

## Mississippi Valley Division goes 'Back to the Future' at R5

By Pamela Harrion, MVD Public Affairs

On Nov. 3-5, 2014, the Mississippi Valley Division hosted the annual regional leadership gathering (or R5) at the Vicksburg District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to discuss accomplishments and concerns surrounding the FY14 and FY15 program and operating budgets, as well as the direction and focus of the division. Approximately 110 MVD and district senior staff leaders, emerging leaders and employees attended and participated in the R5. A ceremony inducting 13 new emerging leaders also took place.

During the R5, MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr stressed the importance of leading change and regionalization. "Commanders have to be objective, long-term focused and understand that they are the agents of change," said Maj. Gen. Wehr. "Each of you has responsibility to shape the direction

of the region through your responsibilities to drive a regional function. This means you command your district but you cannot be captured by your staff and the district culture, you must be regional and represent the region's needs."

General Wehr also elaborated on projected outcomes of the R5. "[It is] important that all of the regional leaders in this room, as well as our emerging leaders, have a common understanding of our program, where we are and where we need to go in the future."

Outcomes of the R5 included:

- Did we do what we said we would? If not, assign accountability for corrective action.
- Common corporate understanding of regional programs and operating budget, USACE Campaign Plan mandatory actions, MVD Implementation PLAN (I-PLAN) priority actions and district Operations PLANS (O-PLANS).
- Approved a three-year program and operations budgets ensuring efficient and effective regional resource delivery, regional functional guidance to improve delivery of our commitments and MVD regional I-PLAN priority actions with clear accountability for deliverables.

In addition, the MVD commander stressed the importance of managing customer expectations and delivering on commitments. "What we do is important to our country," said General Wehr. "We provide value and need to articulate that value clearly and concisely. Quality is not something extra we have to do. It is inherent in our delivery of our products and services. It takes discipline... We don't do this alone – our stakeholders, partners, Associated General Contractors (AGC),...are key."

He also discussed the four revolutions impacting America today that call for greater national investment to secure future economic growth and power (previously presented by former MVD Commander Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca in the June 2014 issue of Open Channels). These four revolutions are:

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

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## Around the Bend



**Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr**  
Commander  
Mississippi Valley Division  
President-designee  
Mississippi River Commission

MVD Team,

Thank you for the incredible reception that all of you have extended to Deborah and me as we rejoin the Mississippi Valley Division community. We could not be more blessed and excited to be back. After two lightning fast months on the job, let me just say ‘Wow! What an incredible team, focused on doing the right things at the right time to add enduring value to our nation.

Since starting my journey with the Corps’ Most Valuable Division, I have been humbled by the incredible scale and scope of the mission we ‘get to’ execute each day. You develop and deliver some of our nation’s most complicated projects, and somehow make the work seem routine. Your performance is impressive, particularly with how strong everyone finished the fiscal year in delivering commitments to our partners and customers in both obligations and milestones. In FY2014, you executed 105 percent of a 2 billion dollar budget, with a 95 percent

milestone completion rate! These are incredibly productive numbers, and I plan to take every opportunity to celebrate you and your great work.

Speaking of journeys, I recently completed quick ‘get acquainted’ visits to Rock Island, St. Louis, Vicksburg and New Orleans districts, with upcoming trips to Memphis and St. Paul districts. I know how much preparation goes into these visits, and I sincerely thank you for your time and efforts.

The visits are important for me, because the more I know about the work you do, the environment you work in and the people who do the work, then the better prepared I will be to make good decisions as my understanding grows.

Preparing for the future is something we are also doing corporately with the re-launch of our Strategic Campaign Plan and our corresponding MVD Implementation Plan (I-Plan). I urge everyone to become familiar with the I-Plan, and each of your districts’ Operating Plans. Your effort to connect the dots between our future strategy and current actions will give you a greater understanding of how you can help improve our organization.

While we are on the subject of strategic improvement, I am committed to communicating the need for increased national investments in our navigation and flood risk reduction infrastructure. The greater investments are also needed to take full advantage of America’s booming economic growth stemming from increased agricultural

production, the explosive development of unconventional hydrocarbon energy supplies, the return of large scale manufacturing and the accelerating impacts of a changing climate.

On the subject of climate change, we are privileged to partner with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), (with the assistance of Mississippi River Commission member, Admiral Gerd Glang) on a number of Mississippi River watershed initiatives that have key environmental components. Of special importance are the collaborative efforts with NOAA to improve long range rainfall forecasting, and to prepare the Gulf Coast for rising sea levels.

