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Terrebonne Parish

... finished by June

STORY BY ALAN DOOLEY, PA

“I have never seen a project run like this,” said program manager Sheila McCarthy from her desk in St. Louis District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She spoke of the concerted team effort to provide more than six miles of new levees for the Terrebonne Parish region west of New Orleans.

“When we were assigned this project, there were people who dubbed it ‘Mission Impossible,’” McCarthy said. “The numbers of people, the communication needs and cooperation are all truly

daunting – but we’re making it work,” she affirmed.

Congress has authorized, and the Corps of Engineers is committed to provide, this critical element of hurricane and flood protection to Terrebonne Parish by June 1 of this year. That target date is now less than six months away.

Three years ago the New Orleans region was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. While Katrina’s winds were much reduced by landfall, the storm surge pushed ahead of the storm was truly incredible. It inundated some 80 percent of the “Big Easy” and

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(Background) Members of the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, the Corps of Engineers, and the Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District at the groundbreaking Friday, Feb. 6, 2009. *USACE photo courtesy of New Orleans District*

From the Corner Office



Col. Thomas E. O'Hara, Jr.

District Team -

Recently, I rang the large bell in the fourth floor lobby of the R.A.Y. Building to get everyone's attention and to start a town hall meeting.

That bell was from the former District dredge Fort Gage. From 1908 to 1940 the bell tolled to ensure other vessels were aware of Fort Gage's location on the river in darkness and fog. The bell subsequently served in various ways until it was retired to the District Commander's office in 1968 and relocated to its current place of honor in 1991.

Its 300 pounds of copper and tin produce an incredible sound which continues to get everyone's attention.

I want to reinforce my comments that day and to share this information with those who could not be present.

I began by telling the assembled group that within the St. Louis District, we have three #1 missions:

- Our **first #1** priority mission is to support the Global War on Terrorism. We do this with our people who volunteer to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan to be part of the Army in those regions. They lend their expertise to this effort, but most importantly, they bring their energy and passion with them to help with our nation's number one mission – securing stability for us and our allies and a better life for the people of those troubled nations. I urge you all to consider how you might help with this effort and then to make that commitment. I also thank all those who already have volunteered as well as those who picked up the slack back here that allowed them to deploy.

- Our **second #1** mission is to actively support our regional effort to bring a 100-year level of protection to New Orleans and the region of south Louisiana. We have been part of the Katrina recovery effort since even before that devastating storm came ashore on 29 August 2005. But late last year, BG Walsh analyzed progress, assessed the road ahead and decided that we were not going to meet the goal of providing that protection in 2011 without a greatly enlarged effort on all our parts. He charged the upper five MVD districts to team with New Orleans and take primary roles in meeting that goal. He told us firmly: "Failure is NOT an option." We in St. Louis are working to restore levee protection in

Terrebonne Parish by June of this summer (2009), to provide similar protection to Grand Isle, and to complete additional work in Orleans Metro and on Hero Channel

- And equally important or **third priority** mission is to continue to carry out the work that supports our customers in the St. Louis District. Included in our full St. Louis District work plan, we have an ongoing operation and maintenance mission, we are restoring flood protection projects that were damaged last year, we are embarked on major rehab work at Locks 27 and we are preparing for a possible flood season that could be only a matter of weeks away.

Before we adjourned, Joe Kellett, who's enroute to supporting the first mission by deploying to Afghanistan, told how our work load has historically cycled up and down. At low ebbs there have been calls to shrink the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to consolidate districts or eliminate functions.

But at low points the nation almost inevitably turns to the Corps of Engineers to plan and execute solutions to problems that only engineers and a team like ours can implement.

We're in one of those up cycles now. We have more work than the previous numbers of people we had can accomplish. We are both replacing retirees and growing the

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US Army Corps of Engineers®
St. Louis District

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TERREBONNE, FROM COVER

surrounding parishes by the next morning. While relatively less damage was recorded in Terrebonne Parish from Katrina, Hurricane Rita a few weeks later made up for that “victory” by pounding areas west of New Orleans.

