



ST. LOUIS ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT

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Medal of Honor for Combat Engineer

(*Army News Service*) The often-used quote says: "All gave some, some gave all." Combat Engineer Sgt. First Class Paul R. Smith certainly gave all and his sacrifice has been recognized by award of the first and to date only, Medal of Honor during the Gulf Wars.

Smith was accorded the nation's highest military award for his actions near the Baghdad, Iraq airport on April 4, 2003. During heavy combat with an estimated 100 Republican Guard forces, Smith exposed himself to enemy fire while attacking them with a .50 caliber machine gun from a damaged armored personnel carrier. He was killed by a single round to the head as he fought off

the enemy, saving his unit from probable destruction.

The announcement of Smith's award came from the White House on March 29, 2005. The medal was presented to Smith's wife, son and daughter by the President on April 4th exactly two years from the date of the fatal engagement.

Smith's unit, part of the 11th Engineer Battalion, was supporting Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry as part of the 3rd Infantry Division's envelopment of Baghdad when the action took place.

Smith and his fellow Engineer Soldiers were assigned to prepare a holding compound for enemy prisoners of war being taken during the assault on the

Iraqi capital and selected an area of structures formerly used by the Republican Guard.

As they moved into the area they were attacked by a company-sized force.

Sgt. First Class Smith recognized the vulnerability of his more than 100 fellow Soldiers and quickly organized a defense with two platoons of Soldiers, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle and three M-113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APC).

Initially he fought back with hand grenades and anti-tank weapons while organizing an evacuation of three Soldiers who had been wounded as the action opened.

Medal of Honor Cont. page 3



Commander's Perspective



COL Kevin Williams

This will be my final column in *Esprit* before changing command. This has been a superb tour and it's tough to leave. I say this not because I am driven to hold onto command, but rather because of the people in St. Louis, their incredible skills and work ethic, and because of those factors, what we have accomplished together. You made the difficult tasks easy and the impossible ones doable. I could not have asked for a better team.

When I attended the prospective commanders course at USACE, I was told that the District Commanders assignment in St. Louis was a plum assignment. I withheld my judgment until I had been here awhile, but let me assure you, I am telling my replacement, COL Setliff, the very same thing about the job. Everything about this job is just great, the location, the people, and what we do for our Nation. I do wish we had more work to do, because this organization can sure do it.

I was amazed as I got into my tour to learn of the multitude of relationships that you as individuals and collectively as a District have with our many customers and stakeholders, both here in the St. Louis area and around the country. Whenever we encountered a challenge, it seemed that someone here either knew the answer or was on excellent working terms with someone else who did. I cannot tell you how many times the thought, "How are we going to do that?" was still in my head when you arrived in front of my desk with the answer or someone in tow who knew the answer.

When COL Setliff takes over on June 30th, I will have already spent several days turning over with him. Some of you will have met him by then. Many more will have to wait until he takes over and has the opportunity to get to your offices and activities. I urge you all to give him the same support, friendship, and loyalty that you have at all times shown me. You made my transition into command very smooth and comfortable and I am confident that you will do the same for COL Setliff.

I have deeply appreciated the countless things, great and small, that you have done for me and my family. You've treated me extremely well and showed great warmth and friendship to my family too. So I'm not the only one who will miss this assignment.

As I sign off, I do so with two final thoughts: "Go Cards," and Essayons. Essayons of course, means "Let us try." I am convinced that you as individuals and as the wonderful St. Louis District family are able to do anything to which you set your minds and energy. I am

confident that when you respond to the direction, Essayons, that you will succeed. You owe each other, your District, the Corps of Engineers, the Army and our Nation no less.

Thank you for all that you have done and for all that you will do in the future.

Essayons!

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District Commander ----- COL C. Kevin Williams

Chief, Public Affairs ----- Alan J. Dooley

Editor ----- Russell A. Elliott

Address mail to: US Army Engineer District, St. Louis, ATTN: CEMVS-PA, 1222 Spruce, St. Louis, MO 63103-2833, Phone (314) 331-8095



Captured Iraqi artillery munitions add a dangerous foreground to this photo of Sgt. First Class Paul Smith (R) and his combat comrades.

**Medal of Honor
Cont. from page 1**

Then he moved to man a .50 caliber machine gun on a damaged APC, firing until the weapon was empty, reloading at least two more times and continuing to pour a withering fire on the attacking enemy. Finally, when another Soldier who had been feeding him ammunition noticed the gun was silent, that Soldier found Smith dead on the floor of the APC.

After the small combined Infantry-Engineer unit had repulsed the enemy attack, numerous Soldiers spoke of Smith's high standards and toughness.

Specialist Michael Seaman, who had supported Smith with ammunition, called Smith the kind of Soldier everyone should try to become. "He was fair yet tough. He always knew what he was talking about. He was hard in training so we would be hard in battle," Seaman told.

Another Soldier, Sgt. Thomas Robbins, who witnessed Smith's heroism, stated: "He was a hard man to work for at times, but he always did what was right and made sure that everyone in his platoon did the same. He was the best leader and Soldier you could ask to work under," Robbins concluded.

But Smith had another side. Writing in Army News, Eric Cramer told of his interview with Sgt. First Class Smith's wife, Birgit.

"He was a great father and a devoted husband," she told Cramer. "Before he

even knew his unit was going to go, he told me that if there's any way I can get 'my boys' over there, I'm going."

Speaking of Smith's heroism, she said, "Paul was married to the Army before he was married to me, in a way, so I'm not surprised he would give himself up so his boys could come home."

Birgit Smith said that when she first learned that her husband had been nominated for the Medal of Honor, she didn't know the significance. Now though, she says, "To know that his name never dies makes me feel very good."

Reflecting on Smith's eagerness to return to Iraq, his wife said, "When he came back from the (first) Gulf War, he felt like he didn't finish the job. I think Paul was ready. He wanted to make the change over there. He wanted to finish the job."