I believe MVD has an amazing team, with a legacy of exceptional service in peace and war. We continue to build on that legacy today with civilian volunteers who are serving overseas. Please keep the 27 MVD volunteers who are currently serving in harm’s way in your thoughts and prayers.

I am truly honored to serve our nation with such a highly productive team of influencers and producers.

Essayons! Building Strong!



MVD Commander Major General Michael Wehr held a town hall meeting Oct. 22, 2014, at the Vicksburg District to get reacquainted. MG Wehr is a former commander of the Vicksburg District.



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

Major General Mike Wehr, commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, watching the mat sinking unit's revetment work at Fair Landing, Ark., (Nov. 9) from the Corps' Motor Vessel JAMES.



MVD and district senior leaders signed an "R5 Challenges Agreement" during the annual regional leadership gathering (or R5) at the Vicksburg District, Nov. 5, 2014. The agreement was signed committing to seek vertical alignment, ensuring those they lead understand the actions they want to accomplish and that they are anticipating their future actions.



Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, MVD commander, addresses St. Louis District employees during a town hall meeting Oct. 15, 2014.



## MVD and district employees join Emerging Leaders Program

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 135 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 Conference, 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 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.

The three possible methods for nomination to the 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 EL selection board establishes and communicates the nomination application suspense dates.

An emerging leader completes the MVD EL program 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.



## MVD and district employees join ELP...(continued from page 4)



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Wehr welcomed and shared expectations with MVD Regional Emerging Leaders at the annual regional leadership gathering (or R5), which took place at the Vicksburg District. An induction ceremony also welcomed 13 new ELs from MVD and its districts.

There are 10 (with one optional) 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).

Congratulations are extended to the following MVD and district employees newly inducted into the Emerging Leaders Program (Class of 2014-2016): MVD – Charles Carson and Pamela Harrion; St. Paul District – Lisa Lund and George Stringham; Rock Island District – Andrew Goodall; St. Louis District – Rachel Lopez and Joshua VerDught; Memphis District – Nicholas Bidlack; Vicksburg District – Randy Holder and Marneshia Richard; and New Orleans District – Michael Krehely, Wesley Morgan and Anthony Galodoro.

Second-year ELs (Class of 2013-2015) include: MVD – Sabine Faltenbacher and Brian

Anderson; St. Paul District – Elizabeth Nelsen; St. Louis District – Kathryn McCain and James Wallace; Memphis District – Terrance Knowlton and Jamie Nabakowski; Vicksburg District – LeAnn Riggs and Dan Egger; and New Orleans District – John Campbell and John Templeton.

Graduating ELs (Class of 2012-2014) include: MVD – Joel Brown, Ben Robinson, Eric Haliburton and Andrea Day; St. Paul District – Chris Haring; Rock Island District – James Homann, Rick Nickel and Sara Paxson; St. Louis District – Tim Eagan, Jose Lopez and Mary Markos (former employee); Memphis District – Jason Allmon; and New Orleans District – Brad Guarisco and Dana R. Ray.





## MVD goes 'Back to the Future'... *(continued from page 1)*

changes have impacted the climate, such as increased runoff and higher river stages)

Developing employees (including ELs) and unleashing the talent of our people were other important topics of discussion during the R5. Regarding the MVD 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, Maj. Gen. Wehr said that USACE ranked 161 out of 300 agency subcomponents in Partnership for Public Service's Best Places to Work. "I ask every commander to assess the survey results to identify

strengths as well as challenges and take action to improve employee engagement...It is up to us to show the path. We need to recognize this is a [long] journey not a sprint... Leadership engagement and involvement at all levels is key. We need to discipline ourselves to use the processes we already have – IDPs (individual development plans), TAPES (Total Army Personnel Evaluation System) counseling, awards...empower our supervisors...encourage commanders to select an emerging leader each time you go to the hill for your spring and fall visits. It is a unique op-

portunity to develop future leaders. Include them in other key strategic engagements..."

At the conclusion of the R5, MVD and district senior leaders signed an "R5 Challenges Agreement," committing to seeking vertical alignment, ensuring those they lead understand the actions they want to accomplish and that they are anticipating their future actions.

In closing, General Wehr said, "Every now and then, we need to look behind us and see who's following..."



