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**Millwright Wes Elliot steadies the countershaft and pinion gear as it is lowered into the machinery room in the west wall of the main chamber at Locks 27 near Granite City, Ill.**

## **Locks 27 Machinery Rehabilitation Nears Completion**

*Photos and story by George Stringham, PA*

At week sixteen of the lift-gate machinery and counterweight project at Locks 27 on the Chain of Rocks Canal near Granite City, Ill., Midwest Foundation Corporation, the contractor, started to see the light at the end of the tunnel as work on the \$13 million rehabilitation project drew to a close.

The project consists of replacing or refurbishing much of the 50-plus-year-old lift-gate machinery and counterweights for both the main chamber and the smaller auxiliary chamber and requires the lock chamber to be closed while the maintenance is being conducted. This necessitated two 55-day closures, leaving one lock operational

while the other was being rehabilitated.

“This project has been a real testament to cooperation between the Corps and the river industry,” said Peg O’Bryan, Chief of the St. Louis District’s Operations Division. “Anytime you close one of the locks, for whatever reason, it’s going to have an impact.”

It wasn’t a coincidence that, on

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### Commander's Perspective



**Lt. Col. Gregory C. Raimondo**

Normally in *Esprit*, I try to convey new information or praise our people for their superb accomplishments. Without downplaying the work you all do and how well you do it, I have a very serious concern for each of you: your safety.

Many may remember a TV show – “Hill Street Blues.” Before the patrolmen hit the street at the start of each episode, the sergeant conducting their precinct meeting ended with, “Be careful out there.”

This applies fully in the St. Louis District as well.

I am very concerned about the increase in accidents and injuries we sustained in the St. Louis District during this past year. This bothers me both because of how it impacts our mission and because of my personal concern for each of you and your families, as members of our larger District family.

Our leadership from the top down, has a growing concern about unnecessary

and preventable accidents. And believe me, most are unnecessary and preventable. Rather than settle for an ongoing number of accidents and injuries, they have set tougher goals. When we look back, we see too many accidents that we should have anticipated, that we suffered from trying to take short cuts or from other causes we should have foreseen and headed off. So previous standards for “good enough,” simply aren’t good enough anymore.

Safety is not just Gary Groenemann and Kathy Meadows’ jobs. It is everyone’s job. They offer us many tools to help keep us safe and try to keep us all on our toes. But like bread, safety must be made every day. And it starts with each one of us.

During these opening days and weeks of 2006, I urge each of you in the St. Louis District family to rethink what you do and how you do it. Are there risks that we can avoid or greatly minimize? Working on water with giant machinery is inherently risky. So is driving. But if we think about what we are doing, we can foresee many of the potential problems and either avoid accidents altogether or perform our tasks in a safer manner. I know we can.

And don’t just watch out for yourself. We work most often in teams. Watch out for each other. Share responsibility. Be your colleague’s second and third set of eyes. If you see something potentially unsafe, tell a supervisor, immediately. If you are not sure, tell a supervisor, immediately. Let them make the decision.

The people of the St. Louis District are the heart of the good that we bring to our District, the Corps and the Nation. Without you we cannot achieve what we

do, and injuries and mishaps are taking too many of you out of that equation. Of equal or more importance though is the pain and suffering that comes with each of these mishaps. We all feel it. Each of you is precious to me. Be safe.



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## Lock 27 Machinery Cont. from page 1

October 17, the 600-foot auxiliary lock was the first lock to be closed.

“Fall is a busy time for the industry,” O’Bryan emphasized. “If you think about it, that’s when agriculture’s fall harvest is being shipped down the Mississippi River to Louisiana ports. By doing the work on the aux lock first, we were able to keep the larger, 1,200-foot chamber open through the rest of their busy season.”

The 1,200-foot main chamber can accommodate an entire 16-barge tow (largest seen on the Upper Mississippi River). A standard tow of that size measures 105 feet wide by approximately 1160 feet long.

When the main chamber is closed, all river traffic has to travel through the smaller, 600-foot auxiliary chamber, requiring some of the larger tows to make double cuts or special lockages.

These lockages require the tow to be ‘cut’ into two sections, a process that can take upwards of two hours, almost four times the 20 to 30 minutes it takes using the main chamber.

The reason to do the maintenance on the auxiliary lock first was two-fold. The work being done to the main chamber is nearly identical to that which was performed on the auxiliary chamber.

“Another important factor to doing the closures in the order that we did was that it gave us an opportunity to do a lessons learned from the auxiliary lock and apply them to the work we were going to do to the main chamber,” said Jay Fowler, resident engineer for the project. “As a result, we were able to find ways to work more efficiently and save time.”

One such lesson was the importance of getting an early start on the concrete removal.

“We started cutting concrete about two weeks before we closed the (main) chamber,” Fowler said. “This gave us a head start on the work.”

Overall, 2,694 square feet of concrete was removed, or 1,347 square feet from each chamber.

The lessons learned included a new process for removing the old counterweights.

In the auxiliary lock, the counter-



**Curt Coleman welds a shear tab into place in preparation to reinstall one of the giant chains to operate the lift gates.**

weights were suspended above the floor of the chase (shaft that houses the counterweights) so that the chain that connects the counterweight to the lift gate was removed. Then the counterweight could be lifted out of the chase and the new counterweight installed.

“We later discovered the chains were long enough to lower the counterweights to the bottom of their chase,” Fowler said. “So we were able to shave several days off the process.”

He also commented that another factor that helped the project’s progress was that the contractor maintained continuity with his labor forces on both lock closures. The experience they obtained during the first lock closure was invaluable during the second closure.

Another important factor has been the weather.

“This mild winter has been a big factor and has allowed us to maintain our schedule with relative ease,” said Tom Clark, superintendent of Midwest Foundation Corporation.

Machinery isn’t the only part of the facility that’s getting an upgrade. So is the programmable logic controller, or PLC. The PLC is a specialized computer that operates the motors and pumps to move the machinery at the lock. The lock operator uses a personal computer with a graphical user interface to operate the lock. This user interface must also be

adapted to the new PLC.

Shane Nieu Kirk, an electrical engineer with the St. Louis District, explained that the last time it was upgraded was in 1995 and that the technology was probably several years old then.

“The technology that’s currently in place is probably 20 years old,” Nieu Kirk said.

Although the process is similar to updating your PC at home to Windows XP, he stressed that this process also requires that they re-write all the control logic.

Just as redundancy helped the machinery replacement process, so should it for the installation of the new PLC as well.

“It took about 10 days to get the new PLC processor to operate the way we want when we installed it on the auxiliary lock’s system,” he explained. “I don’t expect it to take anywhere near that long when we do the main lock.”

Overall the project has progressed extremely well. Through successful partnering efforts between the Corps of Engineers and Midwest Foundation Corporation, project costs have been kept within budget and on schedule.

When Locks 27 returns to a fully operational status in a few short weeks, its new machinery and upgraded operating system will not only increase its efficiency, but it will also give it a new lease on life.



## Introducing St. Louis' New Real Estate Chief



**Anne Kosel, Chief, Real Estate Division**

Iowa native Anne Kosel took up the reins of the St. Louis District's Real Estate Division in August 2005. But it doesn't seem that long ago here in St. Louis because within days of reporting, she was headed south to respond to Hurricane Katrina. A thirteen-year Corps employee, she has risen through the ranks of three Districts before coming to St. Louis from her previous position as the Kansas City District's Real Estate Civil Branch Chief.