Smith was born in El Paso, Tex., September 24, 1969. At age 9, he and his family moved to South Tampa, Fla.

He enlisted in the Army in October 1989, attended Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Leonard Wood. He subsequently served two tours in Germany as well as others stateside. He was deployed to the first



One of Iraq's many sandstorms creates an eerie light as Sgt. Smith (R) and a fellow Soldier rest atop building rubble.



President George W. Bush personally makes the presentation to Sgt. First Class Smith's widow Birgit and his two children, Jessica and David.

Gulf War, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and again to Iraq in 2003.

On March 19th, Smith and his unit crossed the border into Iraq, traveling more than 300 kilometers during the war's first 48 hours. On the night of April

3rd, they punched through the Karbala Gap south of Baghdad en route to the Airport where he would fight his final action.

He is survived by his wife and two children, Jessica and David.



Sgt. First Class Smith's widow, Birgit visits his final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery.



The Medal of Honor is our Nation's highest award.

When President Abraham Lincoln signed S.J.R. No 82 into law as 12 Stat. 623-624 on July 14, 1862, the Army Medal of Honor was born. It read in part:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized to cause two thousand "medals of honor" to be prepared with suitable emblematic devices, and to direct that the same be presented, in the name of the Congress, to such non-commissioned officers and privates as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities, during the present insurrection (Civil War)."

With this simple and rather obscure act, Congress created a unique award that would achieve prominence in American history like few others.



St. Louis District Supports Troops in the Hunt for IEDs

by Dave Kreigbaum

The St. Louis District has lent technical and contractual assistance to Corps of Engineers offices working on a variety of projects, but none may be as critical as the work being done in the hunt for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Iraq. In supporting the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' Research and Development Center - Topographic Engineering Center in Virginia (ERDC-TEC), the St. Louis District is having a direct impact on the lives of our troops stationed in Iraq.

When Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker called on the Corps of Engineers to help with a solution for locating IEDs in Iraq, St. Louis District and ERDC-TEC sprang into action. The District's Geospatial Engineering Branch (ED-S) lent its on-call technical expertise to the design of a camera system called "Buckeye," which could be installed on an aircraft and then flown over an area of interest thought to contain IEDs.

The imagery from this flight would then be processed on a computer, with results showing possible locations for the IEDs by identifying small changes between earlier and current images.

IEDs have been hidden along roadsides in a variety of ways, from abandoned cars, to piles of garbage and animal carcasses. They can be detonated by remote control or hardwired to a push button.

Tests in the United States showed that the system was able to image a large area at one time, making this tool even more important. Real-life use in Iraq has shown that the Buckeye system is successful for locating probable IEDs in that environment. Proof of the system's value comes from commanders in Iraq, who are already asking for more of the Buckeye systems.

St. Louis District's experts in the Contract Division (CT) and the Project Management Branch (PM) made sure that Architectural/Engineer Photogrammetric



Dave Kreigbaum shows the kind of imagery that the "Buckeye" system produces to identify possible IEDs to commanders in the field.

contracts and funding for work on this time-sensitive project were quickly in place, so that the war-fighters could get this life-saving system as soon as possible at a price that was agreeable to the Government. The contract experts made "emergency" work such as this look easy - they've done it many times before when important work has come to the District.

The Buckeye project is not the first time ERDC-TEC and MVS have worked together under a timeline to get a tool to the war-fighter. Further studies on the

Buckeye system show that it could be merged with another project on which the St. Louis District was instrumental in contracting - the Urban Tactical Planner (UTP). The UTP is actual aerial image 'draped' over an elevation model of the area.

St. Louis District has lent its technical and contractual expertise to the UTP project since the mid-1990s. With UTP, urban areas can be visited on the computer in great detail before the troops put boots on the ground in a hostile situation.



This actual image identifies changes on the ground that may indicated presence of possible deadly IEDs.



Twin Cities Levee Dedicated at Festus-Crystal City

The twin Missouri cities of Festus-Crystal City dedicated their new flood protection levee - first revealed at the ceremony to be named for its champion, Rita Lovelace, Saturday, June 11. The event, conducted on the land side of the levee drew an enthusiastic crowd who heard several speakers praise the new structure.

Congressman Russ Carnahan (D-Mo 3rd District) began by noting Robert Frost's words about good fences making good neighbors, and said he hoped that the new "wall" would make an easier relationship between the cities and the Mississippi River. He said he was greatly impressed by how the two cities had pulled together so tightly to meet a need that will well-serve both communities into their future together. He praised Rita Lovelace's tireless efforts and pledged to continue to support ongoing and new projects to make the region safer from flooding.

Col. Kevin Williams, St. Louis District Engineer noted that he had wielded a shovel when ground was broken for the project and was most pleased to be able to dedicate it as it was being brought to completion before he is to retire at the end of June. He drew laughs when he related how at the groundbreaking, then Congressman Dick Gephart had told how during an especially tough budget year, he had redoubled his efforts to find funds for the levee project because he didn't want to come home and have to tell Rita that he had failed. The colonel also praised the communities for taxing themselves and sticking to their plans to complete the project.

Festus City Administrator Steve Stoll next introduced Rita Lovelace, describing her as having a bull dog determination. He said that every project of this magnitude needs a champion, and Rita had been just that person.

Short of stature, but towering in triumph, Rita Lovelace stepped to the



Rita and Tom Lovelace (2nd and 3rd from right) prepare to cut the ribbon at the Festus-Crystal City Twin City Levee dedication June 11. Participating in the memorable day was Honorable Congressman Russ Carnahan, Col. Kevin Williams, Crystal City Mayor Tom Schilly and Festus Mayor Gene Doyle.

microphone, and with a gleaming smile, raised her left hand in a "V for Victory" sign. Then she told how she had struggled for nearly 12 years to gain congressional support, local funding and then to get the 3,600 foot, \$13 million



Rita Lovelace signifies "Victory" in her 12- year struggle to see the Festus-Crystal City Levee built.

levee built to provide the Twin Cities with a 500-year level of protection from Mississippi River flooding.