**Revetment Work at Fair Landing, Arkansas**—U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Motor Vessel GRUGETT moves buoys on the Mississippi River to widen the navigation channel in order to minimize impacts to commercial navigation as revetment work progresses at Fair Landing, Arkansas, Nov. 9, 2014. The video of this work can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mVtkw9ZOGs&list=UUUp3ZXBw6xCuKExo4uBOjotQ>. (Mat sinking unit photo courtesy of the U.S. Corps of Engineers.)



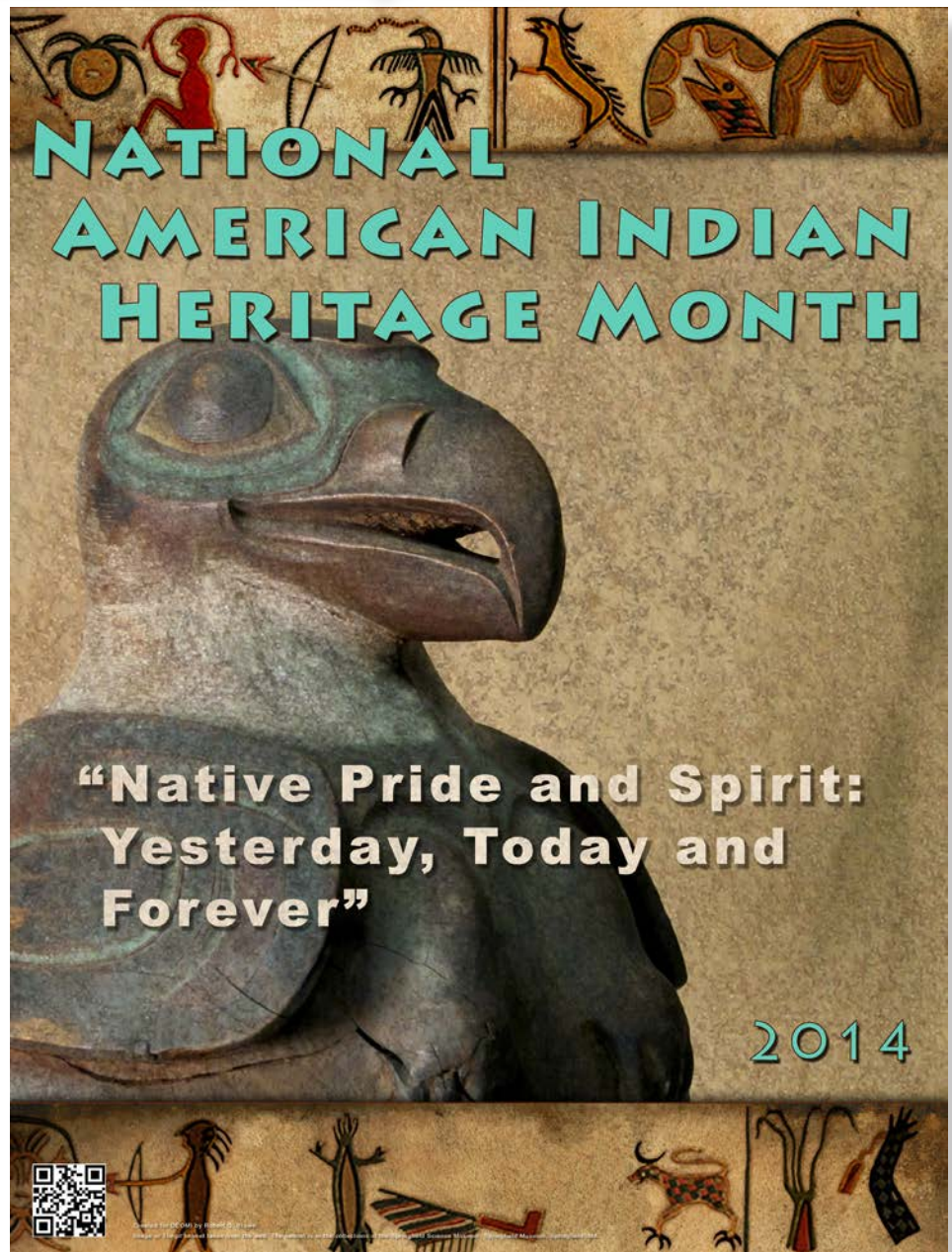
## November is National Indian American Heritage Month

By MVD Public Affairs

In 1990, President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month, with the purpose of honoring and recognizing the original peoples of America and their contributions to the past and future. The theme for the 2014 American Indian Heritage Month is: “Native Pride and Spirit: Yesterday, Today and Forever.”