As fall approached last year, Mississippi Valley Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh told his assembled district commanders, “Failure is not an option.” He called them forward into the mission, driving a regional sharing of work and responsibility to best ensure success.

Calling on his subordinate commanders to bring their districts into the mission more fully, he parceled out chunks of the work to the upper five Districts from the Canadian border south to New Orleans. In various combinations, elements from the river basin they share in common were marshaled to focus their collective talents on one mission: securing a 100 year level of protection for the people of New Orleans by 2011, and all of the crucial steps leading to that conclusion.

One of the first projects slated for completion on this ambitious

schedule is building six miles of levee structure in Terrebonne Parish. The appropriation for the project is approximately \$30 million. It is a giant and swift step forward for the approximately 100-mile protection system in the parish. “I believe we can do this by Brig. Gen. Walsh’s target – June 1, 2009,” McCarthy recently affirmed in St. Louis.

McCarthy had just finished one of the three-times-a-week scheduled teleconferences with counterparts in New Orleans when she spoke to Esprit. In less than an hour they had brought up issues, made decisions and issued guidance. “We

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(Left to right) Archie Ringgenberg, Larry Whitt, Sheila McCarthy and others sit in on a teleconference from St. Louis regarding repairs that must be completed to a levee in Terrebonne Parish prior to the start of the 2009 hurricane season on June 1.

USACE photo by Alan Dooley

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new talent that will prepare us to handle the challenges the future will present. We are doing so because once again, our nation is turning to a proven team – a team with demonstrated skills and performance – the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for critical infrastructure work.

We are also looking forward to getting the hard numbers for the President’s stimulus package. This work will allow us to advance some critical missions within the District. This work will also add additional items onto an already full plate, but I have full confidence in your – our – ability to get the job done.

I rang the Fort Gage bell to get people’s attention. We need everyone’s attention and participation to get our three #1s done to the standard that we are known for.

Our nation, our Army, our citizen-customers need us.

To meet those needs, our U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is Building Strong. Failure is not an option, nor together as a team, will it be a result.

We are embarked on great missions around the world, around the nation and around the District. The journey will not be easy, but I look forward to making that journey with you all.

Hooah!
COLO.



5 Years and Counting...

NGRM continues to connect Americans to the Mississippi River

BY MINDY CORY, PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

For some, it's all about relaxation and recreation. For others, it's a source of income and livelihood. Any way you look at it, just about every person in the United States, if not the world, has some connection to the Mississippi River. At the National Great Rivers Museum, operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers' St. Louis District, you are invited to discover and explore your relationship with the Mississippi in a hands-on environment.

The National Great Rivers Museum in Alton, IL, which serves as the base of operations for the District's Rivers Project Interpretive Service and Outreach Program, opened its doors in October 2003 and has since touched the lives of well over a quarter-million visitors from around the world.

The museum is an important asset for the St. Louis District. Many of the visitors who come to visit are not that familiar with the Mighty Miss, yet they leave with an understanding of and appreciation for the tremendous amount of work that the Corps does to create a reliable transportation corridor while maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

What's so special about the museum?

The National Great Rivers Museum is not just another every day museum. The exhibits are designed to make everything real to the visitor. For example, a display that tells

you a standard hopper barge is 35 feet wide doesn't carry quite the same impact as the museum's life sized barge cross section.

Perhaps the most popular of all of the museum's exhibits is the tow-boat simulator. "Everyone wants to steer the barges," says Kimberly Rea, the Rivers Project's Interpretive Service and Outreach Manager. Successfully completing the simulator's three scenarios takes a great deal of skill and patience. "Most people end up crashing their tow. They get a good laugh and then try again."

Another crowd favorite is the aquarium. Mistaken for everything from swordfish to sharks are 3 shovelnose sturgeon, 2 longnose gar, and 1 bowfin fish make the museum their home.

These lesser-known fish were chosen over their more commonly recognized counterparts, such as catfish and bass, because of their historic past. These native species swam in the Mississippi River

during the Jurassic period as they continue to do today.

