



## Conference room dedicated at Chena Project

**By Curt Biberdorf**  
*Public Affairs Office*

A room at the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project administrative office was named after a former district commander during a ceremony May 25.

Fourteen family members of the late retired Col. Peter A. Topp joined former colleagues and friends to dedicate the "Topp of the World" Conference Room in honor of the officer who led the Alaska District from 1994-1997.

Topp, an experienced mountaineer, died after falling rocks struck him during a climb near Telluride, Colo., July 26, 2010, at age 59.

With family gathered around, Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander; Topp's widow, Gina; and mother, Catherine, cut a ribbon to dedicate the room. Afterward, John Schaake, project manager, and Tim Feaval, senior park

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Photo by Curt Biberdorf

**The widow of Col. Peter Topp, Gina, (left) and his mother, Catherine, view the "Topp of the World" Conference Room at the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project after a dedication ceremony honoring the former Alaska District commander May 25.**

## Job opportunities, benefits abound in Japan, Korea

**By John Budnik**  
*Public Affairs Office*

Senior leaders from the Far East and Japan districts visited the Alaska District in May to discuss job opportunities at these locations.

Allen Chin, Engineering Division chief, and Sam Adkins, Construction Division chief, both of the Far East District, and Cathy Gill, Engineering Division chief in Japan, discussed careers and lifestyles to encourage district employees interested working overseas.

The Far East District, located in South Korea, has about 470 employees. Its construction division has 80 openings while project management has 10 and engineering has five, said Chin.

Construction positions there are primarily project engineers and quality assurance representatives, but the district also needs civil, electrical and mechanical engineers for quality

assurance, Adkins said.

Most of the work is being generated by the relocation of the Yongsan Army post in Seoul to U.S. Army Garrison-Humphreys. The district's estimated workload is \$1.4 billion in FY2014.

"I have a lot of vacancies now," Adkins said. "I anticipate having vacancies for the next several years."

The same is true for Japan. Engineering, construction, project management and support staff positions need to be filled to manage a workload that will remain strong through FY2016. Furthermore, both host-nation and U.S.-funded projects are expected to continue through FY2020, said Gill.

A move to one of these countries usually spans three to five years, and those who take a position overseas have statutory re-employment rights to Alaska upon completion or release from their duty.

Employees are allowed shipment of one vehicle and up to 18,000 pounds

of household goods at government expense. Financial incentives and benefits include a housing allowance, foreign post differential and allowance, and educational travel.

Employees and their families have commissary and post exchange privileges, but off-post shopping is always an option. Besides traditional local foods, both countries have plenty of familiar restaurant choices.

Children attend Department of Defense schools through high school, and child development centers, youth sports and other activities are offered as well. Many recreational opportunities are available in both nations, including state-of-the-art athletic facilities, golf courses and parks.

To view job openings and apply, visit [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). Employees can learn more about these opportunities on the Operation Crossroads site at <https://team.usace.army.mil/sites/POA/opcross/default.aspx>.

# Conference room

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Photo by Curt Biberdorf

**Family members of the late retired Col. Peter Topp, Alaska District's 20th commander, gather at the "Topp of the World" Conference Room in the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project administrative office after a dedication ceremony May 25.**

ranger, slid open barn-style wooden doors to first reveal a bronze engraved sign with Topp's name mounted on the threshold's header before showing the entire room.

Gina walked inside to unveil a portrait of her late husband and viewed a memorial plaque that will decorate the room. Topp's family was thrilled with the honor.

"He admired and respected the people that he worked with here, so to get recognition that reciprocates that sentiment, well, it just doesn't get any better than that," said Heidi Topp Brooks, Peter's sister.

She said the family still treasures memories from a visit to Alaska in 1995 and thanked the district for giving them an "excellent" reason to return.

"He would have given (this honor) a prominent place in his most treasured honors" because of what he was able to accomplish in Alaska, Brooks said.

The ceremony happened almost nine months after the official opening of the new building in order to set aside a special time to celebrate it with his family, but the idea dawned in 2009

during the building's construction, Koenig said.

During a project visit, he asked Schaake to consider naming the conference center in honor of someone, and after a few days of consideration, Schaake recommended Topp.

Besides Topp's service to the nation and district, he was fond of the Chena Project.

For example, during his command, he worked with Boy Scouts to expand and improve the project's visitors kiosk area. He also was involved in the planning and landscaping of the host site, Schaake said.

