

Volume 13, Issue 2

Open Channels

<http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil>

February-March 2015

MVD Hosts First Non-Commissioned Officer & Officer Professional Development for Mississippi's Engineer Regiments

By Pamela Harrion, MVD Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division hosted its first Non-Commissioned Officer & Officer Professional Development (NCOPD and OPD) for Mississippi's Engineer Regiments Feb. 19 in Vicksburg, Miss. This inaugural event brought together local military members and their spouses to share capabilities and support efforts in the local Mississippi area. The purpose is to build Total Army partnerships and relationships that will create a more cohesive family within the U. S. Army.

The OPD is the first of many future NCO and OPD meetings that will take place approximately every 60 days, addressing a variety of topics during this FY15 and years to come.



MVD hosted its inaugural Non-Commission Officer & Officer Professional Development for Mississippi's Engineer Regiments, Feb. 19. Pictured are military members from the USACE's Mississippi Valley Division, Engineer Research and Development Center, the 412th Theater Engineer Command, the 168th Engineer Brigade of the MS Army National Guard and the State Headquarters of the Mississippi MSARNG. Also pictured are military members' spouses. (Photo by Pamela Harrion)

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The event, coordinated by Capt. Correy Elder (MVD), included attendees from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' MVD, Engineer Research and Development Center, the 412th Theater Engineer Command, the 168th Engineer Brigade of the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG) and the State Headquarters of the Mississippi MSARNG.

Special guests included Brig. Gen. Donna Williams, deputy commanding general for support, 412th TEC; Brig. Gen. J. Roy Robinson, MSARNG executive director/dual status commander for the state of Mississippi; and Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, MVD commander.





Around the Bend



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

MVD Team,

As we continuously work strategic engagements, programs and initiatives, congratulations to everyone for milestones achieved thus far.

Our campaign goals for 2015 continue to be focused on supporting national security, transforming civil works, reducing disaster risks and preparing for tomorrow. As the Nation and Army prepare for the future, we must anticipate the evolving needs of Soldiers and Families.

Relative to our campaign goals, the MVD-MRC team is thankful for the opportunities involving USACE wide engagement over the last few weeks. Talented people have enabled great events,

in which I was honored to commemorate first-hand, ranging from:

- A Total Army social / partnership with a diverse group of soldiers and spouses – On Feb. 19, MVD hosted its first Mississippi Engineer Unit Professional Development event in Vicksburg. The inaugural event brought together local Active, Reserve and National Guard military members and spouses to share unit capabilities and support efforts in the local Mississippi area. The purpose is to build Total Army partnerships and relationships that will create a more cohesive family within the U. S. Army. The event will take place approximately every 60 days.

- Our 87th annual meeting/ partnership with the Regional Associated General Contractors of America (over a century of cooperation) helped re-emphasize the reason for investment in the nation’s great alluvial valley – it must be a team sport with very skilled long-term contractors that can operate in emergency situations with an initial “hand shake” as well as the daily business of keeping the river trained and open for commerce, with banks protected!

- The Inland Waterways Conference in St. Louis (opening comments by Rear Admiral Kevin Cook and myself) brought together government and industry leaders to discuss issues, challenges and opportunities related to the maritime industry on inland rivers. This helped demonstrate to industry and federal partners our commitment to the Inland Marine Transportation System and the uninterrupted com-

merce it delivers. This was a great opportunity to meet the people most interested in our Fair Land-ing bendway revetment and weir construction (completed Feb. 22, 40 days ahead of schedule).

- Gaining alignment with the civil works team, specifically on our MVD/Great Lakes and Ohio River Division GLMRIS (Great Lakes and Mississippi River Inter-basin Study)/Brandon Road study. The GLMRIS Brandon Road Lock & Dam project offers a unique opportunity for inter-division col-laboration for MVD project man-agement within the programmatic oversight of LRD.

- Other upcoming 2015 key strategic engagements that the MVD-MRC team is working in-clude our Washington, D.C., visits (Mar. 16-19) and the high water inspection trip. I look forward to engaging and working with our congressional leaders and stake-holders during these two important events.

Moving forward, we must continue to prepare for the future by focusing on people, technology, process and strategic engagement. Always remember that the strength of our Nation is our Army; the strength of our Army is our Sol-diers and Civilians; the strength of our Soldiers and Civilians are our Families. This is what makes us Total Army Strong.

Building Strong,

Maj. Gen. Mike Wehr



Mississippi River Commission schedules high-water inspection trip

By MVD Public Affairs

The Mississippi River Commission will conduct its annual high-water inspection trip on the Mississippi River March 23-27, 2015.