This month, the Mississippi Valley Division is giving special recognition for the past and present contributions American Indian Soldiers, Civilians and Families have made to make our Army what it is today. In honor of National American Indian Heritage Month, MVD’s Equal Employment Opportunity Office is displaying the Native Pride and Spirit: Yesterday, Today and Forever” poster in the MRC Building’s lobby.

National American Indian Heritage Month is a time of reflection as members of our community honor the contributions of American Indians for building our nation and supporting the military services. However, it is important that we sincerely acknowledge the great legacy of resilience taught to us by the American Indians’ painful history. Despite facing adversity repeatedly, their vision and determination have helped transform our national character and have enriched our understanding of their distinct culture. They serve as an example to all. Our government is working to promote the recruitment, retention, development and advancement of American Indian



government employees, and work to ensure their equal treatment under the law.

Today, American Indians are leaders in every aspect of our society from the classroom, to the boardroom, to the battlefield. The Mississippi Valley Division’s permanent workforce for Native American/ Alaskan Native repre-

sents 1.12% for women compared with the general civilian labor force for Native American/Alaskan Native with 0.30% for women.





## Welcome Aboard!



**Sabine Faltenbacher**  
Program Manager  
MVD Business Management  
Division

Sabine Faltenbacher has been selected as the management analyst in support of the MVD Business Management Division team and will also serve as the MVD regional conference manager.

Sabine joined the USACE team as the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) manager/senior pay pool administrator in 2008. During her tenure, she coordinated various programs, events and teams. She facilitated actions as Mass Transit Benefit program manager, training officer, Leadership Development Program Tier I coordinator and Continuous Process Improvement program team member. She has a comprehensive understanding of command goals and program objectives; i.e., USACE Campaign Plan, Implementation Plan (I-PLAN), District Operations Plan (O-PLAN), linkage to Human Capital, individual performance plans and current/future manpower needs. She wrote numerous guides for the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System (CEFMS), performance management, NSPS, as well as the Total Army Personnel

Evaluation System (TAPES) senior and basic systems.

For the last three and a half years, she served in a dual-hatted position as a budget/program analyst in support of the Emergency Operation Center and expedited financial/administrative support for all funding matters. She completed USACE Planning Response Team level one and two certification for resource management and provides assistance during an actual disaster event.

In 2013, Sabine had the opportunity to serve as regional training officer and executive coordinator at MVD during a temporary promotional assignment. In this role, she served as liaison on behalf of the Regional Business Center and managed aspects necessary to conduct regional meetings. She assisted the regional strategic planner with developing plans and implementing initiatives that will help transition to operate the division as a regional integrated business entity. She completed a MVD I-PLAN 2014-2018 information booklet, composed draft, for Regional Business Plan FY14-15, participated in the development and direction of policies and programs and wrote other materials as needed.

Sabine is very excited about the opportunity to continue her career at MVD and is looking forward to continuously supporting our USACE mission.

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



**Andy Hardy**  
Program Manager  
MVD Operations Division

Andy Hardy recently joined the MVD Operations Division on a temporary assignment. In this position, he will serve as a program manager for the Mississippi River and Tributaries team.

He began his career at the Vicksburg District in 2001 as a civil engineer in the Geotechnical Branch, Engineering Division. He has been serving as the lead geotechnical engineer for the Vicksburg District Mississippi River Levee program, and was heavily involved in the 2011 flood event and the engineering levee restoration designs that followed.

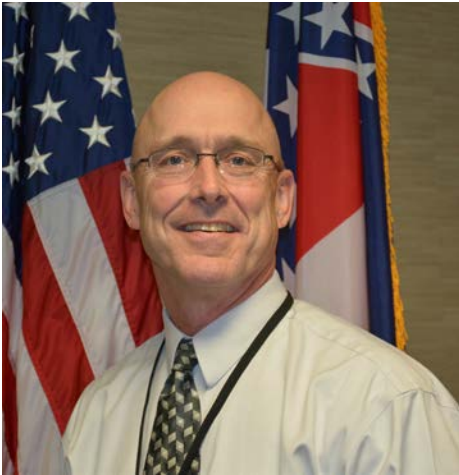
He graduated from Mississippi State University in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and participated in the cooperative education program. He is a registered professional engineer in Mississippi.

Andy is a lifelong resident of Vicksburg and resides here with his wife, Melissa, who teaches 4th grade at Beechwood Elementary. He enjoys travelling and building furniture in his spare time.