Outside, near the museum's main entrance, is a water feature designed to look like a real river, including a waterfall, slough, islands, and delta. During the summer months, visitors are invited to kick off their shoes and wade (but not swim!) in the water.

The 100 seat Discovery Theater is possibly one of the museum's most impressive features. Visitors are invited to relax and take a journey down the Mississippi in Power of the River, a 25 minute film. Power of the River's main premise is that the Mississippi River serves as an artery of America. The ever-changing Mississippi does everything from carry goods to provide for wildlife; it brings people together.

Additional films are periodically shown to add variety to the theater's offerings. In the past, films

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Viewed from the top of the lock and dam, the 24,000 square foot museum and associated administrative offices and maintenance shops sit on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River, one mile downstream of Alton, Ill.

USACE photo by George Stringham

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO, DEPLOYING FOR OIF/OEF

STORY BY NICOLE DALRYMPLE
 GULF REGION DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Part 2 of a two part series. In the last issue of Esprit, Public Affairs Specialist Nicole Dalrymple, currently in the opening weeks of her second deployment to Iraq, wrote about preparations before departing St. Louis. In this issue Nicole walks you through the next phase at the deployment center in Winchester, Va., before taking you aboard your globe-girdling flight to Iraq or Afghanistan.

For packing, the trick is to ship as much as possible. You do not want to be carrying a lot of heavy bags through Dulles International Airport, Kuwait and Iraq or Afghanistan. You will be grateful for a lighter load.

Due to limited storage space, people should mail things about two weeks before their arrival date. Check with someone deployed about how long mail is taking to arrive. I'm in Baghdad and mail is arriving in about a week. Oddly enough it is taking longer to travel the opposite direction.

You will be responsible for making your travel arrangements to the APPO in Virginia, but they will issue your travel orders. You will be given a phone number to call for plane reservations and hotel reservations. You will also reserve a spot in a limo service, to use to get from Dulles International Airport to Winchester. Your plane ticket is paid for through TAC's central billing account, but you will pay for your hotel and transportation from Dulles International Airport to Winchester with your Travel Card. You will file a voucher once you arrive at your assigned location.

Most likely you will leave St. Louis on Sunday. In-processing begins Monday at the UDC. Staff



Nicole gives a thumbs up on December 6 while enroute to the Qudas Power Plant, located north of Baghdad.

will be at the airport in the baggage claim area to meet you. Just look for sign with the Corps castle.

Your orders do not include a rental car. If you chose to get one it will be at your own expense. While you are in Winchester the UDC staff picks you up every morning at your hotel, takes you to lunch and drops you off at the end of the day.

In-processing takes about three full days. During that time you will get issued uniforms and other equipment. Almost all of it fits in one very full duffel bag. Bags are limited to 50 pounds each so keep that in mind while packing. You are also limited to three checked bags so remember that too.

You'll attend several briefings at the UDC, receive first aid training,

learn how to properly fit your gas mask, get a new CAC card, make sure all your personnel information is taken care of, and complete your medical preparations. The staff is very professional and works hard to make things as smooth as possible.

Travel out of Winchester is different depending on whether you are going to Afghanistan or Iraq.

People deploying to Iraq leave Dulles on a nonstop flight to Kuwait City. It's about a 12 hour flight. For about \$200 you can upgrade from Economy to Economy Extra; this is non-reimbursable but definitely worth it. If you have the frequent flyer miles it might be worth upgrading to Business. Twelve hours is a

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Osprey nesting structures installed at Riverlands

STORY AND PHOTOS BY *MINDY CORY*
PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Two new osprey nesting structures at the US Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District's Rivers Project Office at West Alton, Mo., might be inhabited in as little as a month after their installation. The basket-like platforms sitting atop utility poles are designed to serve as habitat for ospreys, a bird of prey that normally begins nesting in late February.

Ospreys normally nest in large trees that are completely surrounded by water, giving them a 360° view of potential predators. Because availability of this type of habitat is limited, ospreys are opportunistic and readily build nests on man-made platforms.

The idea of placing the structures was brought about by volunteer Gene Sands who spends a good deal of time observing the wildlife at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Sands, a retired biologist, contacted the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to inquire about having a platform donated.