She remembered how during the flood of 1993, when her grandson had been stricken and needed hospitalization, that it took two hours over back roads and detours to get him to the hospital, and how that had galvanized her to action. She also paused to choke back emotions when she spoke of levee project supporters who had passed away before seeing their dreams come to fruition.

As Rita talked at the ceremony's end with Congressman Carnahan, two participants stole away silently to remove a cardboard cover from a sign on the levee slope behind the ceremony site. In gleaming white letters, the sign told everyone present of the name selected for the new levee: "Rita Lovelace Twin City Levee."

Shocked and at a loss for words, but not without a gleaming smile, Rita Lovelace accepted a shower of praise and thanks from many present at the ceremony. Clearly, Rita Lovelace's "good fence" had already made a lot of good neighbors even better friends.



Valley Park Levee Is Dedicated

Citizens of Valley Park Mo., a city plagued by 14 major floods from the adjacent Meramec River in the last 90 years, gathered Saturday June 18, to dedicate a new \$49 million flood damage reduction levee. The dedication was conducted on the final day of the 2005 Valley Days celebration.

The 3.2-mile long levee, designed to protect them from the statistically predictable 100-year flood event, will actually be completed later this summer. At this time however, according to geotechnical engineer Patrick J. Conroy, the partially completed project already protects the city from all historic floods except the 1982 flood of record. When it is done, the levee's height will exceed even that flood by some four feet.



Retired Congressman Robert A. Young, namesake of the St. Louis District Headquarters building, was a featured speaker at the Valley Park Levee dedication.

The levee includes three closure structures, one each on Vance Road and St. Louis Avenue, as well as another across the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks. A total of 41 relief wells are also to control excess underseepage. Six closable gravity drains permit rain water to pass through the levee into the river. When they are closed during a flood event, water is diverted into a series of five new holding ponds where it will be stored until after a flood.

Following the Valley Days parade, in



(L) Congr. Robert A. Young and Todd Akin; Mayor Dan Michael; Kacky Garner (Sen. Talent's staff); Col. Kevin Williams; City Attorney Eric Martin; Missouri Senator Pro Tem Michael Gibbons; Tory Catanzaro, City Business Association.

which District Commander Col. Kevin Williams served as Grand Marshal, citizens, local officials, representatives of two of the levee's contractors and Corps employees gathered just inside of the St. Louis Ave. closure structure.

Several past and current employees, project managers and District Commanders attended, including retired Col. Lee McKinney, under whom the project was started were also present.

Speakers included Col. Kevin Williams, Congressman Todd Akin (R-Mo, 2nd District) and Mayor Dan Michel. Late addition of former Congressman Robert A. Young was a highlight of the event. Young served in the House of Representatives when the Meramec River Lakes project was deauthorized and got language included that authorized the Corps to investigate flood damage reduction measures for the cities of the Lower Meramec River. The Valley Park levee was constructed under this legislation.

Congressman Akin told the assembled crowd how proud he was to see their levee project completed and how good he felt to know that their city was finally safe from the neighboring river. He pledged his ongoing support to the city's economic growth and future safety.

Colonel Williams told of the pride he shared with the Corps employees who for some two decades have worked side by side with the city of Valley Park to bring create a safer, brighter future. He pointedly praised the citizenry for their

determination to complete the project.

Valley Park Mayor Dan Michel thanked the Corps and the citizens for their support and steadfastness.

As a huge American flag flew high above from the ladder of a Valley Park fire truck, dignitaries and attendees moved to the closure structure on St. Louis Avenue. A yellow ribbon was stretched across the road and the speakers placed their hands on ceremonial pair of giant scissors. On the count of "three," the blades sliced the ribbon and the levee was declared dedicated.

Reflecting on his involvement, Jim Zerega, the project manager who finished the project said, "The Corps Team has felt a real urgency to complete the levee system before Valley Park was flooded again. With the help of ESI, we have been able to finish the job. We are happy for Valley Park's residents who have suffered from past floods. We had to overcome a variety of challenges to reach this point. It could easily have gone the other way and Valley Park could be sitting with incomplete flood protection and prospects of a long wait because of budget constraints."

As the event ended, several groups of people who worked to complete the project drew together for last "family photos" in front of the levee.

As they walked quietly away, several stopped and looked back, some with relief and others with tinges of sadness that this unifying work was ended.



Waterways Journal — a St. Louis Original

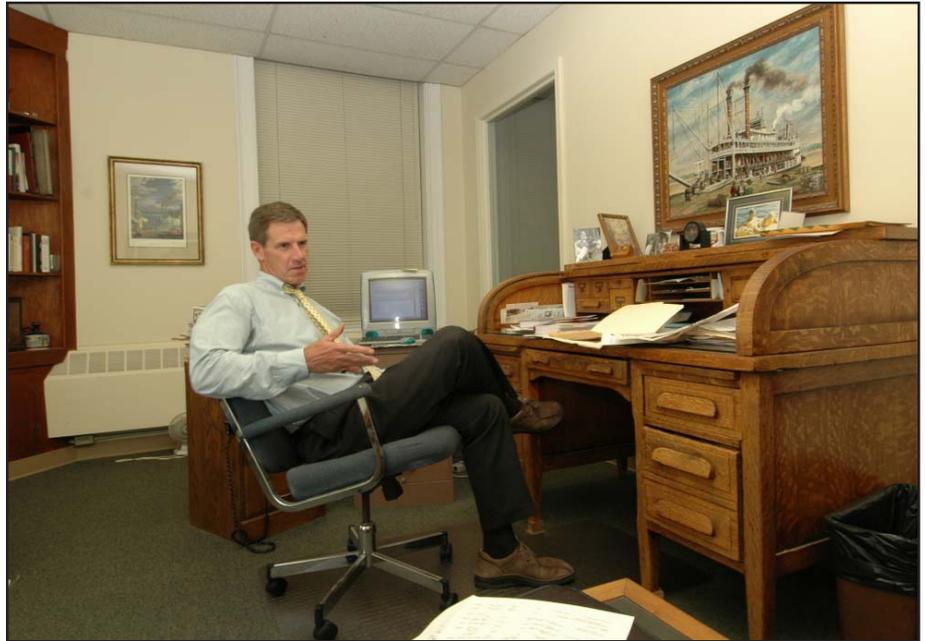
Imagine celebrating a 40th birthday in 1927 and to still be going strong 78 years later. Well, that is the case with *The Waterways Journal*, arguably the oldest, continuously published, privately owned paper in the nation. Every week from a small office in downtown St. Louis a staff of 12 produces this piece of waterways history.