"What we want to do as an organization is to lift up our heroes, the giants, and stand on their shoulders in the future," Koenig said.

One way to accomplish this is by inducting former employees into the district hall of fame. Another path is by naming conference rooms in their honor. The Chena Project has the fifth conference room in the district dedicated to an individual.

"I remember Peter as a great leader," Koenig said. "He had a passion for

people, for engineering and was the epitome of Army values."

Topp is an example of history for everyone to emulate as they move forward in their personal and professional lives, Koenig said.

He recalled how Topp encouraged him to accept an assignment in Alaska as a captain and later advised him before returning to the district as commander.

Unable to attend, Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, former Army Chief of Engineers and Topp's West Point classmate, sent a statement further describing his character.

He wrote that Topp would probably say this honor is embarrassing, and the designers and builders "who make me proud to be an engineer" are more deserving of such recognition.

"May we all remember Peter's impacts on our lives and be forever grateful for his legacy," Van Antwerp said.

With the floor opened for comments, Bob Bechtold, who served as a captain and major in the district from 1992-1999, said Topp meant much to him.

"In my office I have a list of three rules posted on a wall: Do your best. Do the right thing. Treat others with respect. That's what Peter taught us. I'll always remember that," he said.

Allen Churchill, Operations Branch chief, presented a wood-framed gift with encased photos of Topp sitting on Bucky the Moose—the wooden Chena Project mascot—and the new office along with a wood emblem of a moose to Gina.

The Topp family gave a gift as well. As an "Alaska-style" toolkit, Brooks offered a wrapped roll of duct tape labeled "Topp of the World" in case "anything needs repair."

She said naming a conference room after her brother is slightly ironic because he did not like long meetings.

"In Peter's spirit, I hope that the meetings that take place here in the Topp of the World Conference Room are very productive but not too long," Brooks said.

## GOLD NUGGETS

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## Team's participation in exercise improves life in Philippines

By Ali Martinez

62nd Engineer Detachment

The 62nd Engineer Detachment (Forward Engineer Support Team-Advance) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District participated in the Balikatan 2012 exercises in the Republic of the Philippines for two weeks in April.

Balikatan is an annual bilateral exercise between the U.S. military and the Armed Forces of the Philippines designed to strengthen each country's capabilities and commitments to the mutual defense treaty and visiting forces agreement.

The detachment trained with both militaries on the main island of Luzon. The team helped the people of the Philippines, its military and future joint U.S. and Philippine training through improved infrastructure that boosts quality of life.

The unit assessed infrastructure at Marine Barracks Gregorio Lim in Ternate, Cavite; roads and bridges at Fort Magsaysay in Palayan City; future infrastructure feasibility at Crow Valley Gunnery Range in Tarlac, and the Naval Education and Training Command area in Zambales; and inspected bridges and



Courtesy photo

**Members of the 62nd Engineer Detachment consult with Marines about infrastructure feasibility at Crow Valley Gunnery Range in Tarlac during a deployment to the Philippines for Exercise Balikatan 2012.**

routes from Fort Magsaysay to Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Zambales.

"Exercises like Balikatan provide our U.S. Army Corps of Engineer-Field Force Engineering teams an excellent opportunity to train on our core mission tasks and spread the knowledge of our capabilities throughout joint U.S. forces and allies while providing real-value products to the host nations and U.S. forces," said Capt. Corey Warren, detachment commander.

"Deployments to joint training exercises, like major deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, test a team's ability to coordinate, interact and perform under stressful conditions away from home and comforts," he said.

Balikatan 2012 was the first major training exercise that the full team participated in since returning from a deployment to Iraq in April 2011 and bringing on five new team members.

The engineering detachment unites a wide variety of credentials and expertise that allows the team to meet engineering challenges successfully and efficiently, Warren said.

Although each team member has a specialty, all cross-train on the team's critical tasks of reconnaissance and assessment of bridges, roads, facilities and other infrastructure projects in order to ensure mission success.

Warren and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Contreras, noncommissioned officer-in-charge, provide military leadership for six Army civilian employees. They are Thomas Baker, geographical information specialist and cartographer; Darrell Neal, civil engineer; Ronald Faulkner, civil engineer; Ronald Jackson, contract specialist; Alfonso-Luis Martinez, mechanical engineer; and Reynaldo Singson, electrical engineer.