Four public meetings have been scheduled aboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI in selected towns along the river so commission members have the opportunity to meet with local partners, stakeholders and residents and hear their concerns, ideas and issues. The meeting places, dates and times are as follows:

- March 23 - 9:00 a.m., New Madrid, Mo. (City Front)
- March 24 - 9:00 a.m., Memphis, Tenn. (Beal Street Landing)
- March 25 - 1:00 p.m., Vicksburg, Miss. (City Front)
- March 27 - 9:00 a.m., Baton Rouge, La. (City Dock above USS Kidd)

All meetings are open to the public. Anyone with an interest is invited to present their views and suggestions on matters affecting the water resources infrastructure needs in the valley, including flood control and the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, environmental issues, recreation, navigation and others.

The agenda for each public meeting will be as follows:

1. Summary report by president of the commission on national and regional issues affecting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and commission programs and projects on the Mississippi River and its tributaries.



Pictured is the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI on the Mississippi River in Vicksburg, Miss., during a high-water inspection trip.

2. District commander's overview for the commission on current project issues in the respective district area.

3. Presentations to the commission by local organizations and members of the public giving views or comments on any issue affecting the programs or projects of the commission and the Corps of Engineers.

The MRC, established in 1879, is composed of seven members, each nominated by the President of the United States and vetted by the Senate. Three of the organization's members are officers of the Corps of Engineers; one member is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and three members are civilians, two of whom are civil engineers.

General duties of the commission include recommendation of policy and work programs, the study of and reporting upon the necessity for modifications or additions to the flood control and navigation project, recommendation upon any matters authorized by law, and making semi-annual inspection trips. The duties of the commission include the entire length of the Mississippi River from its

headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minn., to Head of Passes, La., where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

The purpose of the public meetings is to maintain a dialogue, an exchange of viewpoints and ideas flowing between the watershed interests, the public and the Corps. Presentations by the public are made orally, but a copy of the remarks should be presented to the commission for the official record and written response.

The public hearing process is unique to the Mississippi River Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The benefits of hearing the issues and concerns first hand through the public hearing process are invaluable to the commission and the Corps. Also, the interaction with congressional, federal and state interests, local boards and non-government organizations and the public is crucial to the decision-making process for the nation's water resources.

Since 1879, the seven-member Presidentially appointed Mississippi River Commission has developed and matured plans for the general improvement of the Mississippi River from the Head of Passes to the Headwaters. The Mississippi River Commission brings critical engineering representation to the drainage basin, which impacts 41% of the United States and includes 1.25 million square miles, over 250 tributaries, 31 states and two Canadian provinces.



Mississippi River Commission members meet in Vicksburg, Miss.



Mississippi River Commission members met in Vicksburg, Miss., Feb. 9, 2015. Pictured (left to right) are MRC Director Stephen Gambrell and MRC members Brig. Gen. John S. Kem, Rear Admiral Gerd F. Glang, Honorable Sam E. Angel, MRC President-Nominee Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, Honorable R. D. James, Honorable Norma Jean Mattei, Ph.D. and MRC Secretary Col. Torrey A. DiCiro. (Photo by Alfred Dulaney)

MVD conducts District FY16 Program Briefings



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr and his staff met with MVD's six district commanders to discuss their FY16 program budgets during the months of February and March 2015. Pictured are Maj. Gen. Wehr and his staff and Memphis District Commander Col. Jeffery Anderson and his staff during a district FY16 program briefing Feb. 19 in Vicksburg, Miss. (Photo by Pamela Harrion)



