she developed the draft Standard Operating Procedure for planning assistance for the region, providing clear and consistent guidance to the MVD team. Mrs. Palmer also took the initiative to develop a regional partnership agreement model for the planning assistance program for the region.

Mrs. Palmer also managed the reporting to Corps headquarters for the

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act construction contracts including partnership agreements for environmental infrastructure contracts for the region. She ensured adherence to policy and guidance to ensure proper quarterly reporting per requirements of the Office of Management and Budget.

### LENGTH OF SERVICE

Approximately 18 employees, representing 355 years of federal service, received length of service certificates ranging from 5 to 30 years of service

The following certificates were presented: 5 Years—Richard Feibelman, Eric Haliburton, Chris Koeppel and Susan Williams; 10 Years—Melissa Blackburn; 15 Years—Andrea Day, Eddie LeBlanc and Melissa Mullen; 20 Years—Chuck Camillo; 25 Years—Robin Broils-Cox and Cindy Constanicio; 30 Years—Victoria Ellis, Marie Hartley, Phil Hollis, Rosalyn Johnson, Mark Moore, Jamie Triplett and Renee Turner.

Additional awards presented were: Shawn Cosgrove, the Managers' Internal Control Program Excellence Award; Jamie Baker, the Department of the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service (for exceptional support to MVD headquarters for the carpet replacement project); Clay Humphrey, Department of the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service (for exceptional support to MVD as the information technology project manager for the carpet replacement project); Chris Jackson, Certificate of Appreciation (as the PC technician for the carpet installation project team); Torin Morgan, Certificate of Appreciation (for outstanding service to MVD as desktop support technician for the carpet installation project team); and Eileen Winkle, Certificate of Appreciation (for outstanding support of MVD's Logistics Office).





## University students, French journalists visit the Mississippi Valley Division

By Pamela Harrion,  
MVD Public Affairs



Students from the University of Wyoming and Jackson State University visited the Mississippi River Commission building May 16, 2014, in Vicksburg, Miss., during their summer field course on hydrology and geophysics. As part of their visit, they learned about taking discharge measurements on the Mississippi River. They also visited the Vicksburg District, the Engineer Research and Development Center and the Lower Mississippi River Museum. Also pictured is Dr. Barbara Kleiss, director of the Mississippi Science and Technology Office, MVD.

Watershed Division Chief Chuck Shadie (left) shares the “Room for the River” presentation with French photojournalists Marine Ernout and Laurent Rigaux in the Mississippi River Commission conference room on May 23, 2014. The presentation detailed how the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project handled the record-setting river flows that formed the Great Flood of 2011. The journalists are on a “Grand Tour” along nine of the world’s major rivers, including the Mighty Mississippi. (For more information and photos about the tour, visit <http://www.ungranddetour.fr/>).







## MVD mourns the passing of Dr. David Vigh, MVD senior biologist



**Dr. David Allen Vigh**  
(January 13, 1958 -  
April 30, 2014)

A truly remarkable member of the Mississippi Valley Division family will be greatly missed. On April 30th, Senior Biologist Dr. David Allen Vigh passed away at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, while undergoing a stem cell transplant.

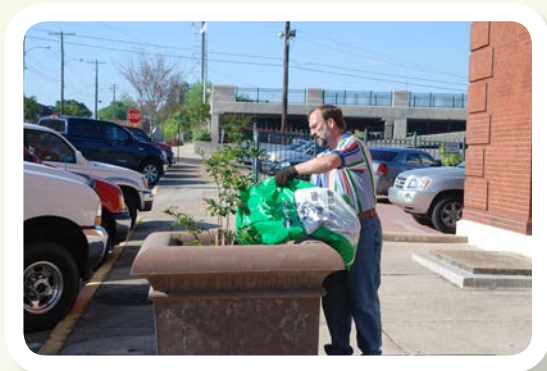
Vigh, 56, was born January 13, 1958, in Wilkensburg, Pa. He loved science from a young age and excelled in school. He received a bachelor's degree from Maryville College in Tenn., a master's degree from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va., and a Ph.D. from Tulane in New Orleans, La.

Vigh worked for nearly 30 years for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with his last role as senior regional biologist in the MVD Environmental Division in Vicksburg, Miss.

The following are some kind words that Dr. Vigh's fellow co-workers used to describe him:

*"He was a good-hearted, fun-loving, gentle soul who loved the outdoors and had a good sense of humor and a hard work ethic. He loved his wife and kids immensely. He was a fighter till the end and didn't complain about his condition and was more concerned for his wife's welfare than himself. He was a wonderful, proud father to his family who all love him dearly. He was most happy when he shared time with them. He will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. He always said he hoped he lived long enough to one day take a flight into outer space as he was a huge Star Trek fan. So we will grant his wish by sending his ashes on a flight into orbit among the stars with his path tracked by family, His Final Frontier. We love you Dave and will one day walk together again. He would tell you his favorite Mr. Spock quote was "Live Long and Prosper."*

He is survived by his wife, Susan; son, Jacob Vigh; stepson, Jake Moore; step-daughter, Lauren Bartholet; mother, Eleanor; sister, Paula Vigh; niece and nephew Cassie and Patrick Neeley; and cousin, Kirk Hazen.