Herschel Deaton, military planner, serves as the team's liaison at the district and assisted with logistics during the exercise.

During its stay, the team enjoyed close contact with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and local civilians. The team was highly appreciative for the opportunity to share experiences and learn about the Philippines history and culture through training and off-duty time visiting sites near Makati, Bataan and Camp O'Donnell.

The members of the 62nd Engineer Detachment contributed to the overall success of the Balikatan 2012 exercises and benefited from the cross-training opportunities and real assessments.

The hospitality and camaraderie displayed by the people of the Philippines will remain a cherished memory for all the team members, said Warren.



Courtesy photo

**Reynaldo Singson, Darrell Neal and Ronald Faulkner with the 62nd Engineer Detachment assess the condition of a road at Fort Magsaysay during a deployment to the Philippines for Exercise Balikatan 2012.**

# Day emphasizes health, safety

**By Curt Biberdorf**  
Public Affairs Office

Safety Day brought out hundreds of employees to participate in familiar activities as well as a new one at the Alaska District headquarters May 2.

The daylong event is observed every May to promote health, wellness and safety through a lineup of events that also satisfy annual training requirements.

With a captive audience gathered in the north parking lot after a morning fire drill, Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, stressed the importance of safety within the district and contractor community.

“A lot of activities present an inherent risk,” Koenig said. “We need to think about risk and how to mitigate it. Is there too much risk? Then maybe we shouldn’t be doing it.”

He added that everyone is a safety officer and not only has the ability but the responsibility to maintain a safety culture.

Once cleared to re-enter the buildings, employees were free to visit interactive stations and a classroom sessions for the rest of the day.

In the atrium annex, Situs Ergonomics technicians evaluated employees for office ergonomics, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Health and Wellness Clinic staff checked body mass and blood pressure and provided dietary information, and JBER Fire Department and Rescue Services led fire extinguisher training and fire safety awareness.

Outside the annex, the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Department of Emergency Management parked



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

**Ray Lammon, Equal Employment Opportunity program manager, attempts to steer around a light post during the impaired driving demonstration course in the north parking lot at district headquarters during Safety Day May 2.**

its remodeled earthquake simulator and rattled visitors strapped into the “Quake Cabin” with the equivalent of a Magnitude 5.5 temblor. Employees could take handouts and brochures about earthquake and disaster preparedness and see a display of a sample emergency kit.

The Blood Bank of Alaska Bloodmobile welcomed 16 donors, while 30 yards away, employees gathered at the starting point of the fun run/walk.

New this year was the impaired driving demonstration course set up in the north parking lot. Managed by the JBER Army Substance Abuse Program Office, participants wore goggles that gave the perception of being under the influence of alcohol and then pedaled a four-wheel cart through a cone-marked course.

Offsite at JBER-Richardson, Safety Office and JBER Morale Welfare and Recreation staff trained 16 employees on all-terrain vehicle safety.

The hands-on training included field time to practice skills learned at the course. It is a requirement for anyone renting an ATV on base and for employees who use them on the job.

Classroom training filled a large part of the day, with bear safety taught by Victor Ross, Regulatory Division project manager; recreational boating and water safety led by Joe McCullough, Alaska Department of Natural Resources; and public safety and crime prevention offered by Anita Shell, Anchorage Police Department.

Besides showing specific ways to reduce the chance of home burglary, Shell reviewed changes to traffic laws, which include increased speeding fines for driving 30 mph or more over the limit and mandatory helmet use for motorcycle riders within city limits.

The Northern Area Office staff participated in a scaled-down version Safety Day May 24 with classroom training to satisfy the requirements for employees around Fairbanks.

The 2013 Safety Day is less than a year away. To offer suggestions or recommendations to help with planning, contact Buster Godwin, Safety and Occupational Health Office chief.



Photo by John Budnik

**Tech. Sgt. Antoine Johnson, 673rd Civil Engineer Squadron fire inspector, explains fire extinguisher use before allowing employees the opportunity to put out a “flame” on a digital trainer at the district headquarters atrium annex during Safety Day May 2.**

# District's workload shifting to smaller programs

By **Larry McCallister**

*Programs and Project Management*

With the 2012 construction season well under way, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District is executing 280 projects valued at \$515 million.

While the district's \$345 million military construction program is similar in size to last year's, the future military construction workload will be much smaller.