Kosel's career to date tells one a lot about who she is and how she works.

"I started as a GS-1 student trainee in Rock Island, where I was going to college," she said. There she worked in Real Estate while attending Augustana College. "When I graduated I could not be converted to a permanent position in Real Estate due to a hiring freeze at the time. I decided to continue my education, working toward a master's degree and was able to transfer to Operations Division and begin work as a Park Ranger," she said.

Only months later she was able to gain employment across the nation in the Real Estate Division in Portland District.

"I was initially assigned to a wide variety of projects and activities that

nobody else wanted to take on," she noted with a smile.

"That was good." She was first assigned to a 30-year-old, incomplete project, to tie up the loose ends of the City of North Bonneville relocation contract. "When you relocate an entire community, there's going to be conflict and this project was saturated with it. Many people, Corps and city residents, still have strong feelings about it. My boss said he didn't want to tell me anything that might prejudice me. 'Read the contract. Here are all the files,' he told me."

What may have been "give it to the new person" moves turned out well indeed. "I got involved with a broad spectrum of work. I didn't get tagged with any single area. I learned the majority of Real Estate functions," Anne said.

Her involvement included major work with four Native American tribes to reestablish their century-old fishing rights that had been damaged during construction of the three major hydro-power dam projects on the Columbia River.

"This was fascinating, to work with these distinct cultures and their histories. We worked very closely with the tribes on every aspect of the project, from the location and layout of the sites to the design of structures, such as fish cleaning stations and drying sheds as well as a multitude of other details to help reestablish their historic tribal rights to fish the Columbia River. I had never seen such close coordination with end users of a project," she told.

In Portland, Kosel was able to get involved with several opportunities to advance herself, including the district Leadership Development Program and the HQUSACE Emerging Leaders Conference.

In 2002, an opportunity arose in Kansas City. "I thought about it hard," she said. "I asked myself if it fit into my 10-year plan." Two factors weighed heavily in the decision: an opportunity to assume supervisory responsibilities and a chance to work in a district with both

civil and military missions.

Portland and Kansas City were completely different entities. "All Districts are unique," Kosel noted.

"In Portland for example, we had very few agricultural and commercial concession leases. In Kansas City we had many of both, considering we had 18 lake projects in the district. I also got involved with military real estate issues associated with Army installations, Reserve Centers and Recruiting Stations throughout the region."

"I think that I have grown through both functional and geographical diversity." Being given assignments nobody else wanted has prepared her to do things others may not have even thought of, she indicated. "I think this has made me more competitive.

"Listen, moving around is not for everyone, nor is it the only way to grow," Kosel said. "But I can be mobile. My husband is a union sheet metal construction worker. There's construction anywhere. We have always supported each other's goals and we were both willing to relocate to help further each others' opportunities." The Kosels do not have children either. "If I need to deploy to carry out the mission, my husband supports me fully."

Kosel's move to Kansas City put her at the head of the Real Estate Civil Branch there. It also opened the door to greater leadership opportunities. "My boss deployed to Iraq twice and I got my first experience as an acting Division Chief," she reported. She also went to Tulsa, Ok. on a temporary assignment as the acting Real Estate Chief there.

Soon after accepting her new job in St. Louis – with one day to unpack and find stuff in her household goods shipment, Kosel was en route to the Gulf Coast to help respond to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Assigned primarily to provide real estate support to the Blue Roof mission, she reported that one of the highlights of her two months there was establishing a call center for citizens to seek roof protection for their homes.

"The Corps received a tasker from



FEMA to set up a call center and I was given the responsibility to make it happen. We planned on opening on a Monday with contract employees manning the phones. We were scrambling to find furniture, phones and fax machines to equip the center, as well as develop operator scripts, training and communications plans within about a week. It was a tough schedule, but doable,” Anne thought. Doable that is, until someone incorrectly announced that the call center would be open and working on Friday.

Earlier in the week, I had heard about 24 firemen that could be assigned to the Corps from FEMA to support the temporary roofing mission. I coordinated with the Roofing Mission Manager to make that happen, but I didn’t know when they would arrive. They showed up the same day the announcement about the new opening date came out and pitched in immediately. They physically set up the center, worked with Information Management to test the phones and fax machines and went through my training so they could staff the center

until we were able to get the contractors on board. We opened the center on Friday and helped several homeowners complete the right-of-entry over the phone, so they could receive their temporary roof.

“In one case we learned of a gentleman who was hospitalized with a terminal illness. His wife called the center and told us that her husband wanted to spend his final days at home, but the hospital would not release him until their damaged roof was repaired. We jumped on their request and the next day his house had a Blue Roof. It made us feel pretty good to be able to honor his last wish.

Kosel put a lot of careful consideration into coming to St. Louis.

“I knew Tom Hewlett. We had served on the USACE Work Force Development Committee together and I had worlds of respect for him. At his last meeting, he told me he was retiring and urged me to apply for the position.

Again, Anne weighed the pros and cons against her long term career goals. In the end she applied for and was

accepted into the new position.

“There are always concerns of acceptance as a newcomer to a district. Tom had been in St. Louis for ages and was truly a homegrown part of the District’s heritage. But within days of being selected I received several e-mails from St. Louis – most from people I had never met – welcoming me.

“St. Louis’ people have been so helpful, friendly, warm and I might add, patient with me as I get up to speed on the projects and activities in this district. I have learned that the people here really are a family. They work hard and play hard. And family doesn’t end on the sidewalk out front. It connects their homes and families in many cases,” she concluded

Anne obviously fits the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District and it her, extremely well.

The furniture in the Real Estate Division Chief’s office has not changed, nor has its location. “Tom spoke well of St. Louis. He has left me a powerful professional legacy and I want that to continue,” Anne Kosel ended.

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## Dredging Season Ends: 7.9 Million Cubic Yards of Sediment Removed

By Nicole Dalrymple, PA

Just before Christmas the District’s 2005 dredging season came to a successful conclusion. Dredge Potter is now wintering at the District’s Service Base at the Foot of Arsenal, and the contract Dredge America is wintering below the Kaskaskia Lock and Dam near River Mile 118 on the Upper Mississippi.

Due to existing and expected low water conditions, the District’s Dredge Potter was activated July 29, 13 days before its scheduled activation. Dredge America, a contract dredge owned and operated by Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Company of Oak Brook, Ill., was activated August 1, also earlier than scheduled.

Together the two dredges completed 40 jobs, removing more than 7.9 million cubic yards of sediment from the navigation channel. Lance Engle, dredging project manager for the St.

Louis District, explains that would be enough sediment to fill the recently demolished Busch Stadium from field level to the top three times, plus some.

Removing that sediment ensures that even at the low water reference plane, there is a minimum of 9 feet of water in the navigation channel. For example the LWRP for St. Louis’ gage is a –3.5 feet. On January 13 the gage was at +2.3, making channel depth approximately 14.8 feet at that location.

The District is responsible for maintaining a 9-foot navigation channel on 300 miles of the Mississippi River from Saverton, Mo., to Cairo, Ill., on 80 miles of the lower Illinois River, as well as 36 miles of the lower Kaskaskia River. Through dredging operations, locks and dams, and channel improvement structures, the District is able to accomplish this mission.