For 118 years the nation's inland navigation industry has been getting its news from the pages of the journal. Only five men have been responsible for the journal since its inception. Capt. Donald T. Wright, the third publisher, purchased the paper in 1921 and owned it until his death in 1965. The paper was then sold to the Spencer family, in whose ownership it remains.

A glimpse of the mighty Mississippi River can be seen from the journal's office windows on the sixth floor of the historic Security Building at North Fourth Street. The office space boasts lots of personality. There are older desks in the offices. Nary a plastic desk nor partition is in sight. The walls are lined with paintings and images of river life and navigation. There are several model steamboats under glass cases. An old steering wheel hangs on the conference room wall. Filing cabinets are labeled "Steamboat Photos." And there are bound volumes of the journal reaching back over 100 years.

The paper exudes tradition, longevity and family. After purchasing the paper in 1965, H.N. "Ray" Spencer became its publisher. His son, H. Nelson Spencer, began working for the paper in 1969 and became publisher ten years later when his father retired. Nelson's son, Nelson "Spence" Spencer, works for the paper too, doing primarily sales and advertising.

The small staff of twelve is much like family and many have been with the paper for decades. "We have been blessed with good people," said publisher H. Nelson Spencer. "We have very little turnover."



A 19th century rolltop desk coexists with a 21st century computer and a bookcase filled with modern reference volumes in the office of H. Nelson Spencer, publisher of *The Waterways Journal* since 1979.

"People tend to come work here and stay," said John Shoulberg, editor and associate publisher. "Nelson is a great guy to work for. He bends over backwards to take care of his people."

Shoulberg has been working for the journal fourteen years, starting first as the assistant editor. He became editor in 1996 when longtime editor Jack Simpson retired. Simpson may have retired but he didn't cut his ties with the journal. He continues to write the editorials and closely follow the industry.

The staff includes four off-site correspondents who report from Washington D.C., the Upper Ohio River, Paducah, Ky., and the Gulf Coast. For over twenty years, Bill Evans, the paper's representative in New Orleans, reported on the inland waterways along the Gulf Coast, stretching from Texas to Florida. He recently died of lung cancer and has been a huge loss for the company, Shoulberg said. "He was a great resource and is sorely missed," he said. The journal recently found a licensed towboat captain who is also a journalism school grad to take over in New Orleans.

Katie Antalick is the current staff writer and has written several stories on

The Corps of Engineers. Kevin McDaniel is the company's graphics artist and Ed Rahe, who began as a staff writer, now works in advertising. He has been with the company nine years and says with a smile that he must be on his way to a long association with the paper.

During a recent two hour visit to the journal's offices, there was one name that was repeated numerous times: Jim Swift. Swift is synonymous with *The Waterways Journal*. He first came to work for the journal in 1941. Over the years he worked as the business manager and the resident historian, becoming the face of *The Waterways Journal* for hundreds of people who make their livelihoods along the inland waterways.

"Jim Swift really represented the company," Spencer recalled. "He would take trips for weeks at a time traveling up the rivers, visiting customers, and calling on advertisers and subscribers. He was the face of *The Waterways Journal* to so many people." Even after his retirement, Swift continued to write the Old Boat column until his death, October 29, 2002.

Following Swift's death, Alan Bates took over the history column. "He has done a masterful job," Shoulberg said.



“He sends in photos to accompany his columns, and he always points out some intricate, telling detail in the photo that the rest of us would overlook. His writing style is a joy to read and to edit. I’m sure many of our subscribers re-up each year because of Alan’s column.”

The journal, which has been dubbed “the riverman’s bible,” has a circulation through subscription of about 5,000. Some of the larger tow companies subscribe in bulk and put the issues on their boats, Spencer explained.

“There are a lot of old companies [in the industry],” he added. “Our subscribers stay with us. We are the only source of news on a weekly basis. We keep up-to-date on the issues.”

Staying up-to-date involves staying informed on a diverse range of subjects that include pertinent legislation and regulations, current events and new construction.

The navigation industry is facing many challenges, Spencer explained. The issue with flow levels on the Missouri River has all but stopped navigation on that inland waterway. Companies are struggling to find quality deckhands to work on the river. Several companies are being bought out and many are being consolidated. In addition to challenges on the home front, South America is proving a stout competitor for exporting grain to China. “They are developing their [infrastructure] and we are neglecting ours,” Spencer said.

In the United States, the river industry has a difficult image, Shoulberg pointed out. “People don’t know what the barge industry is all about,” he said. “The industry is always hoping to get the news out about the deteriorating locks but that doesn’t really get much news. When the industry usually makes it in the news it’s usually not good, such as tows breaking up or losses on the rivers.”

“It is so obvious that the navigational lock rehabilitation work needs to be done,” he went on to say. “There’s going to be a benefit to the nation for the work.”

Both Spencer and Shoulberg ex-

pressed optimism because several previous company owners who sold out in past years are re-emerging as small operators, frequently carrying out specialized niches that bigger companies have gotten out of.