## Welcome Aboard! *(continued from page 8)*



**Joseph Willging**  
Acting Division Counsel  
Office of Counsel

Joseph (Joe) Willging joined MVD on a temporary assignment to serve as the acting division counsel during the temporary absence of Ms. Bitsy Sloan, who is on detail to Headquarters, US-ACE, as the deputy chief counsel. Mr. Willging is the district counsel, St. Paul District, and has held that position since June 2008.

Prior to coming to the Corps of Engineers, Mr. Willging was an associate deputy general counsel in the Office of the Army General Counsel from December 2005 until June 2008, providing advice to senior Army Secretariat officials in all areas of environmental law. From 2003 to 2005 he practiced in the Office of the Deputy General Counsel, Environment and Installations, Office of the Secretary of Defense. In May of 2003, Mr. Willging retired from active duty in the United States Air Force.

Mr. Willging, a St. Paul native, received his bachelor's degree from the College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn., in 1978 and his Juris Doctorate from the William Mitchell College of Law, St. Paul, Minn., in 1981. In 1991, he earned a Master

of Laws degree in environmental law from The National Law Center, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.



**Donna Roberts**  
Administrative Support  
Assistant  
MVD Programs Directorate

Donna Roberts recently joined MVD as administrative assistant for Planning and the Lower District Support Team, Programs Directorate. Prior to this position, she served as secretary to the Vicksburg District commander since October 2010.

Donna began her Army career in January 1991, employed by contractors supporting the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) mission to destroy the aging stockpiled chemical weapons. She held positions as word processor and administrative assistant at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Edgewood Area (Maryland). While there, she supported a CMA training facility, an environmental contractor and an oversight contractor.

Her family transferred to Pine Bluff, Ark., in 2000, where she worked for contractors at the Pine Bluff Chemical Agent Disposal

Facility (PBCDF). She assisted the laboratory contractor in initial setup of the administrative office and recruitment efforts. She also provided administrative support as a member of the oversight contractor, which was fully integrated within the government team. Donna began her federal civilian career in May 2009, when she became the PBCDF project manager's secretary. She transferred to the Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District, in October 2010 as administrative support assistant.



**Dale Junkin**  
Administrative Support Assistant  
MVD Watershed Division

Dale Junkin recently joined MVD as the administrative assistant for the Watershed Division, Regional Business Directorate.

She came from the Vicksburg District, where she spent more than 11 years as secretary for the Design Branch in the Engineering and Construction Division. She has more than 24 years of experience with the federal government.

Dale has been a resident of Vicksburg for 44 years. She is married and has two daughters, a granddaughter and two grandsons.



## Welcome Aboard! *(continued from page 9)*

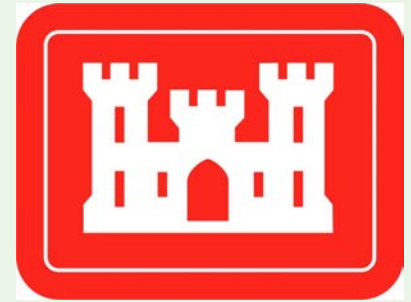


**Thomas Morrissey**  
Assistant Division Counsel  
Office of Counsel

Thomas J. Morrissey is the newest assistant division counsel at MVD.

He comes from an acting assistant division counsel detail at Transatlantic Division, where he provided full support to the Middle East and Transatlantic-Afghanistan districts.

He joined the Corps in 2010 as an assistant district counsel in Omaha, where he practiced a full range of legal fields, including procurement, regulatory and litigation in support of both civil works and military missions.



# TAKE ALONG BOBBER!

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## Around the Division



Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, MVD commander, recently presented Daryl Glorioso, with the Superior Civilian Service Award for providing consummate legal services as the Assistant Division Counsel from April 2014 to October 2014.



A Regional Acquisition Strategy Board Steering Committee working meeting was held Oct. 16 at the MRC building in Vicksburg, Miss., to bring the regional contracting leaders together to discuss FY14 accomplishments and lessons learned. Pictured (back row) are Archie Ringgenberg, Tim Black, Jeff Waguespack, Chris Pease, Priscilla Sweeney, Allison Hudson, Brunson Grothus, Wendell Norman, Kevin Henricks; and front row are Angelina Waring, Edith Brandon, Jeri McGuffie, Lynnieste Cosey-Mayfield, Anne Fleishman and Alicia Bounds.

## Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



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