Jim Pierce, captain of Dredge Potter, is proud of the job his crew did this year. “We have completed 27 jobs on over 250 miles of river,” Capt. Pierce said.

“The crew responded quickly to shallow areas and pumped a lot of sand. Working 24 hours, 7 days a week, the crew has worked very hard. I am very pleased with the job they’ve done,” he said.

The navigation industry is pleased too, according to Sammy Dickey, chairman of the River Industry Action Committee, a coalition of tow companies and other navigation interests.

“I’ve been in recent contact with several tow companies and they are very pleased with the channel’s condition,” Dickey said. “The dredging crews have done an excellent job preparing the channel for this season’s low water conditions. The industry is heavily



reliant on their work, and their efforts ensure that millions of dollars worth of commodities make it to their final destination.”

Constantly fluctuating river levels require a close working relationship between Corps of Engineers personnel,

the U.S. Coast Guard, the Weather Service and the river industry.

Since July the river has fluctuated from a high of 12 feet to a low of -3.5 at the St. Louis gage, falling as much as 3.63 feet in less than 24 hours.

As necessary, low water teleconfer-

ences are conducted to discuss current and expected river levels, and the U.S. Coast Guard issues advisories as necessary. Advisories are available online at <http://www.ribb.com/navnotice.html>.

## Flexible Pipe Test Conducted by Dredge Potter

Dustpan dredges have served on the Mississippi River for more than a century. Their design stems from the late 1800s. They were designed to move sand and other fine material from the navigation channel and dispose of it elsewhere. Early versions were steam powered. Indeed, the St. Louis District dustpan dredge Potter, was steam powered for decades until she was radically altered in the late 1990s by installing a modern, more economical diesel-electric power plant.

Dustpan dredges have traditionally operated with steel discharge pipes. These pipes, up to 1000 feet long, took dredge material from the stern of the dredge, in a straight line away from the vessel. Their discharge end could be maneuvered back and forth as the dredge worked upstream, pulling itself up anchored cables with a winch.

This was very efficient for getting material away from the channel, but the inflexible pipe prevented designating precise locations for depositing the material. “It was like trying to draw with a compass,” the Applied River Engineering Center’s Rob Davinroy said.

The Master of the Memphis District’s Dredge Hurley, Rick Niday took part in a 1999 study to see if a plastic discharge pipe could be used to deposit dredged material in a fixed location. The study was to look at the use of dustpan dredges for channel work in the Southwest Pass area of the Mississippi River’s entry into the Gulf of Mexico. The study sought to answer the question of whether in addition to removing material from somewhere (a navigation channel), could dredges send it to a location where it could serve a planned environmental purpose. That might include building ecosystem-friendly sand bars, islands or

restoring marshlands and wetlands.

While fixed-point discharge is not new, applying it to environmental work is innovative.

During the middle of the 2005 dredging season in the Middle Mississippi River, St. Louis’s Dredge Potter tried this technique, using an aging 1,000-foot flexible discharge pipe that had come from the Memphis District where it had not been used in some time.



Flexible pipe being connected to Potter

Did the results demonstrate a possible new mission for Potter?

Matt Thurman, who works with dredging operations in St. Louis, called it a “Great test.” Terry Bequette, Dredge Potter’s First Mate, acknowledged that while the technique did not add to the vessel’s channel maintenance capability, it worked for this possible new mission. “Once we got some kinks worked out and were able to sustain pumping, we built an island pretty quickly. We put material into eight feet of water, and within

minutes we could see the build up on the surface. We could build an acre of island in less than two hours this way.”

Niday agreed that based on limited experiments with Dredge Hurley that the principle is feasible, but it takes a lot of work to make it do so. “We haven’t worked with it that much and there is a learning curve.”

One challenge is that while the discharge point remains still, with that end of the pipe being held in place by a work boat, the dredge must be able to move forward up the river. “It would be better if we had a pipe that floated vice sinking to the bottom once it was full of water and sand,” Matt Thurman said. This would aid visibility and ease handling, he noted.

Indeed, both Thurman and Niday reported that a floating discharge pipe exists, but it is expensive. Rob Davinroy pointed out that with the growing emphasis on environmental issues, and especially with future work in support of the NESP (Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program) such capability might become more financially feasible and add new, important work for the Corps’ dustpan dredges.

Though the technology of dustpan dredging is more than 75 years old, its future potential is as new as tomorrow. According to Rob Davinroy, “I think the dustpan dredges are incredibly capable tools to apply to environmental work. Their mission to sustain the navigation channel has diminished somewhat over past years as we have introduced navigation or training structures into the river. That mission will never end totally, but if we can improve where dredge material goes to the same precision that they can define where it comes from, this will be an invaluable tool to help sustain the river’s future ecology.”



## District's Iraq Mass Graves Team Wins Corps' PDT of the Year Award

By Nicole Dalrymple, PA

On December 5, Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, announced the winners of the Corps' best FY05 project delivery teams. Selections were made from among 31 nomination packets submitted to Headquarters by the major subordinate commands.

The St. Louis District's Iraq Mass Graves PDT was given the highest honor – the Excellence Award. Lt. Gen. Strock personally presented the plaque and accompanying certificates to PDT members at a luncheon in St. Louis on December 9.

"The awarding of the USACE PDT Excellence Award to the St. Louis District's Iraq Mass Graves Team is tremendous. It is an example of a dedicated and professional team truly delivering a project. We in the District are proud of their effort and achievement," said Col. Lewis F. Setliff III, St. Louis District Commander.

A committee comprised of employees from Project Management, Engineering and Construction, Military Programs, Civil Works, Environmental, Strategic Integration and Resource Management judged the nomination packages.

Nominations were rated on quality, cost, and time as measured by the Project Management Plan, plus the seven imperatives from Engineer Regulation 5-1-11 (synergy, integrated and coordinated management, teamwork, partnering, balancing competing demands, applying innovation technology and tools, and sharing lessons learned.)

The Iraq Mass Graves PDT was formed in June 2004. The Department of Justice's Regime Crimes Liaison Office in Baghdad contacted St. Louis District to help exhume mass graves in Iraq and examine them for forensic evidence to use in war crime trials.

The PDT is a diverse group of civilians and Soldiers working together to help the Iraqi Special Tribunal. Resources and expertise from across the

USACE and other federal agencies were brought together for this mission that crossed geographic and organization boundaries. The team working in Iraq includes international experts from the U.S., Australia, Costa Rica and Canada.

Project Director Dr. Michael K. "Sonny" Trimble said, "In my life I've never been able to say a particular team was the best in the world. In this moment, I think they are the best and they can back that up. The team doesn't realize how good they are."

"We are all ethically and morally committed to the work, here and in Iraq," he went on to say. "You couldn't sustain this work without being committed. I have nothing but high praise for the whole team. The glue that binds us all is the program we put together here in St. Louis."

Trimble is the Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mandatory Center of Expertise for Archaeological Curation and Collection Management in St. Louis. He has spent 14 of the last 19 months in Iraq leading this historic endeavor.