In order to stay relevant, the journal’s staff keeps up-to-date with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard, the two federal agencies that have the biggest impact on the inland waterways. The history of the Corps of Engineers and *The Waterways Journal* go back together, Spencer pointed out. “Our history is interwoven.”



Nelson “Spence” Spencer, son of *The Waterways Journal* publisher, shows a historic copy of a century-old edition of the paper, certainly a far cry from today’s full color version.

Over the years, the journal’s staff has taken on new ventures, starting the Inland River Guide in 1972 and buying the Inland River Record in the 1970s. Both guides are industry specific. The Guide provides listings of inland river terminals, dredging companies, fueling services, divers, surveyors, shipyards, marine repair facilities and insurance firms. The Record provides lists of towing vessels, including their history, horsepower, size and other pertinent data.

They also have two guides for recreational boaters: Quimby’s Cruising Guide, begun in 1962, and the

HeartLand Boating Guide, purchased five years ago from a couple who started the guide ten years prior. Quimby’s is an annual publication and HeartLand Boating comes out nine times a year.

Just in the past ten years the paper has made several changes. Shoulberg recalls when he first started with the company that they use to put all their stories and photos on a computer disk and deliver it to the printer, where all the layout and design was done. Now they are doing the magazine layout in-house, and most recently, the paper went to color printing.

Shoulberg hopes to see continued changes and improvements. He would like to get back to personality stories and features, getting a more personal face on the stories. He also hopes to continue to develop and build up the website.

All the new endeavors stay true to the original vision though. We have stayed true to the original vision,” Spencer said. “We strictly focus on the inland waterways.”

“As long as the industry is around so will the journal be,” he said. And he sees that into the foreseeable future. “There will always be a need to move bulk commodities on the river. It is the most environmentally sound way to move products. It is a great industry that provides a really needed service. The industry is in strong hands. There are progressive, smart people at the helm.”

And so are there at *The Waterways Journal*.



This magnificent dome, recently exposed in reconstruction of the historic Security Building in which the Journal’s editorial offices are located, now greets visitors.



Construction Branch Moves to Engineering Division. Dennis Seibel to Head Up Construction

By Nicole Dalrymple

On May 16, St. Louis District Engineer, Col. Kevin Williams announced that the Construction Branch was to be reorganized from the Construction-Operations Division to the Engineering Division. The reorganization is expected to be final by the end of fiscal year 2005.



"This organizational alignment of technical organizations will enhance the Mississippi Valley Division's effectiveness and competitiveness as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' largest Regional Business Center," Col. Williams wrote in his email announcement. "The result will be an ability to meet our customer's needs, while being consistently and uniformly aligned with MVD's districts, all of which have aligned to Engineering and Construction Divisions.

"In addition, this will facilitate the cross training and career development of our engineering professionals in both the design and construction requirements of our business."

The man leading the Construction Branch through this time of transition is newly selected chief, Dennis Seibel. Dennis is well equipped for the challenge with 29 years of work experience with the Corps of Engineers, all but one of those being here in the St. Louis District.

"Dennis has tremendous experience in the construction program and will be a great asset in the success of construction

management in the district and the region," said Peggy O'Bryan, chief of the Construction-Operations Readiness Division.

A St. Louis native, Dennis always wanted to work in his hometown. He graduated from the University of Missouri at Rolla with a degree in civil engineering in May 1975. After a year of working in the oilfields of Texas, he got a job with the Kansas City District. Dennis worked in Kansas City for about six months and then transferred to Fort Leonard Wood for a brief stint. By 1978 an opportunity in the St. Louis District's hydraulics section opened up for him. He worked there briefly before transferring to the Construction Branch's modifications section.

In 1980 Dennis went to the Melvin Price Locks and Dam project where he worked for several years as the assistant field project engineer.

"Mel Price was a very interesting project to be a part of," Dennis said.

"There was a lot of work and activity. We were using techniques that hadn't been used in St. Louis for many years."

It was a major construction project for the District, and the Corps, that employed hundreds of people in the region. "There were probably as many Corps employees onsite then as there are in all of construction now," Dennis said. During the project he had multiple responsibilities that included quality assurance, reviewing shop drawings and overseeing contract administration and modifications.

After dedicating eleven years to Mel Price's construction, Dennis returned to the District office. A few years later in 1997, he went to the Northern Area Office in Elsberry, Mo., where he worked as the area engineer. In Elsberry Dennis supervised resident engineers, construction representatives and handled work assignments including major rehabilitations at Locks and Dams 24 and 25.

Working in construction has been a good match for Dennis and he finds the work rewarding. "When you work in construction you have something new

every day," he said. "It is never black and white. You are working in the gray area."

He recalls the most rewarding experience of his career being the Great Flood of 1993. He said it was an intense time with a tremendous amount of work that needed to be done quickly. All the damaged levees had to be repaired before the next flood season. Many levees had a level of protection reestablished before spring flooding and all of them were repaired within a year. "Being busy and what we were accomplishing was the best part of that experience. We were really helping people," he said.

Dennis has not only helped people here in the region but also elsewhere around the world. He's been a part of disaster response teams assisting victims of Hurricanes Frederick (1979) and Andrew (1992), as well as Typhoon Chataan (2002) in Guam.

There are future challenges. Regionalization and Communities of Practice are changing the way we do business. Future work for the branch hinges on Congressional approval and subsequent funding and reducing overhead rates continue to present challenges that Dennis will have to meet.

Dennis is also interested in doing more productive cross training so that the branch is more effective and efficient. This will help to identify ways to smooth work through the peaks and valleys of construction.

He also knows that approaching retirements will bring changes to the workforce. In the next four years, a third of the Construction Branch's staff will be eligible for retirement.

"We'll have to look at the future, the future workload, and balance the retirements and new hires," he said. "Our workforce is mature. We want to keep a talented workforce within the funding environment we are operating in."

It's a dynamic environment into which Dennis Siebel has been thrust, but with his in-depth experience, he is certainly up for the challenge.