"I only asked for one platform and they (IDNR) insisted I take two" said Sands who went with Corps biologist Charlie Deutsch to retrieve the donated items.

Corps biologist Sarah Miller confirmed that ospreys had been in the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary as recently as a few weeks before installation. Miller used the success of similar structures at the Corps' Carlyle Lake as a guide to determine the best locations for the new habitat.

Three nesting platforms are already in place at Carlyle Lake, approximately 50 miles southeast of the Alton area. The first structure was installed at the lake in 2003



Corps biologist Sarah Miller (left) and an AmerenUE employee watch as one of the two osprey nesting structures is installed at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo.

and was occupied immediately. It continues to remain active. The success of this shoreline platform aided in Miller deciding on two waterside locations, one on Ellis Island and the other just behind the Rivers Project Office.

Miller worked with Ameren, a St. Louis based utility company, to arrange donation of two utility poles along with a crew of four to install the structures. Installation was completed on January 22, 2009.

While the main goal is to increase nesting habitat and encourage a balanced ecosystem, the plat-

forms' locations have other benefits as well.

"Visitors can see both sites from our conference room with a spotting scope or binoculars. If we end up with any active nests, they would make excellent environmental education tools," says Miller.

The room Miller mentioned is a multi-purpose facility with large glass windows, serving the Corps as a conference room at the Rivers Project Office. When it is not being used for meetings it is available for the public to watch birds from

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communicate. We cooperate. This could not be done any other way," McCarthy said.

McCarthy credits New Orleans with having set the table for success. Their Office of Counsel, Real Estate and Environmental offices drove a lot of complex and critical decisions and processes on a fast track. A multitude of elements – the project information report, a cooperative agreement and environmental assessment and then gaining rights of entry, were completed in astounding time frames.

"A lot of that truly difficult work was done when we joined forces in

October," she said.

Since then St. Louis District engineers and planners have completed designs and specifications for the levee work. The process of soliciting bids and letting contracts has also been accomplished in a tight, aggressive schedule.

"Our contracting office was crucial in this step," McCarthy commented. "Without their work against a tight schedule, I don't know if we would have made the deadlines we've met.

"We let two contracts on a North and South section on Feb. 2," McCarthy said. "We issued the contractors a notice to proceed two

days later on Feb. 4."

McCarthy marvels at the agreements that have had to be hammered out. Failure in any one might have delayed the project. St. Louis and New Orleans are working together. The Terrebonne Levee Conservation District has entered one agreement to provide borrow material to build the levee with. The Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government has signed up for the project. And they have had to execute agreements not just with the Corps of Engineers, but with each other.

With contractors poised all around, synchronized shovels wielded by Corps personnel, representatives from the Terrebonne Parish government, the levee and conservation districts, as well as a representatives from U.S. Senator David Vitter's office and State Senator Reggie Dupre, were sunk into the soil and the ground was broken on Friday, Feb. 6.

"A fast track for this kind of work would be 18 to 24 months," McCarthy noted. "But we don't have that long."

With earthmoving equipment at work, the Lafayette Area office of the New Orleans District is providing on scene oversight of the work.

From her task of working hand in hand with New Orleans senior program manager Darrell Broussard, Sheila McCarthy, who is becoming somewhat of a commuter of St. Louis-to-New Orleans commercial flights, says she has never seen the like of this mission in her 16 years of program management with the Corps of Engineers.

"We aren't even moving money the normal way. I am permitted to manage money completely in the New Orleans resources data base. It was complicated to start



Col. Thomas E. O'Hara Jr. speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the project that kicked off the start of construction on the \$30 million project to repair, replace, modify and improve the Suzie Canal and Orange Street nonfederal levees.

Photo courtesy of New Orleans District

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USACE photo by Alan Dooley

HOLIDAY

IS ANOTHER

SUCCESS



USACE photo by Alan Dooley



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USACE photo by George Stringham



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USACE photo by Alan Dooley



USACE photo by Alan Dooley

OSPREY, FROM PAGE 6

indoors. Visitors are invited to bring their own binoculars or take advantage of two spotting scopes that are provided, although it is likely they may not need them as the wildlife is often in plain sight.