## Kem appointed to Mississippi River Commission

By MVD Public Affairs

Brigadier General John S. Kem has been appointed by President Obama to serve on the Mississippi River Commission.

Brig. Gen. Kem serves as the commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Northwestern Division, a position he has held since July 2013. In this position, he oversees an annual program of more than \$3 billion in civil works, environmental restoration and military construction in more than a dozen states, primarily within the Columbia and Missouri river basins. He also oversees the operations of district commands in Portland, Seattle, Walla Walla, Omaha and Kansas City, Mo.

Previously, Brig. Gen. Kem was the Director of Engineering, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012, Commander of the Europe District of the Army Corps of Engineers from 2008 to 2011, and Commander of the 16th Armored Engineer Battalion, 1st Armored Division in Iraq from 2003 to 2005. His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, and the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster. Brig. Gen. Kem received a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy, an M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and an M.S. in environmental engineering from Northwestern University.



Brig. Gen. John S. Kem

The Corps of Engineers members of the Mississippi River Commission provide representation and leadership from the nation's three largest watersheds:

- Mississippi River
- Missouri River
- Ohio River

All MRC members are nominated and appointed by the President of the United States.

The commission was created by an Act of Congress on June 28, 1879, to plan and provide for the general improvement of the entire length of the Mississippi River. This includes improving navigation, preventing destructive floods and facilitating commerce. The presidential appointees consist of three officers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a representative from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and three civilians, two of whom must be civil engineers.

The commission itself is an advisory body. Its general duties include recommending policy and work programs, studying and reporting on modifications or changes to the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, commenting on matters authorized by law, making inspection trips and holding public hearings that facilitate exchanges of viewpoints and ideas between the public and the MRC. Since 1879 the commission has been “listening, inspecting, partnering and engineering” with water resource interests in a watershed that is influenced by the drainage of more than 41 percent of the United States and two provinces of Canada.

For more information, please visit the MRC website at [www.mvd.usace.army.mil/mrc](http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/mrc).







## Welcome Aboard!



**Aaron Matthews**  
MVD Real Estate Regional Management and Disposal Function Subject Matter Expert

Aaron Matthews has been selected as the MVD Real Estate Regional Management and Disposal Function subject matter expert. He has been employed by the Vicksburg District since May 2004 and has served in several positions from entry level realty specialist to the Management and Disposal Branch chief with oversight of the South Regional Real Estate Division districts.

Aaron has gained valuable and practical experience in Army Real Estate in both Real Property Acquisition and Management and Disposal functions.

Aaron holds two degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi; a master's degree in Economic Development and Planning and a bachelor's degree in Business Management (Management Information Systems).

Aaron and his wife, Christin, are both natives of Vicksburg; they have

two children, Jane Elizabeth, 3, and John Oliver, 1.

Aaron's hobbies include traveling, fishing, hunting and guitar, but he spends the majority of his free time chasing his kids.



**Jennifer Chambers**  
MVD Senior Civil Engineer (Structural) for the Regional Business Directorate

Jennifer Chambers was recently selected as a senior civil engineer (Structural) for the Regional Business Directorate, Business Technical Division. Mrs. Chambers comes to MVD from the Vicksburg District, where she served as the chief of the Structures Section in Design Branch of the Engineering and Construction Division.

Mrs. Chambers has more than 19 years of engineering experience. She began her career in the private industry working as a civil design engineer. Her employment with USACE began in 2000 when she was hired as a structural design engineer in the Structures Section. Since that time she has worked as the Vicksburg District's architect engineer coordinator, temporarily as the assistant chief of the River Operations Branch and assisted in the Emergency Operations Center

for hurricane Katrina response. For the last seven years, she has worked as the supervisor and chief of the Structures Section, the program manager for Hydraulic Steel Structures, the Bridge Safety program manager and has been a member of the Structural Community of Practice.

Mrs. Chambers is a native of Houma, La., and is a graduate of Louisiana Tech University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. She is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Louisiana. She is an officer and active member of the Society of American Military Engineers and serves on the SAME/Army Engineering Camp Board.

Jennifer is married to Pat Chambers. They reside in Vicksburg, Miss., and have three sons, Matthew, Tanner and Dillon.