Deanne Strauser Named Strategic Initiatives Coordinator

By Nicole Dalrymple

Deanne Strauser was selected as the District's new Strategic Initiatives Coordinator on April 25th.

The District-wide announcement, sent by Dave Leake, Chief of the District's Planning and Project Development Branch, read: "Ms. Strauser was selected from a short list of exceptionally well qualified candidates, to a large extent, based on her proven outreach performance with a wide variety of external customers and her demonstrated ability to coordinate production inputs from a broad array of District elements."

As the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Deanne will be in familiar territory. She'll be responsible for evaluating the District's capabilities and workload, and coordinating these with partners/stakeholders and their needs.

"It'll be important that I understand our capabilities and where we're at as a District," she said.

Her new duties will also include advising senior leaders, understanding where the Corps sits in relation to economic, technological and political trends, and recommending actionable items.

Since 1988, Deanne has been developing skills and experiences that make her an ideal match for her new position. She has worked in both engineering and project management and has seen many of the District's centers of expertise come into existence. She even recalls putting together the submission package that ultimately got the Photogrammetric Mapping Branch recognized as a technical center of expertise.

In 1998, Deanne became the project



manager of the Support for Others and Work for Others programs. During that assignment, she had the opportunity to work on a lot of specialty projects. As the project manager, she was responsible for coordinating with other agencies and technical folks in house, helping match specific expertise to needs.

Deanne's working knowledge of the Applied River Engineering Center, the Curation and Archives Analysis Branch, the Ordnance and Technical Service Branch, and the Photogrammetric Mapping Branch, as well as other specialty areas, provides a solid foundation for her to build on.

Deanne's first working experience with the Corps of Engineers was as a summer hire from 1981-83. She graduated from the University of Missouri at Rolla with a degree in engineering management. While she wanted to get a job with the Corps, there was a hiring freeze at the time and she went to work for Emerson Electric Co. It wasn't until 1988 that she was hired by Mike Dace to work in project management.

In the early 90s, Mike Dace started the Ordnance and Explosives Technical Services Branch and together they both moved to the Engineering Division. She recalls that at the time she was doing a lot of survey and mapping work for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Deanne fondly remembers her first assignment with O&E that required travel. She got to take five trips to beautiful Carmel, Calif. to do research work at Fort Ord when it was being closed by the 1991 Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Deanne worked in O&E until 1998.

Over the years Deanne's work assignments have required a lot of interaction with engineering and project management but she is now looking forward to building relationships with the folks in Operations and Readiness, as well as the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program and others in the District.

"Our folks in the field have great existing relationships with many

stakeholders," she said. "I'd like to build upon those."

The Corps' growing role in Homeland Security will also be a consideration as Deanne seeks new opportunities for the District. She plans to look at trends to see where we can apply our capabilities. "I'm looking forward to building new relationships. That's what I enjoy the most, meeting new people and seeing how we can work together."

She'll also keep an eye on how regionalization will impact the way we do business. "We do need more coordination across District boundaries and to fully embrace the idea behind 'one door to the Corps'," she said.

It's almost a bit overwhelming when she thinks about all the things she wants to accomplish in her new position but Deanne says she is excited about the new challenges.

"This position is a natural progression of my career with the Corps," Deanne said. "I'm really looking forward to the challenges."

The road map to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' future has been articulated in the new Strategic Directions brochure. A copy is either in each Corps employee's hands or en route to you. Read yours now.



From Desk to Dock — Jim Lynch to Manage Rend Lake

By Nicole Dalrymple

It is a goal he has been working toward for twenty plus years. When Jim Lynch heard the news that he'd been selected as the new operations manager for Rend Lake he said he felt like he'd finally accomplished his goal: "to manage a great resource." It's what he set out to do from the beginning, earning a degree in natural resources management from Southern Illinois University. "It's what excites me, gets the blood pumping."



Returning to Rend Lake brings Jim's career full circle. He began working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the early eighties at Rend Lake. He moved from there to Wappapello Lake to work as a natural resources program manager, and then on to Carlyle Lake for a developmental assignment as the assistant operations manager. Following that was a very brief assignment in the recreation program at Mark Twain Lake before being selected for a natural resources specialist position in the District.

After nine years, he was selected to be a special assistant to the then-chief of Construction and Operations, Wally Feld. A year later he was selected to be the chief of the Operations Technical and Policy Branch, a position he's held the past four years.

In addition to working at all but one of the St. Louis District lakes, Jim also did a six-month developmental assignment at Headquarters in Washington D.C. in 1993. "All the moving around and different positions were to get prepared," he said. "Cross pollination between

organizational levels used to be mandatory to move up."

He moved to different lakes on purpose, wanting to develop skills and experiences that would help him become a lake manager. "On a professional level it's important for people to experience [working at different projects]," he said.

In addition to his current duties, Jim also serves on USACE HQ's Recreation Leadership Advisory Team. He is one of only two representatives from the Mississippi Valley Division. The team provides inputs for new initiatives that will impact the field. "We help keep HQ better connected to the field," Lynch pointed out.

It is important that the Corps have uniform policies and procedures, he explained. "We have the public trust," he said. "We need to have similar direction at all our projects. We need consistency across the board. The Corps of Engineers is responsible for managing 11 million acres of public lands. It's a complicated balancing act."

In the early eighties, coming to work for the Corps was considered a personal challenge for Jim.

Many of his college professors recommended avoiding the Corps. "They didn't view the Corps as land managers," he said. But finding employment in the natural resources field is very competitive, he explained. "I looked at it as an advantage," Jim said. "It was an opportunity to make a difference."

In his twenty plus year career, he has seen many changes in the Corps. "Initially the Corps backed into recreation. Since then, the Corp, through its interpretative program and partnering, has really stood itself up. I've seen tremendous change," he observed.

"The projects are our face to the public," he added. "The project staffs do a lot of outreach and education to show that the Corps is not a 'tear it up and dam it up Corps'."