The platforms are an integral part of re-establishing osprey populations in many areas. Ospreys, like other birds of prey, were heavily impacted by the use of the pesticide DDT which caused drastic declines in population. The osprey remains endangered in several states, including neighboring Illinois, but not in Missouri, where the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary is located.

An osprey is a fairly large bird of prey with a white underside, black back and wings, and a dark stripe across its white face. They are often identified in flight by the bends in their 5-foot wingspans which give them a slightly “M” shaped silhouette.

A typical osprey clutch is up to 4 eggs. They do not all hatch at the same time; often 5 days will pass between the first and last hatching. Because a young raptor’s size increases rapidly, the oldest chick often dominates its siblings and will monopolize a scarce food supply.

Ospreys are known for the spectacular displays they put on while hunting for fish, the main staple of their diet. The birds will often



Corps biologist Sarah Miller discusses the project with Gene Sands, a retired biologist who regularly attends events at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo., and who’s idea it was to install the osprey nesting structures.

hover over the water’s surface until conditions are exactly right. Then they dive feet first into the water to grab a fish which is carried head first, in line with the bird’s body.

The West Alton, Mo., site, where the osprey nesting structures are located, is part of a highly successful effort by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide habitat for both migratory and non-migratory wildlife.

Lying in the center of one of the world’s most productive migratory bird flyways, the Mississippi

Flyway, the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary is home to bald eagles in the winter, white pelicans in spring and fall, and is currently hosting a large flock of more than 300 trumpeter swans. In addition, extensive bird watching in the area has resulted in confirmed sightings of birds such as the Ross’ gull, the smew and recently, a laughing gull, all of which are extremely rare in the region.

The area is also home to a wide variety of rare and endangered plant life.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO, FROM PAGE 5

very long time to be on a place.

People deploying to Afghanistan fly into Dubai and then transfer to a flight to Kabul.

An important key during your in-bound travel is to get as much sleep as possible, stay flexible and try to keep a positive attitude. For many Kuwait can be the most challenging part of the deployment process as you arrive at a “tent city.” But the good news is you are usually only there overnight.

The best source of information is probably

fellow employees who have recently redeployed or who are currently deployed. If you have specific questions don’t hesitate to ask. An informed decision is the best kind of decision you can make.

Preparation, a good attitude and flexibility will help you get from St. Louis to the start of a successful deployment. Do what you’re told to do. Do it as early as possible. It’s a life-changing experience and the changes start right up front!

Check out the UDC web site at <http://www.tac.usace.army.mil/deploymentcenter/index.asp>

MUSEUM, FROM PAGE 4

such as Lewis & Clark: Confluence of Time & Courage, Where Eagles Soar, and Life of Lincoln have been featured. The winter of 2009 brings with it yet another film, Raptor Force which focuses on the birds' flight capabilities.

Other than just plain old curiosity, a common reason for visiting the National Great Rivers Museum is to take a tour of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam.

"This is one of the few places that you can actually go to the top of the lock and dam structure," says Rea. The 45-minute tours go about halfway across the structure, stopping at both the 600 and 1,200 foot lock chambers. "If you're lucky," she adds "maybe you'll get to see a tow locking through."

When all is said and done, there are dozens of exhibits inside and outside of the museum and along the tour route, each highlighting a different aspect of the Mississippi River. Nearly everything at the museum is hands on and just waiting

to be explored.

It's more than just exhibits

The museum staff is regularly called upon to seek out and develop new program offerings.

"In the past year or so," says Rea "we've developed a geocaching program, a cell phone tour (Guide by Cell), an in-classroom research and coloring contest (Bonkers for Birds), a triathlon style race (Riverlands Outdoor Challenge), and Segway Glided tours, just to name a few."

The museum's geocaching program utilizes GPS technology to send visitors on a high tech scavenger hunt. In the program's first year, courses were held throughout the summer on Saturday mornings, as well as during special events and scheduled field trips. Through this program, more than 150 people learned the basics of handheld GPS receivers.