### PDT members from St. Louis are:

- Deanne Strauser, Project Manager
- Dr. Sonny Trimble, Field Project Director
- Jim Barnes, Cultural Objects Manager
- Kathy Feld, Secretary
- Kathy Tober, Human Resources
- Kelly Bertoglio, Evidence Manager
- Natalie Drew, Archives Manager
- Keisha Hurst, Physical Anthropologist
- Jennifer Riordan, Physical Anthropologist
- Cathy Van Arsdale, Editorial Assistant
- Chris Pulliam, Financial Manager
- Chris Roberts, Report Format Specialist
- Hank Counts, Explosive Ordnance Specialist
- Maj. Chris Grose, Field Operations
- Capt. Ryan Larson, Operations and Security Director
- Archie Ringgenberg, Contracting Officer
- Kathy Souders, Contracting Specialist
- Marilyn Ard, Contracting Specialist

- Debbie Warner, Logistics Travel
- Phyllis Murphy, Travel Clerk
- Mary Beth Ferrer, Logistics Transportation

### Thoughts from some PDT Members:

"My part was very small compared to the folks that actually went over to Iraq," said *Kathy Sounders*, contracting specialist. "The part that I did play, making sure the team had all the equipment and supplies necessary to complete their task, gave me a sense of pride, knowing that in some small way I was part of the team that would present the evidence that would hold Saddam Hussein and his regime accountable."

"This has been a significant project, and it's an honor to be part of the PDT award," said *Kelly Bertoglio*, Office of Council paralegal. "I believe more than the award, the knowledge that we have accomplished a task in a precise manner that offers living survivors an opportunity to find a possible connection with long missing family members is the greatest reward. The many talents within the team and everyone's willingness to cooperate has made this, and continues to make this mission a success."

"I was mainly involved in editing the first set of reports from the first two dig sites," said *Cathy Van Arsdale*, editorial assistant. "One grave contained only women and children, including little babies and pregnant women. The work was extremely hard for me to deal with on an emotional level, especially since I was pregnant with my son at the time. I just couldn't comprehend the total disregard for fellow human beings. It affected me a great deal and when I think about it, although I try not to, I hug my baby closer to me."

*To learn more about the Iraq Mass Grave Team you can read the Esprit Fall 2005 cover story available online at <http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/pa/esprit/2005/esp1005.pdf>*

*(Portions of this article are courtesy of Engineer Update)*



## Corps Aids Hurricane Recovery Efforts

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers met the greatest natural disaster to hit our nation with one of the greatest responses in Corps history.

Hurricane Katrina smashed southeast Louisiana, Mississippi, and southwestern Alabama coastal areas on Aug. 29. Then Hurricane Rita steam rolled across southwestern Louisiana and southeastern Texas on Sept. 24. Together, these two storms shattered lives, homes, and economies.

New Orleans was hit particularly hard. Hurricane Katrina left the Crescent City with no power, no drinking water, dwindling food supplies and, because of levee breaches, rapidly rising floodwaters in the streets.

During the next several days, the nation watched a crisis unfold as levees and floodwalls breached at the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, and the 17th Street and London Avenue canals. By Sept. 1, almost 80 percent of New Orleans was under water, some places more than 20 feet. Thousands of people sought shelter from the rising waters on rooftops; thousands more gathered in shelters or in groups on high ground. Against this backdrop of despair, the Corps offered hope.

On Sept. 2, President George W. Bush and area leaders met Col. Richard Wagenaar, New Orleans District Commander, at the site of the 17th Street Canal floodwall breach. The President saw levee board members working side-by-side with Corps' project engineers and contractors to stop the flow of water into the city.

The flurry of activity led Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco to approach Maj. Gen. Don Riley, Commander of USACE Joint Task Force Katrina Forward, and say with tears in her eyes, "This is the first sign of hope. The first sign that the city is coming back. I'll call this Project Hope."

Blanco made an impression on Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, Mississippi Valley Division Commander. Reflecting on Blanco's words, he named his



**Col. Setliff and Greg Bertoglio discuss the reinforced Blue Roof plastic sheeting being used to protect homes in Mississippi.**

command's support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Response Plan "Task Force Hope."

MVD's response was driven by the division's Hurricane Contingency Plan. "MVD developed the current plan in 1998 following Hurricane Georges," said Crear. "We update and release it every year by June 1. We basically followed the plan, tweaking it as we went. It was amazing, and fortunate considering the scope of this disaster, how well it worked."

Under the MVD contingency plan for a hurricane hit on New Orleans, New Orleans District, as the "victim" district, would have reconstitution as its primary initial mission. The plan also assumed there would be an "unwatering" mission for New Orleans. Memphis and Vicksburg districts would handle the primary FEMA missions for Louisiana and Mississippi, respectively. St. Louis District would execute civil works missions such as levee repairs. The plan also recognized the motor vessel Mississippi as a possible MVD forward headquarters.

"We knew a single district couldn't fight a hurricane alone," said Crear. "The only big deviation was bringing in Rock Island District to handle the unwatering."

Engaging more than 3,800 personnel

at its peak, Task Force Hope received support from 41 district offices, eight division offices, the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power), the Engineer Research and Development Center, Humphreys Engineering Center, Huntsville Engineering Center, the Institute for Water Resources, the USACE Finance Center, Transatlantic Programs Center, and the U.S. Army Engineer School. Volunteers from Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and several domestic federal agencies including the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Reclamation, also joined the task force. "Task Force Hope is a great group of red shirts (Corps field personnel), white shirts (Corps managers), camo shirts (Army personnel), blue shirts (FEMA), and state and local agencies, all working on a common objective," said Brig. Gen. Crear. "We have an expeditionary mind set — we shed the district and agency mentality and became a team. It was pretty neat to have the Germans, the Dutch, and the Luxembourgers involved in the unwatering efforts. They had good equipment and were great people to work with."

While the complexity of Task Force Hope's response was unprecedented in its scope, the good news was that the FEMA missions assigned to Corps personnel were not unprecedented — ice, water, power, temporary roofing,



and temporary public structures. Corps personnel are routinely trained in these typical disaster response missions.

But the tasks of unwatering a city, then rebuilding a severely damaged hurricane protection system, are unique. They were handled by Task Force Unwatering and Task Force Guardian.

As Task Force Unwatering began its complex mission, Crear announced a plan to return the hurricane protection levee system to its pre-Hurricane Katrina status by the beginning of the next hurricane season. To carry out that task, he established Task Force Guardian headed by Col. Lewis "Skip" Setliff III, the St. Louis District Commander.

Working around-the-clock throughout September, Task Force Unwatering made Herculean progress. But before they could complete all temporary repairs and "dry" the city, Hurricane Rita swept through on Sep. 24, reflooding almost 40 percent of the area, causing even more damage to Southeast Louisiana.

On Sept. 25, Task Force Unwatering once again began surveying damage and access routes for construction crews. Task Force Unwatering declared New Orleans dry on Oct. 11. Many original estimates for unwatering New Orleans were 80 days or more. Even with the setback of Rita, Task Force Unwatering completed their mission in only 43 days.

Task Force Guardian's work will continue in the coming months. Its mission is to return all federal levees and floodwalls to pre-Katrina levels of protection by June 1, the start of hurricane season. As of February 12, the task force had awarded 52 of the 59 scheduled contracts and an additional 3 contracts were being advertised. The total estimated value of the awarded contracts is \$586M (fully burdened) and the estimated value of the 3 advertised contracts is \$44M (fully burdened).