Once he reports for work, Jim's first immediate concern is the 2007 fiscal year budget. He'll also dedicate time to getting to know the staff, their strengths

and their interests.

Rend Lake has the oldest master plan in the District, he pointed out. Jim plans to seek community involvement in the plan's update. "I want to know what they see for the lake," he said. "It's very important that we stay connected to our partners and the community's interests."

Hoping to continue to build on the already successful partnerships Rend Lake has with the community, Jim said he wants to continue to move all interests forward so they're not in competition. "We don't want to divide our partners but to plan together for a future."

"As money continues to get tight our partnerships will become even more important," he said. "Partners influence Congress and where limited funds are invested."

Jim also plans to look at the changing customer base for the lake.

"The boomers going into retirement now look for different things," he said. For example many campsites had to upgrade their electrical outlets so that the large mobile homes could be supported. "We need to listen to our customers," he said. "It's important."

Another concern Jim plans to address is a low water plan. Currently the lake is prepared for high water events but Jim wants them to be just as prepared for low water or drought conditions.

The District's three Illinois lakes are largely the only source of fishing, hunting, boating, and sailing on public land in the state. "Only two percent of the land in Illinois is public ownership," Jim said. "What we do is essential."

Jim and his wife are currently looking for a home in the Rend Lake area. Jim looks forward to the move. It will give him a chance to reconnect to what he cares about.

He also wants his two kids to experience the country setting. Jim grew up in a northern Illinois farming community, where kids were let out of school to help with the planting and harvesting. He is looking forward to giving his children a similar experience with this move.



LM Welcomes New Property Disposal Officer

Bill Williams brings 24 years of experience to his new position as St. Louis District's Property Disposal Officer -- 20 with the Corps.



He started with the Corps in 1981, going first to Germany.

He returned stateside in 2000, going to the Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM) in Huntsville, Ala.

"I wanted to get back to the Corps though," Williams said. "All those years made it more like a family than a job."

Bill came to St. Louis in late March and said "I'm eager to get out to all of the projects." But he cited his difficulty with driving directions. "They tell you, 'Go to 70, 270 and then take 143. No one uses street names. Thank goodness for MapQuest!'"

Bill resides in Belleville, Ill. "I catch Metro Link in Shiloh. It's great."

On weekends he enjoys short trips and yard work. "I love to see new things and St. Louis has a lot to offer," he said.

Did Bill find "family" back in the Corps?

"You bet. I enjoyed my work in Alabama, but I always felt like an outsider. My first morning here I was shocked to have two people come up to me, introduce themselves and say 'Good Morning.' It's great to be back."

Romanda Walker Returns to Public Affairs

This summer is Romanda Walker's fourth with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in St. Louis. Romanda previously worked as a student intern, one summer in PM and two others in Public Affairs.



She is a masters degree candidate at the University of Missouri in Columbia, where she is seeking a degree in Bioinformatics. There she is studying the use of computer technology to advance research and analysis of DNA, proteins and other genetic factors.

She has returned to the St. Louis District after a two year absence, coming back under the Department of Labor-sponsored Workforce Recruitment Program which seeks to interest top-performing college students in government careers.

A native St. Louisian, her interests include computers, reading and a little shopping. She hopes her education will lead to a career in biomedical research.

Note to Readers: We want to welcome new people to the District in *Esprit*. If you have people you'd like to see in *Esprit*, please provide head and shoulders photos similar to these and a short (75-100 words) bio. Call PA for assistance.

Employee of The Month!

April 2005

Kent Hayes has been selected as the April 2005 Employee of the Month. For the past 5 months, Kent served as the Acting Security Manager while



Dawn Walgate was on maternity leave. Throughout the period, he rose to the challenge and demonstrated his ability to master new tasks through initiative and willingness to learn. Kent was instrumental in completing timely Risk Assessments for the District, as well as keeping up with multiple daily office tasks. The Security Office and District benefited greatly because of his efforts! Way to go Kent!

May 2005

Rachel Garren is the May 2005 Employee of the Month. Rachel served as the MVS Natural Resource Management



Tract Coordinator for the National Environmental and Natural Resource Conference and the Operation Management Meeting hosted by the St. Louis District on behalf of USACE. The USACE leadership and conference participants gave great credit to Rachel's leadership and talents in organizing the headquarters conference. Rachel's attention to details and team spirit reflected well on the St. Louis District and the City of St. Louis. National leadership recognized the conference goal as an advancement of the 2012 plan of communication in a learning organization within the Community of Practice (COP) and declared the conference a communication success.



US Army Corps of Engineers

Permission Slip

Ask yourself:

1. Is it good for my customer?
2. Is it legal and ethical?
3. Is it something I am willing to be accountable for?

If so, don't ask for permission. You already have it.

Just do it!

One Team: Relevant, Ready, Responsive, Reliable

Just Do It!

Lt. Gen. Strock has endorsed the *Just Do It* program, placing his signature on new editions of the card. Released on the Corps' Birthday, June 16th the new cards are already on their way to every District employee. Carry yours with pride!



Illinois' Kaskaskia Watershed Recognized for Excellence

St. Louis – In early May more than 550 environmental and natural resources professionals from around the country gathered together in St. Louis for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' annual Environmental and Natural Resources Conference. On the conference's final day the Army's Chief of Engineers, Lieutenant General Carl A. Strock, presented the Partners in Stewardship Award of Excellence to Andrea Lewis, Operations Manager at Lake Shelbyville, Shelbyville, Ill., and Ed Weilbacher of the Kaskaskia Watershed Association in Illinois for their efforts in sustainable partnership practices.

The Kaskaskia Watershed Association was created with the goal to develop, enhance and protect the ecological and socio ecological values of the natural resources within the Kaskaskia River watershed that balances the needs of a wide variety of local, regional and national stakeholders. The Corps' St. Louis District manages the two lakes on the Kaskaskia River – Carlyle Lake and Lake Shelbyville.