Guide by Cell is a service that allows visitors to call into a phone system to hear recorded messages about a particular topic.

"We started using Guide by Cell inside the museum on a trial basis," says Rea. "It went over really well so now we're spreading it throughout the Rivers Project. It's a great way to connect with visitors at some of our more remote sites."

Many of these programs could not be provided by the Corps alone. Partnerships with the Meeting of the Rivers Foundation, Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau, and St. Louis Science Center, among several others, are instrumental in bringing many of the museum's initiatives to fruition.

The Meeting of the Rivers Foundation, which is the Corps' primary partner at the museum, strives to promote public awareness and understanding of the great rivers, their environments, their impact on the natural world, and the dynamic interaction between the river systems and the human and wildlife communities that border them.

The interpretive team also works hard to spread the Corps' mission throughout the community. "We go to anywhere from 15 to 20 offsite events per year, such as fishing fairs, eco-fests, resource fairs, and career fairs, to tell the Corps' story," says Rea. "Outreach is at the heart of what we do."

The Class A Regional Visitors Center is open eight hours a day, seven days a week. With a staff of only 6 rangers, 3 of whom are part-time student employees, maintaining this demanding schedule would be next to impossible without dedicated volunteers.

Rea explains, "Their generosity is amazing; our volunteers keep us up and running. They staff the reception desk, lead lock and dam tours, and help at special events, always with smiling faces. Some days we have over 500 people come through the door. We couldn't do it alone!"



Jill Dickerson, and her son Cole, experience one of the exhibits at the National USACE photo by Alan Dooley

RRV training pays off during ice storm deployment to northeast Arkansas

STORY BY *GEORGE STRINGHAM, PA*

With highs only reaching into the upper twenties and low thirties, the week of December 4-9 made for a cool few days to do an exercise with the St. Louis District's Rapid Response Vehicle. Then again, working in less than optimal weather conditions can be expected in a real emergency.

Early on the morning of December 4, 2008, Rick Waggoner, John Tatum and Chad Adamson performed the pre-operational checks for the RRV, which is stored and maintained at the District's Service Base at the Foot of Arsenal Street, before heading out on the short trip to Melvin Price Locks and Dam near Alton, Ill. Once there, the parabolic dish was set up and an attempt to make connectivity was made.

Tatum's position on the RRV's three-person team is that of the Alternate Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C3I) Specialist. The other two positions are Team Leader and Operations Specialist.

He explained that shortly being assigned to the team, he deployed to Afghanistan.

"I haven't had the opportunity to learn what's expected for this position," Tatum said. "This gave me the opportunity to do a lot of the things I'd do if I was doing this in a real emergency, minus the actual emergency."

Rick Waggoner, National Program Manager for the St. Louis District, and caretaker of the RRV, explained that the value



John Tatum (left) and Chad Adamson work to establish connectivity with the RRV-01 at Melvin Price Locks and Dam on the afternoon of December 4, 2008.

USACE photos by George Stringham

of this exercise was more than just the training.

"By setting everything up and establishing connectivity, we were able to validate our deployability status in ENLINK, showing us as being green" Waggoner stated.

"We're trying to get as many people qualified in as many positions as possible," he said. "It gives us that much more flexibility and ensures we are able to support an event whenever we receive the call."

This flexibility was apparent during the team's recent deployment at the end of January when the RRV-01 was tasked to support Tulsa District's Power Planning and Response Team in Jonesboro, Ark. Both Adamson

and Tatum deployed to the Northeastern Arkansas town; however, when the need for support was needed in Kentucky, Adamson was called on to make the move, leaving Tatum, Henry Shelton and Mel Cundiff with the RRV in Jonesboro.

Though the RRV-01 is maintained locally in St. Louis, it is a national asset and the District is only considered the custodian of it. It, and its five other sister unit's dispersed across the country, are part of the Corps' Multi-level National Emergency Response System. Since it was first dispatched to the St. Louis District in 1998, the RRV-01 has mobilized 14 times to various disasters or events.