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The MVD family would also like to welcome the following new employees:

- Daryl Glorioso, assistant division counsel, Office of Counsel (detail for 180 days)
- Terrence Messenger, Vicksburg District CPAC, Labor Relations/Management-employee relations specialist serving HQMVD



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](mailto:cemvd-pa@usace.army.mil), so that we can introduce you to everyone in Open Channels.



## Kid's Corner: Take Along Bobber color sheet

# TAKE ALONG BOBBER!

## Bonus Bobber Activities

### Feeling creative?

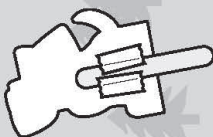
Color your Take Along Bobber by the numbers.

**1 = Yellow, 2 = Orange, 3 = Red, 4 = Blue**



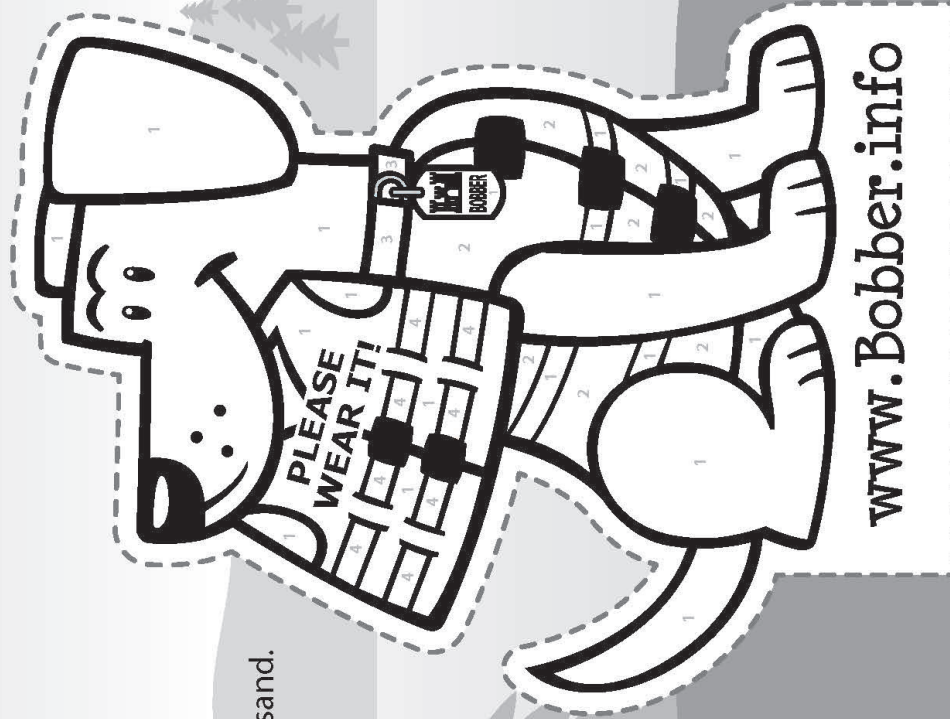
### Get a grip!

Tape a craft stick to the back of your Bobber. It makes handy handle to hold or stick into the sand.

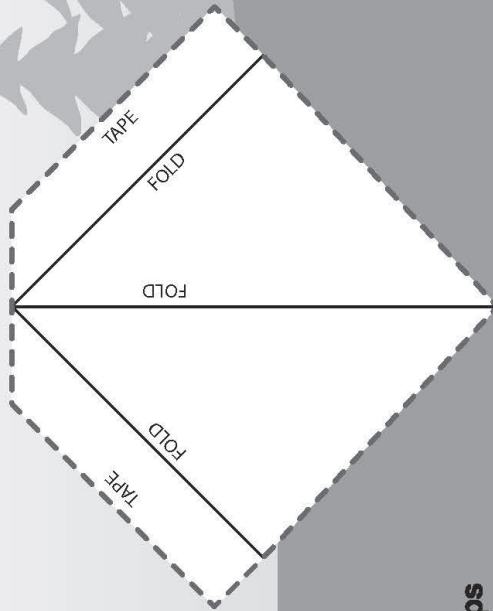


### Teach Bobber to sit!

Cut out the easel below, fold it and tape it to the back of your Bobber to make him sit up.



[www.Bobber.info](http://www.Bobber.info)



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## Around the Division



**MVD celebrates U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's 239th Birthday—** Cpt. Timothy Tracy (left), aide-de-camp for the Mississippi Valley Division commander, and Steve Jones, deputy operations chief for the MVD, tied for first place in the two-mile men's run during MVD's Corps Day picnic, June 6, 2014. The picnic followed the MVD Awards Day (June 5) and was a part of the Corps' birthday events. Other activities during the picnic included a walk, softball, adult's and kid's games, white elephant bingo, a cake walk and golf. Hooah!

## Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



### Division Engineer

Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca

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