With all the demands on the recovery operations, Crear recognized the driving force behind Task Force Hope and its accomplishments.

"The strength of the Corps is its most valuable asset – our people," Crear said. "Every challenge, we hit head on. I've gone to war with many of these same people in Iraq. We went to war again, in a sense. It's our people that got it done."

*(This article was jointly prepared by Charles Camillo, MVD historian, Susan Jackson, MVN PAO, and Wayne Stroupe, ERDC PAO, for Engineer Update)*

## Over 180 Deploy for Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Allen, Gerald	Farkas, Steve	O'Bryan, Peg
Alvey, Mark	Fenske, Dennis	O'Conner, Steve
Arbeiter, Jackie	Fisher, Patti	Okenfuss, Carl
Ashoff, Glenn	Ford, Jim	Parks, Robin
Atkins, Cheryl	Fraser, Randy	Pitrolo, Beth
Bartels, Jule	Frees, Charles	Pope, Riley
Bautsch, Karen	Geahlen, Teri	Preston, Joseph
Beller, Steele	Gentilini, David	Raimondo, Lt. Colonel
Belpedio, Barbara	Gill, Natta	Rector, Mike
Bennett, Lena	Gilmore, Dennis	Reed, Pam
Bertoglio, Greg	Gramke, Rob	Rhoads, Aron
Bertoglio, Kelly	Groenemann, Gary	Riff, Ed
Boecklen, Charlene	Hagan, Rich	Ringgenberg, Archie
Boeckmann, John	Hayes, Kent	Roderick, Mark
Boeser, Terri	Hayes, Roger	Rosenkranz, Chris
Brauer, Eddie	Hays, Becky	Sanders, Dawayne
Brickey, Joan	Helfrich, John	Schulte, Jon
Brooks, Charlie	Hewlett, Tom	Schutte, Jerry
Brown, Don	Hill, Jim	Seibel, Dennis
Brown, Jasen	Hobbs, Steve	Selle, Jason
Bryant, Donna	Hoerner, Lynn	Setliff, Colonel
Burnett, Joe	Holzem, Gordon	Shafer, Maria
Burnett, Sheila	Horneman, Sue	Shaw, Pat
Burton, Chris	Huels, Shelly	Siller, Roger
Campbell, Linda	Jackson, Stephen	Slack, Robert
Cannon, John	James, Vick	Slattery, Kevin
Carroz, Nick	Kellett, Joe	Soraghan, Erich
Catalano, Frank	Kirkpatrick, David	Souders, Kathy
Chatman, Glenn	Kocher, Gregg	Stafford, Judy
Clouse, Paul	Kosel, Anne	Stamper, Jeff
Conroy, Pat	Kreighbaum, Dave	Stavelly, Trisha
Cotter, Carol	Kuehnle, Jim	Stemler, Joan
Counts, Hank	Lachler, Ann	Stenger, Charlotte
Captain Hall	Leavitt, Brett	Stevens, Joseph
Captain Panhorst	Lee, Gary	Stokes, Chris
Craig, Oliver	Leffeler, Chris	Stringham, George
Crocker, Chuck	Little, Travis	Stubits, Rick
Cruitt, Leanne	Logan, Jeremy	Summers, Steve
Cundiff, Mel	Long, Joanne	Surface, Dean
Curtis, Randy	Lovelace, Jim	Taylor, Jackie
Daily, Mike	Manar, Katy	Tippett, Charles
Daves, John	Marshall, Craig	Tokraks, Nancy
Davinroy, Rob	Martin, Lenn	Trout, Randy
Davis, Deb	Mathis, Tracy	Waggoner, Rick
Dell'Orco, Lou	McCormick, Arlyn	Wagner, Maureen
Demsky, Ed	Meadows, Kathy	Walbert, Pat
Derrick, Jeff	Mehrer, Allen	Walgate, Greg
Diaz, Allen	Mezo, Sherman	Walton, Francis
Dierker, Steve	Middleton, Tim	Ward, Harry
Dirnberger, Morris	Miller, Matt	Watwood, Karen
Doerr, Jaynie	Miller, Fred	Webster, Rick
Domzalski, Steven	Mills, Jim	Wernle, Larry
Donnel, Cory	Moore, Ted	Whitt, Larry
Dooley, Alan	Morales, Cindy	Wich, Robert
Doty, Pam	Morgan, Robert	Williams, Kevin
Douglas, Bruce	Morris, Ida	Wilson, Seth
Duff, Vanester	Mueller, Dave	Winston, Mary
Duffy, Kathy	Mulford, Darren	Winston, Thomas
Duncan, Don	Murrell, Tom	Woodruff, Dennis
Dunman, Jeff	Navin, Mike	Ziino, Julie
Dunmire, Loren	Nieukirk, Shane	Zoeller, Donna
Ellis, Gary	Noser, Mary	Zurweller, Stan



## God Bless the USA

by Alan Dooley, PA

Sometime on August 29, as Hurricane Katrina pounded southeastern Louisiana, a 3-by-5-foot American flag was dislodged. It cannot be known if the flag flew in the 140 mile-per-hour winds or was carried by the surge of water that raged over the northern side of St. Bernard Parish.

The flag came to rest, firmly tangled in a tree about seven feet above the ground. In the following days it hung, limply in the still of 100-degree-plus humidity of early September and snapping in the cool, dry breeze of late October.

I saw it first on September 14, while escorting media to shoot video of work being done in the remote site. I thought about pointing it out, but decided I would not do so, mostly out of respect for the flag's quiet dignity.

But it troubled me to leave it, tangled and torn in the tree where it might ultimately be taken, or destroyed by time and weather. It also wasn't good flag etiquette to let it continue to fly in the dark.



Old Glory at rest after the storm.



St. Bernard Parish, La., life-long residents and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees, Glenn Gremillion (L) and Kevin Wagner proudly retrieve an American flag from its precarious resting place. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Photo

On Sept. 27 I returned. I walked down the levee, intending to photograph the flag if it was still there. It was, and I shot several views.

Then I climbed down the levee and touched it. I thought of removing it and bringing it back.

As I touched it though, I realized that it was not mine to recover.

That same day I told the program manager for the levee rehabilitation work in St. Bernard Parish about it.

"It's your project," I told Kevin Wagner. "This is your home and you should bring it in," I said.

The next day Wagner, who grew up in St. Bernard Parish, accompanied by another life-long parish resident and Corps employee, Glen Gremillion, trudged more than a mile over the rough terrain to the tree.

Wagner said, "When I saw our flag waving in the breeze, I was struck by what it had endured and by the fact that it represents what we stand for in the Corps. I felt like I was bringing this flag down to preserve it for my colleagues, my neighbors, my friends – all of the people I grew up with. It was very emotional for me."

When Task Force Guardian was being formed to rehabilitate the hurricane and flood protection system around the New

Orleans region, Wagner was originally assigned to manage work in Plaquemines Parish, to the south. "But St. Bernard was my life-long home," Wagner said.

"I wanted to work that area and to focus my energy on my home, as well as my Corps work," Wagner said. Indeed, Wagner's home was under several feet of water during the flood, but he had joined the fight immediately after securing his family's safety.