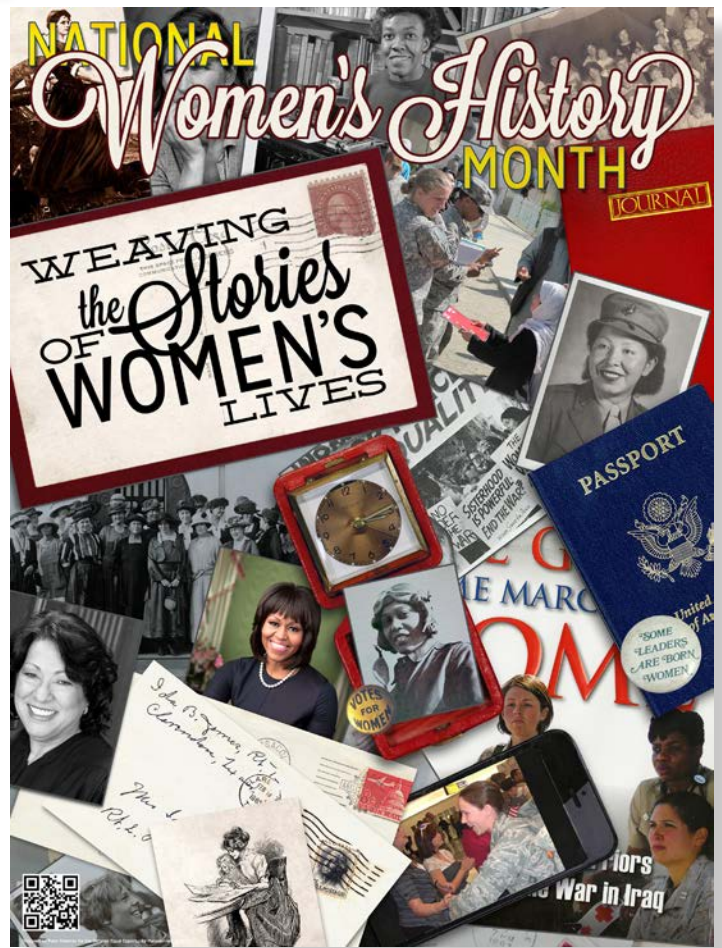
MVD honors National Women's History Month

This month, the Mississippi Valley Division recognizes and appreciates the invaluable contributions of the women in our workforce. They are vital to the division's mission critical accomplishments. Women's History Month gives us an opportunity to understand the critical link between knowing about historical women and making a positive difference in today's world. Each generation needs to draw information and inspiration from the last.

For March 2015, the National Women's History Project has selected the theme "Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives." The theme presents the opportunity to weave women's stories individually and collectively into the essential fabric of our nation's history. This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Women's History Movement and the National Women's History Project.

National Women's History Month can be traced back to March 8, 1857, when women from New York City factories staged a protest over poor working conditions. International Women's Day was first observed in 1909, but it was not until 1981 that Congress passed legislation requesting the president to proclaim the week beginning March 7, 1982, as Women's History Week. Congress continued to pass joint resolutions declaring a Women's History Week every March until 1987. In that year, Congress passed a law designating March 1987 as Women's History Month based on a petition by the National Women's History Project. Since that time, every president has issued proclamations for Women's History Month.

We must remember the women who have made a difference in our history. Two notable examples are Susan B. Anthony and Madeleine K. Albright. Anthony considered women and men equal and spent her life working for equality while promoting temperance and the abolition of slavery. Anthony was a member of the Equal Rights Association and a founder of the National Woman Suffrage Association. In 1872, she was arrested and convicted for voting, but fought for women's equality until she died in 1906. Former Sec-



retary of State Madeleine K. Albright was nominated for the position by President Clinton and was sworn in on January 23, 1997. At that time, she became the first female Secretary of State and was the highest ranking woman in the history of the U.S. government. In addition, Albright had previously served as a representative to the United Nations and as a member of President Clinton's Cabinet and National Security Council.

To commemorate Women's History Month, a poster is being displayed in the lobby of the Mississippi Valley Division and additional information will be available for viewing on the iNET throughout March.



Welcome Aboard! *(continued on page 7)*



Randy Holder
Acting MR&T Environmental
Program Manager for
Programs Directorate

Randy Holder has joined MVD as acting MR&T environmental program manager for the Programs Directorate.

Randy Holder is a senior environmental specialist in the Evaluation Section of the Vicksburg District's Regulatory Branch. He has served as an environmental specialist since April 2009. He is responsible for evaluating and permitting actions for activities in waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. Randy reviews and evaluates complex, controversial and environmentally sensitive permit applications. He ensures that all federal laws, regulations, policies and guidance are implemented and adhered to during the evaluation process. He resolves administrative and technical differences between USACE, federal, state, local, tribal authorities and the general public. Randy is also responsible for drafting environmental assessments that

outline the potential impacts for each project that is evaluated.

In October of 2012, Randy became a senior environmental specialist and took on the additional duties of the chair for the Internal Review Team (IRT) for Mississippi Wetland and Stream Mitigation Banks. The IRT consists of representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and the Department of Marine Resources.

Randy attended the University of Southern Mississippi graduating with a bachelor's degree. He is a member of The Association of State Wetland Managers and serves as an Operations representative on the Quality Management Team. Mr. Holder is the Regulatory contact for all operations and maintenance business information link issues, and is the evaluations section lead for all Vicksburg District Regulatory website related issues. Randy completed the Vicksburg Leadership Development Program in 2013 and was selected in 2014 for the Emerging Leaders Program.