The fiscal year 2012 military budget consists of nine projects, with the Army receiving seven new facilities and the Air Force allotted two. The Army workload is valued at \$286 million with \$176 million destined for Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and \$110 million for Fort Wainwright. Air Force contracts worth \$59 million are headed to Eielson Air Force Base.

The district's civil works program contains 42 projects valued at \$54.2 million. This includes 15 ongoing studies at \$2.8 million, 12 construction projects at \$27.3 million, and 18 operations and maintenance activities at \$24.2 million.

The district has started a \$3 million, three-year Alaska Deep Draft Arctic Ports Study under a feasibility cost-share agreement with the Alaska Department of Transportation.

By the end of the year, the district plans to identify a handful of potential sites in order to conduct further extensive analysis on the feasibility of constructing ports at these sites.

Under operations and maintenance, the district performs maintenance dredging at five harbors annually and at 60 small boat harbors on a rotating basis.

This year, besides the five annual projects, the district will dredge at Petersburg, Seward, Bethel and the Cook Inlet Navigational Channel.

The district's growth area is the environmental program, which includes 229 projects valued at \$116 million this fiscal year. The Formerly Used Defense Sites program is funded this year at \$47 million for work at 65 properties; the Army environmental program has \$16 million for 91 projects and the Air Force environmental program has \$40 million for 67 projects.

The Alaska District executes \$10 million to \$20 million annually in humanitarian assistance in many Southeast Asian countries under the International and Interagency Services program.

These small dollar construction projects build schools, medical clinics, flood management centers and cyclone shelters. This growing program added more than 35 new construction projects in FY2012.

The Alaska District is taking on new project management responsibilities in fiscal years 2011-2015 under the Foreign Military Sales program.

In addition, the district is working on the \$152 million program for master planning, requirements validation, and design and construction of C-17 aircraft facilities for the Indian government at Hindan Air Force Station, India.

The Alaska District is shifting its workload from large in-state military programs to smaller environmental, interagency and international programs.

The Corps of Engineers has survived for more than 200 years by adapting to changing times.

# New Army Chief of Engineers assumes command

By **Tesia Williams**

*USACE Public Affairs*

WASHINGTON - Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick became the 53rd Army Chief of Engineers and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general during a ceremony at Fort McNair May 22.

Bostick was formerly the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

"I absolutely believe Lt. Gen. Bostick is the right person to lead the Army Corps of Engineers," said Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, event host, during his remarks. "He is one of the smartest, most gifted general officers of our time, with the ability to do well and thrive in any environment."

At USACE, Bostick serves as the senior military officer overseeing most of the nation's civil works infrastructure and military construction. He is responsible for more than 37,000 civilian employees and 600 military personnel who provide project management and construction support to 250 Army and Air Force installations



**Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick**

in more than 100 countries around the world. Bostick also oversees USACE's diverse missions.

In addition, as the chief of engineers, Bostick advises the Army on engineering matters and serves as the Army's topographer and proponent for real estate and other related engineering

programs.

"Now, more than ever, the nation needs a lean, agile, strong, capable, competent and trusted Corps of Engineers. One that serves the Army and nation, and one that truly teams with our many military, federal, state, local government, host nation governments, tribal, academia, industry and non-government partners to solve the engineering and scientific challenges facing the joint force, the nation and the global community," Bostick said.

"I'm committed to working with all our partners to continue the rich traditions of the Corps, meet the needs of this country and always deliver," he added.

Bostick graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1978 with a bachelor's degree.

He holds a master's in civil engineering and mechanical engineering from Stanford University, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.

He is a registered professional engineer in Virginia.

## Across the district



Photo by Sonya Cook

### Bridge builders

Michael Udem (far center) and Tatton Suter (right), Department of Army interns in the Engineering Division, help fourth and fifth grade pupils build "gumdrop bridges" at Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School in Wasilla May 7. The children were challenged to build a model bridge using various materials, including candies and toothpicks. Each material was assigned a dollar value, and the bridges were judged on cost, aesthetics and efficiency. Udem and Suter volunteered to visit the class in an effort to encourage future engineers.

### Construction contract awarded

The district awarded the FY2012 design-bid-build Brigade Complex Phase 2 project for a brigade headquarters and battalion headquarters with classrooms to KICC-Alcan General JV for \$23,154,800 May 3. This is one of three contracts in association with this project to complete the beddown of the 2nd Engineer Brigade at JBER-Richardson. The project will also construct a tactical equipment maintenance facility, organizational storage, oil, hazardous material and open storage, administrative space and relocation of a recreational vehicle lot.