Gremillion, who went after the flag with Wagner, echoed Wagner's feelings.

"I was thrilled to see our flag standing out in that tree," Gremillion said. "I just felt like it was so right to do this, to bring this flag down. She had defied the worst nature could bring on, and she deserved a better fate now. I feel like this flag is a piece of history. I was so very proud," he added.

I spent 31 years in the military. I have always felt a thrill when our national anthem was played and our flag was raised. But to touch that flag in that tree made what little hair I still have, stand on end. This single flag has touched me more than any, of any size, anywhere, anytime.

God bless that flag and St. Bernard Parish, where it came to rest. God bless New Orleans and certainly, God Bless the USA.



## Katrina Evacuees Return “Home” to Rend Lake

By Mark Roderick, Rend Lake

With Katrina bearing down on the Gulf Coast, Don and Linda Baker of Gulf Shores, Ala., decided to hook up their twenty-eight-foot RV trailer, which serves as their home, and evacuate before the storm made landfall.

As they drove out of their daughter’s yard, they had one destination in mind — Rend Lake, in Southern Illinois.

The Bakers had been regular campers at Rend Lake when they lived in Southern Illinois while Don was a miner for Freeman Coal at their Waltonville Mine. But like many area miners, his job had ended as mines closed due to dwindling demand for high sulfur coal.

Don and Linda moved to Florida where he and his brother started a house painting business. They enjoyed their life in Florida until the day Linda suffered a massive heart attack, changing their lives forever.

The medical bills took everything they had. Without neither a pension nor health insurance, the Bakers moved to Gulf Shores and set up their RV in their daughter and son-in-law’s yard. They had been there five years when Hurricane Katrina came. The Bakers had ridden out Category 1 hurricanes in their RV before, but they knew they did not want to confront the much larger Katrina.

Don and Linda caught the attention of the Rend Lake staff through a twist of fate. They had been staying in the North Sandusky Recreation Area for almost two weeks, unaware of a Corps policy waiving camping fees for Katrina evacuees. They made plans to extend their stay and to pay additional fees, but a chance remark revealed that the Bakers were at the lake for reasons other than recreation.

On September 10, Park Rangers Mark Roderick and Lena Bennett visited the Bakers campsite. It didn’t take long to realize that not only were they Katrina evacuees, but the Bakers had faced serious challenges.

The Bakers had already evacuated

earlier in the year for Hurricane Dennis. By the time they evacuated for Katrina, they had used up most of their emergency reserve money. In fact, if they returned home and had to evacuate again, they wouldn’t have the money.

Then there was Linda’s heart condition. Because of her open heart surgeries, she required continuous oxygen. She had brought some extra tanks but not enough to last. While they had made arrangements for Linda’s medications to be shipped to friends living nearby, Don wondered where the closest hospital was located. If Linda had any complications, he’d have to drive her. They couldn’t afford an ambulance.

The lake staff immediately processed a refund request for the fees already paid and secured a campsite for them through the month of October. Linda’s medical condition and the absence of her normal medical support remained a serious concern though.

Ranger Roderick called SSM St. Mary Good Samaritan Hospital in Mt Vernon, Ill., which is the regional trauma center and cardiac care facility. He was directed to Dr. Richard Rethorst who operates the SSM clinic in Benton, Ill. After hearing the Baker’s story, Dr. Rethorst, who is also a Red Cross volunteer, accompanied by Rangers Roderick and Bennett visited the Bakers.

Although they were surprised by the visit, as soon as they heard that Dr. Rethorst was a physician there to help, a look of relief washed across Don’s face. After a medical screening and reviewing documents Linda’s cardiologist had sent with her, Dr. Rethorst asked if they needed anything. Don said they were doing well since they didn’t have to pay for their site, and Linda said the rangers had been “God sends.”

When asked if the Bakers had signed up for FEMA assistance or if the Red Cross could help them, Linda replied, “There are people in Louisiana that need the money more than we do.”

Before leaving, Dr. Rethorst offered

free treatment and lab tests at the SSM clinic in Benton. He told the Bakers if they ever had to go to a hospital in the area they were to call him.

After leaving the campsite, Dr. Rethorst told the rangers that based on her medical history and medications, Linda had a very serious heart condition and needed to be checked on periodically. The Baker campsite became a regular ranger patrol point.

Given the seriousness of Linda’s heart condition, the lake staff decided it was time to get the lake’s partners involved.

The next day, every 911 dispatch station had a notice posted about the Bakers. Mercy Regional Ambulance Service told their paramedics that the Bakers were to be treated as high priority patients and agreed to transport them, if necessary, at no charge. A protocol package was set in place at area emergency rooms in the event the Bakers arrived on their own, and special markings were placed at their campsite to assist EMS teams at night.

As their story spread throughout area EMS and law enforcement communities, more support came, including gift certificates for meals in area restaurants.

Things around the Baker’s campsite stayed quiet as September ended and fall weather arrived in October. They still had one remaining problem.

While driving through the Alabama and Tennessee mountains en route to the lake, the brakes went out on their trailer. This didn’t cause any problems while at the campsite, but returning to Alabama would be a different story.

The solution came from the Baker’s daughter and son-in-law. After many phone calls and much convincing, Don and Linda agreed to trade in their RV at a local dealership. Their daughter and son-in-law said that they would make the payments for them.

So as November approached and with it, the end of the hurricane season, Don and Linda packed up their new RV to return to the Gulf Coast after what was probably their most unusual visit in the twenty-five years they had camped at Rend Lake.



## New Navy ship has ties to Army, Corps of Engineers

Story by George Stringham, PA

Photo by Alan Dooley, PA

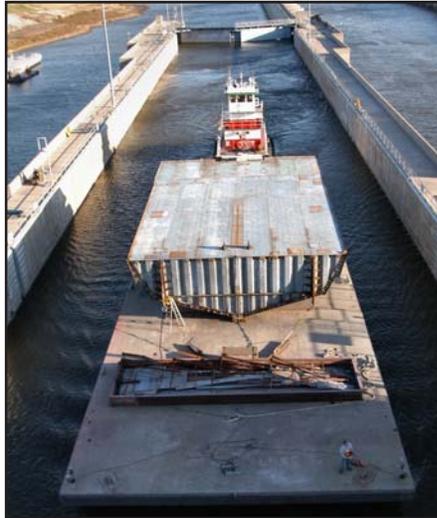
America's inland waterway system is used most often for commercial navigation, moving bulk commodities like grain, petroleum and aggregate but it is worth remembering that it is vitally important to the nation's security and the Department of Defense.

During the fall and early winter, a majority of the navigation on the Mississippi River and other waterways heads towards New Orleans, Baton Rouge and other southern ports, for export overseas. For the past week, though, there has been a special cargo heading upstream from McDonough Marine Service in Lockport, La to Marinette Marine Corporation's shipyard in Marinette, Wis.

McDonough's Motor Vessel Mark K's cargo is the propulsion section for a warship. It is the lead ship of a new class of ships designed to operate in coastal areas around the globe. According to Adm. Michael Mullen's testimony to the House Armed Services Committee on March 11, 2004, the ship, to be commissioned USS FREEDOM, would be the first of 13 such ships for the U.S. Navy. Adm. Mullen is the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and the second-most senior officer in the Navy.