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, so that we can introduce you to everyone in Open Channels.



Scott Stewart
Deputy Chief for Regional
Business Technical Division

Scott Stewart was recently selected as the new deputy chief for the Regional Business Technical Division and senior technical specialist for the Regional Business Directorate, Business Technical Division. Mr. Stewart comes to MVD from the Vicksburg District, where he served as the chief of the Cost Engineering and Specifications Section in Technical Support Branch of Engineering and Construction Division.

Mr. Stewart has more than 22 years of engineering experience. He began his career at the Mississippi Department of Transportation as a civil engineer. His employment with USACE began in 1994 when he was hired as a design engineer in the Levee and Drainage Section at the Vicksburg District. Since that time, he has served as a design engineer in the River Stabilization Section, the Vicksburg District's quality control engineer in Specifications and Quality Control Sec-



Welcome Aboard! *(continued from page 6)*

tion, temporarily as the assistant chief of Design Branch, and chief of the CAD/GIS Section.

Mr. Stewart is a native of McAdams, Miss., and is a 1992 graduate of Mississippi State University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. He is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Mississippi. He is an active member of the Society of American Military Engineers and serves on the SAME/Army Engineering Camp Board.

Scott's hobbies include hunting, fishing, gardening, woodworking and NASCAR.

Scott is married to Laura Leslie Stewart. They reside in Madison, Miss., and have four daughters, Rachel, Anna Claire, Hannah Kate and the late Meagan Alford.



Vinai Vinlander
Assistant Division Counsel
Office of Counsel

Vinai Vinlander has joined MVD as an assistant division counsel. He began his career with the Corps in 2014 as a legal extern for the Northwestern Division, where he worked in the practice areas of contracts, litigation, employment law and Fifth Amendment Takings. Prior to joining the Corps of Engineers, Vinai practiced law for nine years as an attorney with the New York firm of Penino & Moynihan,

LLP. Vinai's practice included civil litigation, torts, occupational safety, contract law, insurance coverage and real estate professional liability claims.

Vinai received his bachelor's degree in marketing and information systems from New York University in 2000, and his Juris Doctor from University of Wisconsin Law School in 2003. He is a January 2015 graduate of Lewis & Clark Law School, Portland, Ore., where he earned a Master of Laws in environmental and natural resources law (L.L.M.) with magna cum laude distinction.

Vinai is fluent in Thai and is a dedicated runner and soccer player.



Prestwood speaks to Belhaven University class

By MVD Public Affairs

DeAnna Prestwood, MVD MR&T senior program manager, recently spoke to Belhaven University's Physical Science for a Sustainable Future class on the "Effectiveness of Channel Improvement." The presentation gave an introduction and history of work on the Mississippi River, and how and why we maintain channel alignment and depth for navigation. She also gave a brief overview of the MR&T system and its use and effectiveness for flood control.



DeAnna Prestwood

The Physical Science for a Sustainable Future course is an introduction to the physical sciences,

particularly physics, geology, atmospheric sciences and chemistry, using a problem-based approach. Current topics of interest will include energy, environmental quality, pharmaceuticals, consumer products, natural disasters and scientific discovery and will focus on the practical application of this knowledge to our lives and a sustainable society.

Ms. Prestwood was invited to speak by Dr. Reid Bishop, associate professor of Chemistry and division chair of Natural Sciences. The class and lab are team taught by Dr. Reid Bishop, Dr. Leslie Walker and Dr. Philip Carson.



Around the Division



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr (right) presented Eileen Winkle (sixth from left), MVD Human Resources strategic advisor, with a Certificate of Retirement Feb. 23, 2015. Ms. Winkle retired with more than 20 years of service. Also pictured are Ms. Winkle's husband, children and grandchildren. (Photo by Pamela Harrion)



(Right) Col. Torrey DiCiro, MVD deputy commander, presented James Clay Humphrey, ACE-IT operations officer for MVD, with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service, Mar. 4, 2015. Mr. Humphrey demonstrated commitment to ensuring courteous and professional support to all customers and contributed immeasurably to educating customers on the benefits of leveraging the enterprise Information Management/Information Technology service model to achieve their business objectives and meet mission requirements. He will be working for ERDC.

Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Division Engineer

Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr

Editor

Pamela Harrion
Public Affairs Specialist

Chief, Public Affairs

Bob Anderson

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.

Send articles to:

Editor,
Public Affairs Office,
U.S. Army Engineer
Division,
Mississippi Valley
P.O. Box 80,
Vicksburg, MS, 39181-
0080
pamela.g.harrion@
usace.army.mil