



## MRC conducts high-water inspection trip down the Mississippi

By Pamela Harrion, MVD Public Affairs

The Mississippi River Commission conducted its annual high-water inspection trip on the Mississippi River April 11-15, 2016.

Four public meetings were held aboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI in towns along the river so commission members could meet with local partners, stakeholders and residents and hear their concerns, ideas and issues. The meeting places included Cairo, Illinois (City Front); Memphis, Tennessee (Beal Street Landing); Lake Providence, Louisiana (City Port); and New Orleans, Louisiana (Thalia Street Wharf, Port of New Orleans).

All meetings were open to the public. Anyone with an interest was 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 was 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.
2. District commander's overview for the commission on current project issues in the respective 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.



MRC Commissioner, the Honorable Dr. Norma Jean Mattei, climbs down from the Vessel Harvest Rain with Sean Duffy (Big River Coalition) below after transiting the Mississippi River downbound from Venice, Louisiana, through Head of Passes to the Gulf of Mexico.

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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

*[\("MRC conducts high-water inspection trip.." continued on page 4\)](#)*



## Around the Bend



**Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr**  
Commander,  
Mississippi Valley Division

President,  
Mississippi River Commission

MVD Team,

In April, MVD senior leaders and district commanders gathered in St. Paul, Minnesota, for our Regional Management Board/Regional Command Council. We appreciated the hospitality of Col. Dan Koprowski and his entire team from the “Headwaters” District, and the Regional Business Team for their efforts in organizing these important regional governance engagements -- well timed to reinforce the 3rd Quarter Executive Governance Meeting currently underway.

The MRC High Water Inspection trip April 11-15 (and our 395th session of the MRC) enabled a ‘Civil Works discussion’ from the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers at Cairo, Illinois, all the way south to Head of Passes. There is nothing quite like the Motor Vessel Mississippi to bring together the Mississippi River Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and our stakeholders and private citizens for a series of public meetings on flood risk management, navigation, environmental restoration and the entire range of water resource challenges.

We appreciate having many onboard over the course of the week to include the White House Office of Management and Budget’s Associate Director for Natural Resources, Energy and Science Mr. Ali Zaidi; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASACW) Lowry Crook; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Legislation to the ASACW Let Mon Lee; USACE Headquarters Chief of the Operations and Regulatory Community of Practice (within the Directorate of Civil Works) Eddie Belk; and Headquarters USACE Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations Maj. Gen. Donald E. (Ed) Jackson Jr.

The Commission heard testimony from 71 stakeholders and the four public meetings drew roughly 300 people, not to mention the additional public visitors while docked. In addition, the Commission hosted stakeholder “roundtable” discussions in Vicksburg and Baton Rouge that attracted another 105 people to hear the concerns of 11 key stakeholders, including Chairman Johnny Bradberry with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and Secretary Shawn Wilson of Louisiana’s state Department of Transportation and Development.

As we continue to recover from the Winter Flood of 2015-16, and a smaller March flood in the Lower Valley, there is much work ahead of us to be prepared for the next high-water event. Col. Anthony Mitchell’s St. Louis District and Col. Jeff Anderson’s Memphis District continue to focus on levee repairs, to include the eight levees in the St. Louis District area that were breached during the winter flood. Col. John Cross’s Vicksburg District is currently passing traffic at all locks on the Red River and dredging to keep the waterway open as river levels fall. Col. Rick Hansen’s New Orleans District continues to fight high water, and dredging in Southwest Pass continues with three hopper and two cutter head dredges.

We ended the month of April with a successful site visit to the Head of Passes and the dredging operation at Southwest Pass.





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

In Col. Baumgartner's Rock Island District, John Behrens, representing the Inland Navigation Design Center and the Rock Island District's Engineering and Construction Division, is preparing to conduct navigational lock assessments in Ukraine at the request of the Ukrainian Embassy and in support of the U.S. State Department from May 28 - June 12, 2016. We also wish Lt. Col. Dan Segura and Capt. Jason Fabijanowicz a safe journey and successful mission as they deploy to Afghanistan this month.

Essays Along the River...Building Strong...Army Strong!

MG Mike Wehr



The White House Office of Management and Budget's Associate Director for Natural Resources, Energy and Science Mr. Ali Zaidi addresses the public in Memphis, Tennessee, during the MRC's high-water inspection trip, with MRC Commissioner Brig. Gen. Richard Kaiser (Great Lakes and Ohio River Division commander) in the background.



Members of the Mississippi River Commission, MVD staff members and guests (Col. Richard Pannell, Galveston District; Command Sgt. Maj. Antonio Jones, Headquarters USACE; and Maj. Gen. Donald E. (Ed) Jackson, Headquarters USACE) visited Capt. Ed Morehouse aboard the Dredge WHEELER in the Southwest Pass.



## MRC conducts high-water inspection trip...(continued from page 1)

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, Minnesota, to Head of Passes, Louisiana, 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.