"When most people think about navigation on the rivers and waterways, they typically think of commercial interests, but the value goes much further," said Peggy O'Bryan, Chief of Operations for the St. Louis District. "In this case, we are serving interests of the Department of the Navy."

The journey of the ship's stern section went through the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway, up Mobile Bay and River, through the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, into the Tennessee River to the Ohio River and down to its confluence with the Mississippi River at Cairo, Ill. From there, it turned north to



**M/V Mark K in Melvin Price Locks auxiliary chamber on November 19, Her cargo is the propulsion section for the lead ship of the Navy's latest class of ships.**

travel up the Mississippi and Illinois rivers/waterway to Lake Michigan before ending its journey at the Marinette shipyard in Marinette, Wis. In order to keep the ship's construction on schedule, the module needed to be delivered by Nov. 28.

One of its stops on the 1,500-mile journey was at Melvin Price Locks and Dam in East Alton, Ill, where it received a 22-foot boost into Pool 26, which would lead it to the Illinois River.

Illustrating the importance of timely delivery of the section of the ship is the fact that it received "priority lockage" privileges for its trip to the Wisconsin shipyard.

"This is something we do, day-in and day-out, but it had some challenges," said Eric Anderson, manager of sales for McDonough Marine Service and coordinator of transferring the module to Marinette Marine. "Probably the biggest was getting under the Burlington Railroad bridge in Lemont, Ill."

The clearance on the bridge is 19 feet, but the barge and its cargo had a combined height of 25 feet.

"In addition to ballasting down the barge to get under the bridge, we had to have a boat on the other side pull it under because ours wouldn't fit," Anderson explained. "A lot of people

said we wouldn't be able to get it done, but we did."

Anderson explained that McDonough Marine specializes in constructing marine propulsion units and that the contract for FREEDOM's module wasn't too different from past ones.

But transiting the Corps-operated locks and dams and managed waterways isn't the only tie FREEDOM has with the Army. The ship's sponsor is Birgit Smith, widow of Army Engineer Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery and gallantry above and beyond the call of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. You can read more about him in the April/May 2005 issue of Esprit, the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers' magazine (<http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/dinfo/pa/NewPA/esprit/2005/esp0504.pdf>).

When complete, the 377-foot vessel will have a 42-foot beam, a top speed of 50+ knots (57 mph), depending on its load, but will only have a 13-foot draft. The ship's innovative design will also allow it to turn 360 degrees in less than eight boat lengths at top speed and to accelerate to full speed in less than two minutes.

Another unique feature is the crew configuration, explained the ship's Combat Systems Officer Lt. Cmdr. Murry Carter.

"Each ship in this class will have two crews, called blue and gold crews, much like SSBNs (ballistic missile submarines)," Lt. Cmdr. Carter said. "The part that makes it unique is that this is the first time this approach has been applied to an entire class of ships in the surface navy."

FREEDOM, which is scheduled for delivery to the Navy next year, is an innovative warship designed to counter threats such as mines, submarines and fast surface craft in shallow or coastal waters.

But the first leg of its service to the Navy and the nation received a welcome helping hand from the nation's commercial river transportation industry and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



## Rare Reemployment Rights Approved for Multibillion Dollar Construction Project at Fort Bliss, Texas

Story by Nicole Dalrymple, PA

Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Chief of Engineers, has announced his decision to approve a request for administrative reemployment rights for a major construction project about to start at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas.

The request was made by the Fort Worth District, which will oversee a \$3+ billion construction project at the fort. The construction project will build facilities to accommodate 25,000 Soldiers being relocated to Fort Bliss as part of Base Realignment and Closure. Construction is expected to take 4-6 years.

The administrative reemployment rights apply to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers non-clerical employees who are hired for the Fort Bliss Program Office. Employees may be hired for 3-year assignments with additional 1-year extensions granted, not to exceed 6 years, if necessary. Employees will have guaranteed return rights to their previous positions in USACE.

Administrative reemployment rights apply to individuals who meet the following criteria:

- Serving in career or career-conditional appointments in the USACE
- In the competitive service
- Have completed their probationary period
- Hired for a non-clerical position
- Agree to be stationed at Fort Bliss Program Office in El Paso, Texas
- Meet the minimum qualifications and other basic requirements for the position to be filled
- Be appointed without a break in service of one workday or more

Fort Worth District, part of the Southwestern Division, will administer Permanent Change of Station paperwork for USACE employees and family members to Fort Bliss and on return to their home duty stations.

Regarding the announcement, Joe Kellett, Deputy District Engineer for Planning, Programs and Project Management in St. Louis said, "This is a fantastic opportunity. These are great construction projects and a real opportunity to be part of an exceptional program. I only remember one other time when the Corps offered reemployment rights on a stateside program and that was Fort Drum, New York. If you want action and responsibility, this job opportunity is something you should consider."



Phase I construction will include 273 buildings totaling over 6.5 million square feet of construction covering 2,500 acres, as well as 15 ranges. Phase II will include additional support facilities such as childcare centers, medical clinics and chapels.

The program's design and construction requirements requires the hiring of up to 100 additional employees.

The goal of the reemployment rights is to eliminate the need for a reduction in force following the project's completion.

Jeff Hair, Human Resources Specialist in Southwestern Division, said, "Generally, offering administrative reemployment rights to the workforce is not common. The Army's transformation [BRAC] program taking place at Fort Bliss is an example of us doing a massive buildup to accommodate the additional brigades within a short construction time window of about five years or so. Once the program is completed however, we will no longer have the workload to support the staff.

Hence the reason these employees will be allowed to return to their former locations."

The majority of the positions to be filled are ones typical to a major construction project, Hair explained. (See list of upcoming positions in text box.)

Advertised positions will be annotated if reemployment rights pertain to the vacancy announcement. "This way employees will know exactly what positions are covered by reemployment rights," Hair said.

Employees who are offered the job and accept can expect to relocate to Fort Bliss within 30-45 days. The plan is to advertise management and leadership positions first, followed by working staff. "We anticipate that most of our positions for this program will be filled this year," Hair said.

### Program Positions

- Program Manager, GS-15 (already filled)
- 2 Area Engineers, GS-14s
- Chief, Contract Administration and Technical Support Branch, GS-14
- 6 Resident Engineers, GS-13s
- Chief, Technical Support Section, GS-13
- Chief, Contract Administration Section, GS-13
- 2 Program Integrators, GS-13
- 16 Civil Engineers, GS-11/12s
- 3 Mechanical Engineers, GS-12s
- 3 Electrical Engineers, GS-12s
- 30 Construction Representatives, GS-9/11/12
- 11 Civil Engineer Technicians, GS-9/11/12
- Safety Officer, GS-12
- Contract Specialist, GS-12
- Public Affairs Specialist, GS-11
- Administrative Officer, GS-11
- 2 Program Analysts, GS-11s
- 13 Support Assistants, GS-5/6/7



While there are no Information or Logistics Management positions being advertised for the program, if someone from those organizations was selected for a staff position they would have return rights to their former job. But with the ongoing A76 and High Performance Organization studies taking place in IM and LM respectively, returning employees may face some uncertainty.