### Facility earns gold rating

The \$13.9 million 3rd Air Support Operations Facility at Fort Wainwright received the Gold Leadership in Environmental Energy and Design rating certification May 14 from the U.S. Green Building Council. The contractor, CH2M Hill Constructors Inc., planned for a silver rating, but through its effort achieved gold.

### Exercise completed at Chena Lakes

The district successfully conducted a tabletop exercise at the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project in North Pole May 7-8. Led by the dam safety team, the exercise allowed the district to practice coordinating the multiple actions required during a flood fight and emergency.

### Upcoming events

June 12	Town Hall Meeting
June 22	Northern Area Office Picnic
June 26	Commander's Farewell Luncheon
June 28	District Picnic, Length of Service Awards
July 2	Change of Command Ceremony

### Road agreement executed

A memorandum of agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs was executed May 4 between Nuiqsut and the district for design and construction of a \$3 million, 3.7-mile Colville River Access Road. This is the second agreement under the BIA International and Interagency Services program.

### Mitigation banks growing

Since 2009, the Regulation Division has approved three mitigation banks and two in-lieu fee programs, with the possibility of more to follow. The division is reviewing proposals for the Arctic Slope Mitigation Bank, Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition In-Lieu Fee Program, Interior Land Trust In-Lieu Fee Program, and The Conservation Fund In-Lieu Fee Program.

### Deployments

**Afghanistan**—Juliet Brown, Annette Crerend, Roger Green, Patricia Lora, Heather Moncrief, David Purdy, April Shepherd, Sharon Thomas, Jim Wolfe

**Returned**—Leanna Dagley, John Mitzel



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

### Federal excellence

Maj. Justin De Armond, contracting officer, receives the Category III Military award from Joel Neimeyer, Alaska Federal Executive Association president, during the 44th Annual Outstanding Federal Employee of the Year Luncheon in Anchorage May 3.

# Accolades



Photo by John Budnik

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents the Army Commander's Award for Civilian Service May 15 to Tina McMaster-Goering, project manager in Civil Works, for her contributions as the course manager for the 2011 Prospect 120 Commander's Course Phase II training from December 2010 to October 2011.



Photo by John Budnik

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service May 15 to Greg Schmidt, Engineering Division deputy chief, for exemplary service Feb. 17 for Bring Your Youth to Work Day. Forty youths ages 9-17 participated in the event filled with science and engineering lessons.



Photo by John Budnik

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service May 15 to Tu Nguyen, civil engineer in the Geotechnical and Materials Section, for levee surveillance and flood fight technical support during the 2011 Missouri River Flood.



Photo by John Budnik

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service May 15 to Scott Kendall, supervisor in the Environmental Engineering Branch, for his commitment to engineering excellence that resulted in the procurement of three Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity contracts for hazardous and toxic radioactive waste architect/engineers.

## Retirements, Farewells



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Monica Bardsley, contract specialist, receives the Army Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Lt. Col. Bobby Stone, deputy district commander, during a farewell ceremony at district headquarters May 8. Bardsley had served in the district since November 2005 and is moving to Georgia.



Photo by John Budnik

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents Judy Beckhorn-Ross, project management assistant, with her certificate of retirement during a ceremony at the district headquarters May 30. Beckhorn-Ross also received the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service for her efforts that helped ensure the success of the military program during its historic years of growth. Beckhorn-Ross retired with 20 years of federal service.



Photo by John Budnik

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents Carl Borash, Civil Work Branch chief, with a certificate of retirement during a ceremony at the district headquarters building May 9. Borash also received a certificate of appreciation, Army Superior Civilian Service Award and Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal for leading the planning, analysis and design of water resource facilities such as dams, shore protection projects and harbors across Alaska. Borash retired after 33 years of federal service.



Photo by John Budnik

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents Kevin Morgan, Regulatory Division chief, with his certificate of retirement during a ceremony at district headquarters May 23. Morgan received the Bronze Order of de Fleury Medal for his exemplary service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the nation. He also received the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Award for excelling in positions of increased responsibility from his start as a park ranger at the Texas Somerville Reservoir. Morgan retired with 31 years of federal service.