## MVD bids farewell to employees



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr recently presented Samantha Pugh with a Certificate of Appreciation, in recognition for her outstanding support during the Winter 2015-16 Mississippi Valley Flood. Pugh is transitioning to the Vicksburg District's emergency management office as a budget analyst.



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr recently presented Jill Leach with a Certificate of Appreciation, in recognition for her outstanding support during the Winter 2015-16 Mississippi Valley Flood. Jill temporarily worked as MVD's Office of Research and Technology Transfer liaison, and has returned to her duty station at the Engineer Research and Development Center.





# ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH



**WALK TOGETHER**  
**EMBRACE DIFFERENCES**  
**BUILD LEGACIES**



1<sup>ST</sup> Filipino Battalion



Chinese-American Composite Wing  
14<sup>TH</sup> Air Force



442<sup>ND</sup> Infantry Regimental  
Combat Team



100<sup>TH</sup> Infantry Battalion

The photo is of the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment with dignitaries in forefront. From Left to Right: Colonel Robert S. Offley, Major General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., Vice President Sergio Osmeña Sr., Colonel Roger S. Fitch, Colonel Clinton A. Pierce.  
(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

SCAN AND VIEW MOMENTS IN HISTORY



Designed by James Ladner for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute





## Welcome Aboard!



**Brad Guarisco**  
MVD Acting Regulatory Appeals Review Officer

Brad is currently on a three-month detail here at MVD, serving as the acting regulatory appeals review officer. He comes to the division from the New Orleans District, where he serves as a botanist in the Surveillance and Enforcement Section of the Regulatory Branch. He is part of the New Orleans District's Local Government Liaison cadre during storm events, the Flood Fight cadre during high-water and flood events, and the New Madrid Response cadre. He is a 2014 graduate of the MVD Emerging Leaders Program. He has also worked at Corps Headquarters in Washington D.C., completing a six-month developmental assignment at the USACE Headquarters Regulatory Community of Practice, contributing to national regulatory policy, budget and practices. He has been with the Corps since 2008.

Brad was born and raised in Morgan City, Louisiana. He is a graduate of Louisiana State University with a bachelor's in Biological Sciences. He lives in New Orleans with his wife, Alison, and 3-year-old son, Brennan, along with two dogs. Brad played rugby for Louisiana State University, and he currently plays for the New Orleans Rugby Club. He has won two USA Rugby National Champion-

ships (2011 USA Rugby Division II National Champions and 2012 USA Rugby Division III National Championships) and has played with USA Rugby South. He also helps to coach the Jesuit High School of New Orleans rugby team.

In his spare time (besides rugby), Brad enjoys hunting, working out, ultimate frisbee and spending time with his family.



**Ben Watkins**  
MVD Antiterrorism Analyst

Ben comes to MVD after having transitioned out of the U.S. Air Force serving as a security forces officer last year. He brings a broad range of experience in antiterrorism and force protection.

His assignments included presidential security flight commander at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland; nuclear security flight commander at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana; and antiterrorism officer at Ali Al Salem AB, Kuwait.



**Michael Tarpey**  
MVD Acting Flood Risk Manager

Michael comes to MVD on a temporary assignment as the regional flood risk manager and flood risk management business line manager. He is from the Rock Island District, where he serves as a senior project manager, leading the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program, the district's major rehabilitation/major maintenance program, and several flood risk management projects. He is also supporting the USACE Headquarters Alternative Financing team.

Michael has worked for USACE for over 20 years in a variety of assignments. He worked in several engineering offices for the first 12 years, working on navigation, ecosystem and flood risk management projects. He was the regional project manager for the Rock Island New Orleans Support (RINOS) team, which was set up to support the New Orleans District hurricane protection system work. He worked as a project manager in the Europe District from 2010 to 2013, overseeing the design and construction of construction projects in Europe and Israel. Michael is a licensed professional engineer and certified project management professional.

Michael and his wife Emmie have eight children together and live in Moline, Illinois.



## Around the Division



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr recently presented Lt. Col. Danny Blanks, MVD Readiness and Contingency Operations, with a Certificate of Appreciation, in recognition of his outstanding support during the Winter 2015-16 Mississippi Valley Flood.

## Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



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## Knowledge Management: Halliburton certified as Lean Six Sigma Green Belt

By Gerry Hardin, MVD Knowledge Management

Ida Halliburton, New Orleans District's Environmental Office, was recently certified as a Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Green Belt. Ida's Lean Six Sigma project reduced the number of days needed to award emergency contract repairs from 42 to 20 calendar days for the New Orleans District floating plant. This resulted in an estimated annual cost avoidance of approximately \$26,000 for New Orleans District alone.



Ida Halliburton

The Lean Six Sigma Project Process that Ida used included: Defining the problem (taking too long to award emergency contract repairs); measuring the existing costs of the current process; analyzing the current process and ways to reduce time needed; improving the process to save time and reduce costs; and controlling the process so that the improvements could be repeated and replicated.

Congratulations to Ida for her successful cost avoidance project, and for earning her Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.