Numerous collaborative efforts have been initiated between the Corps and the Kaskaskia Watershed Association, merging federal, state and local government jurisdictions to address watershed challenges. This relationship has helped reconcile conflicting needs and demands in the Kaskaskia River system and helped create material improvements to Corps infrastructure and operations.

The Partners in Stewardship Awards grew out of the first-time gathering in November 2003 of the seven primary U.S. land management agencies at a conference called Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship. The conference provided over 1,600 attendees a unique opportunity to learn what makes partnerships work, hear success stories, and gain skills to bring back to their organizations.



(L)to(R) Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, Andrea Lewis, Rick Hayes (Watershed Coordinator for the Willamette Valley Project, Portland District), Ed Weilbacher (Director of Southwestern RC&D for the Natural Resource Conservation Service) and Debra Stokes (Senior Partnership Advisor USACE).

The awardees represent some of the most innovative partnerships showcased during the conference. The partnerships selected for the award are recognized as strong programs moving forward into 2005 and serve as examples of "best practices" for the seven land manage-

ment agencies. The federal agencies include the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and Bureau of Indian Affairs.



Mel Price Locks and Dam, Alton Ill., hosted a special "Dining on the Dam" event for Environmental and Natural Resource Conference attendees.



Retiree's Corner

The retirees had their monthly luncheon at the Salad Bowl on March 17th. This being St. Patrick Day, many of the retirees were sidetracked to the Parade in Dogtown, where many of the Irish and many more of those who wish they were Irish went to celebrate. A few, however either lost their way or forgot that it was St. Patrick Day and did attend the luncheon.



Mention was made of the passing of Otto Steffens, the former Resident Engineer at the Clarence Cannon Project. Otto endured many challenges during the construction of the project.

Lew Scheurman mentioned that the Senior Olympics were coming up and that he and his wife were considering participating again. They have been winners of various ribbons over the past several years. Considering his recent knee replacement, Lew said that he was going to give it a try. (Someone has to represent us old retirees.)

FLASHBACK 1970

Here is some historical information from March 1970:

Dick Cameron and Bo Smith from the Environmental Resources Section of the Planning Branch spoke to the Army R.O.T.C. unit at Washington University. They spoke on the Impact of Water Resources on the Environment. There was one interesting sidelight to this endeavor. Prior to their arrival, R.O.T.C. opponents had burned the building down, and the lecture was moved to the Air Force R.O.T.C. unit.

Mr. Netr Manikul, the Director of the Division of the Prime Ministers Affairs of Thailand visited the District Office. He was in the U.S. studying administrative management and organization. He

was given an orientation on the St. Louis Districts mission and function by Edna Varela of the Management Branch and Homer Duff, District Comptroller.
Promotions:

Mr. Ted Postol, formally assigned to Hydraulics Branch, Hydraulics Design Section, promoted to Head of the newly established Water Quality Section, Hydraulics Branch.

Mr. Michael Cullen, formerly Hydraulic Engineer in Hydraulics Branch, Hydraulic Design Section, promoted to Head of the Section.

Mr. James Vithalani promoted from Civil Engineer in the F&M Branch, Soils Section to Head of the Section.

New Employees:

- Edgar Knight AS
- Linda LeVault PR-S
- Larry McCole AS
- Shelia Stowe AS-M
- Mike McClard ED-DA
- Perry Sweet RE-E

Suggestion Awards:

Anton Dorshorst, ED-DS was awarded \$185 for a suggestion that survey crews use a pre-printed survey data loose leaf notebook for recording survey checks made at L&D 26.

William Bell, OD-PS was awarded \$45 for a suggestion that wheel stirrups paddle wheel bucket boards be formed on a power brake on the Dredges Ste Genevieve and Kennedy, in lieu of hand forming in a forge.

Steve Jones, Dredge Kennedy was awarded \$25 for suggesting that a cable release device be used for underrunning hauling cable on dredges. This device will eliminate the dangerous handling of hauling cable by hand.

Outstanding Performance ratings were given to:

- Cletus Menard Dredge Kennedy
- Jacqueline Becker OD
- John D. Lytle ED-F
- Ken Long PA
- Warren Kraus OC
- Franklin Wehrle RE
- Otto Steffens STL Project
- Stephen Williams ADP

- William Stahl RE, Rend Lake
- Ruddle Spring Pathfinder
- Sandor Dombi ED-DG
- Al Watkins OD-PS
- Dorothy Zapf OD-P
- Kathleen Handshy ADP
- George Wilson OC
- Dan Flippen CD

In an unofficial letter to the District from Saudi Arabia, Assistant Chief of the Construction Division, Bob Parsons, who was 6 months TDY there, wrote:

"Had another first yesterday. A camel ride. Everyone, if the opportunity presents itself, should take a camel ride. Not twice, just once. To start off with, they are on their knees when you get in the saddle. Then they get up on their hind legs and you're grabbing that long neck that is full of sand and about 6 inches shorter than a giraffes neck. Just as you get oriented and find that you and the saddle are partly connected, up comes the front end and you're grabbing for something which ends up to be the tail.

Then they give you one rein for the left hand and a big stick for the right hand and hit him on the rump and off you go at a sea-sickening roll. Every part of you that touches that home-made saddle is either being pinched or rubbed raw. I still don't know what the rein or the stick is for. I'm trying to move around and make that saddle comfortable. If you hit him on the right side of the neck, he's supposed to turn left, and on the left he turns right. But they have got to be the hard headedest animal since they invented the Missouri Mule. You've got to hit them like Babe Ruth hit home runs to even get their attention. This is not the easiest thing to do when you're afraid to turn loose of the saddle with both hands.

They are really a gentle animal though. They get their kicks out of life by biting, spitting on you, rubbing you against something like a wall or tree, stepping on your feet, etc. It's an experience not soon forgotten as evidenced by my standing in the corner writing this note to you all."



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