“If their former position is eliminated during the time they are working on this project,” Hair explained, “they would

have return rights to their district. The district could either offer them another vacancy or place them in a position similar to the one they left and then use reduction-in-force procedures to determine their placement rights.”

Kathy Tober, HR Chief for St. Louis, added that employees who complete a 3-year tour or longer would come back to St. Louis District without loss in grade or band (NSPS).

Employees who are interested in the massive construction effort at Fort Bliss

should search for job advertisements on [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil) and apply as indicated.

“I’m also available if any employees would like to contact me concerning these positions or any other information related to the Fort Bliss program,” Hair said.

Employees can reach Jeff Hair in Southwestern Division’s Human Resources Office by email on the global or by phone at 817-886-1187.

## District Combined Federal Campaign is a Huge Success!



St. Louis District employees have shown once again that they know how to give, give, and give some more. Here are the CFC key workers, for the 2005 drive, who led the successful effort to collect a goal-topping \$57,740. They are standing in front of a fourth floor picture display showing some of the more than 180 District employees who have gone to the Gulf Coast in the wake of 2005 hurricane disasters. (L to R) Mae Palmer, Trisha Stavely, Ray McCollum, Shelly Barunica, Lt. Col. Gregory Raimondo, Catherine Cummings, Mary Miles, Anne Woodrome, Vel Swindle, Ron Singleton, Dana Barrentine, and Barbara Townsend.



## Retiree's Corner



Well, all good things must come to an end. The Salad Bowl has been bought out and closed. The land will be developed into condos.

The retirees' last luncheon there was December 23. Norbert Sewing, one of the owners, told the retirees that they have been contacted by St. Louis University about reopening somewhere near the school. However, as of December 15, they had not found a suitable location. Norbert did say that he would contact us when, and if, they reopen. Some of the retirees have been meeting at the Salad Bowl for a long time. It was like a second home. They will now have to adjust to their new location.

Pietro's at 3801 Watson Road will be our new meeting place, at least for the time being. This is not a buffet style restaurant; rather it is a sit down style. Joe Bisher provided information about Pietro's. He said there was no separate room for us, but the restaurant could put us in an area that would provide some privacy. It will be upstairs, with no steps, since some of the retirees have difficulty using stairs. Joe did a lot of research and we appreciate it.

Several groups of retirees lunch periodically and Bill Sutton suggested we consider joining together. This would be a good idea. Bill mentioned that he received a Christmas card from Dave Harley; however, there was no return address. Last we heard, Dave was cultivating his golf talents in Florida.

Ron Bockhorst said that he and his wife, Lois, recently had a very adventurous trip to visit their son and his family in Colorado Springs. They took a bus to avoid bad weather. Well, bad weather caught them. They saw Kansas in a

snowstorm and then spent several hours bussing from Denver to Colorado Springs, again in snow. Fortunately, they arrived safely but very tired of sitting. Their return trip was mercifully uneventful. Ron also mentioned that he was informed that Jack Rhodes is very sick. Jack was one of the District's photographers when he retired. (Let's hope Jack beats this ailment and gets back on his feet.)

Bill Thomure said he is feeling much better since his recent surgery. In fact he is even getting back to bowling.

Lew Scheuermann was asked if he and his wife Helen were entering the senior Olympics this season. Lew said that they were going to pass and let some other seniors receive the prizes. (Lew and Helen have won in virtually all the events they entered, for a number of years.)

Rich Mills said he was fast approaching the "age of maturity" and asked about Social Security. There were several self made experts present and they almost overwhelmed him with information. Rich also mentioned that he would soon celebrate 40 years of wedded bliss.

Larry McCarthy told of decorating his home for Christmas. He embellishes 14 trees throughout his house. He has one in every room, in the various halls and even in the bathrooms. One year he was even asked to leave the house decorated for the annual open house tour in the Tower Grove Park area.

## FLASHBACK

### December 1970

- The annual Christmas Dinner Dance was held at the Boulevard Room of the Sheraton Jefferson Hotel December 12. There was a good crowd attended and the District crowned a new queen — Miss Sally Unterreiner.
- At the recent bid opening for Phase I of the main dam construction at Cannon Reservoir, the apparent low bidder was D. H. Blattner and Sons, Inc. Blattner's bid was later withdrawn and the contract went to Clarkson Construction Company of Kansas City, Missouri.

#### New employees welcomed were:

- Riley Pope, Engineering Division
- James Prater, L&D 25
- Harold Roupe, Engineering Division
- Norman Browning, Operations Division

#### Christmas Messages received from:

- Secretary of the Army - Stanley Resor
- Army Chief of Staff – General W.C. Westmoreland
- Chief of Engineers – Lt. Gen. Clarke.

*The retirees meet on the third Thursday of every month at 11 a.m. Don't forget about our new location – Pietro's at 3801 Watson Road. Hope to see you soon.*

### Recent Retirees:

Since the first of the year, the District has said good-by to several long-standing and outstanding employees. They have now joined the ranks of our retirees. Thank you for your years of service. Good Luck in your new adventures.

We miss you.

- Tom Bloor, Lake Shelbyville ..... 35 years
- Gene Degenhardt, Engineering ..... 39 years
- Kathy Hatfield, Human Resources ..... 38 years
- Greg Hempen, Engineering ..... 35 years
- Welton Joggerst, Operations ..... 34 years
- Sharon McGee, Engineering ..... 30 years
- Larry Strunk, Operations ..... 42 years

# February is National Black History Month

## African-American heroes helped shape the U.S.

*Stories of heroic African-American soldiers who fought in the Civil War are well remembered. Some fought for the South, and some for the North. But little is known about their progress after the Civil War. Here are some personal histories to fill that gap of knowledge.*

Robert Smalls, Naval hero and U.S. Congressman (1829-1915): Smalls was born a slave in Beaufort, S.C. He taught himself to read and write. In 1851, to learn the skills of a seaman, he signed on as a rigger in Charleston, S.C. During the Civil War, he smuggled his family onto a ship while the crew was on shore and sailed out to the Union Navy.

His daring escape brought Smalls into

national prominence. He was granted a sum of money for the surrendered ship and was appointed a pilot in the U.S. Navy. Later, he was promoted to captain for heroism in battle.

During Reconstruction, Smalls returned to South Carolina and was elected to several terms in state government offices, then to the U.S. House of Representatives where he served five terms.

Mifflin Wister Gibbs, Judge and United States Consul (1823-1918): Gibbs was born in Philadelphia, but migrated to San Francisco in 1849. There he operated a bootblack stand before forming a partnership with Peter Lister in a shoe firm on Clay Street.

A restless man, Gibbs migrated to Victoria, British Columbia, in 1858. There he established the first general

store that was not connected with the Hudson Bay Company. He became an influential person and a councilman from the James Bay District. At the same time, he studied law with an English barrister, became a contractor, and built a railroad from the coal mines of Queen Charlotte to Skidgate Harbor.

By 1869, Gibbs had moved to Little Rock, Ark., where he studied at Oberlin College. He was admitted to the bar in 1870 and elected city judge in 1873. He held several positions for President Hayes and President Harrison before being named U.S. Consul to Madagascar in 1897.

*The names of heroic and influential African Americans in history go on seemingly without end. These are just two who can make us proud to be Americans, one and all.*

**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

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**US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
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ST LOUIS MO 63103-2833  

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