Cassie Cooper receives national award



St. Louis District's Cassandra Cooper, River Engineering Section, Hydrologic & Hydraulic Branch, Engineering Division was recently recognized as an All Star by Women of Color Magazine and IBM Corporation for being a top performer in her position relating to technology/business. She received the award at the 13th Annual National Women of Color STEM Conference Award luncheon in Dallas, Texas.

In their selection process, the Career Communications Group, which publishes Women of Color Magazine for today's career women in technology and business, looks at leadership abilities, project achievements, concern for community, and maturity of judgment that will provide direction to those women who will stand in their place in the future.

While working as a Civil Engineering Technician Cassie has demonstrated exceptional aptitude in learning and working in a wide variety of technical disciplines in Environmental Quality, Water Data Management and River Engineering projects at the five St. Louis District Lakes, and the Mississippi, Illinois, and Kaskaskia Rivers.

DPM Sighting



As noted in Col. O'Hara's "From the Corner Office" column on page 2, Joe Kellett has deployed to Afghanistan. Seen here in full "battle rattle," at the site of a future Afghanistan Army Base, we hope to run reports of his activities and experiences, as well as first hand reports of ways MVS personnel can join him in the GWOT.

District recovers MVP barge at Mel Price



USACE photo by George Stringham

A small barge that was a support vessel for Dredge Dubuque sank December 17 below Melvin Price Locks and Dam near Alton, Ill. Dredge Dubuque is a small cutter head-type dredge from the Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District.

Dredge Dubuque arrived at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam Monday, Dec. 15, to winter-over inside the land-side guide wall area downstream of the locks and dam and await servicing at a local shipyard when it happened.

Three work pontoons also broke loose and were recovered by personnel from the Melvin Price facility. These same personnel also removed four floating barrels from the water.

A small quantity of oil created a sheen of about 1500 square feet. It was quickly surrounded with floating absorbent booms available for that purpose by Melvin Price personnel. The U.S. Coast Guard, which along with the EPA and Illinois EPA was called to the scene, estimated that a maximum of 40 gallons of oily material may have entered the water, but it was contained.

St. Paul District dispatched divers to the facility to access the damage and to make preparations for its recovery. The District's floating crane, Sewell, was then taken to Melvin Price on the Friday, December 19, to begin raising the barge. The recovery was completed the following day and was taken to the District's Service Base while arrangements were being made for repairs to be made.

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with a totally new process, but it is absolutely working. That's all that counts," she says.

It is obvious what this means to the southern Louisiana region. They have a long history of being pounded by gulf storms. While no protection can be perfect, risk can and must be reduced.

But what does this mean in turn for St. Louis and the other four districts north of New Orleans? What does this construct bode for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?

"I don't think there's a stronger champion of regionalizing work than Brig. Gen Walsh," St. Louis Engineer District Col. Thomas E. O'Hara said. "This time it is New Orleans that is benefiting. But how much better would we now

be prepared as a region if a disaster similar to the 1993 Mississippi River floods struck the upper districts? Common processes and methods would be reinforced by first-name, face-to-face cooperation and experiences."

In addition, the Corps of Engineers has undergone a wave of retirements in recent years and the pace continues unabated. Replacements are young engineers, project managers and a host of others with the skills that make effective teams.

"Listen," Dave Busse, St. Louis Engineering and Construction Division, recently noted. "We are sending our new employees into New Orleans to work alongside, and to learn from senior, experienced people. They are not reading

about the engineering and design work to build flood risk reduction systems. They are building them. And they are doing this in one of the most challenging, demanding environments on this continent. You can't buy this kind of experience."

In the end, St. Louis and the other districts of the Mississippi Valley Division will be a better team, a proven unit. They will be more ready than ever to come to each other's aid or, if necessary, turn left or right to help neighboring divisions west and east of the Mississippi River.

And Terrebonne Parish and the citizens of that often devastated region will be more secure. True to the new Corps of Engineers motto, we are indeed ...

... **BUILDING STRONG.**

STL Tax Refunds for Deployers

(...unless your residence is within city limits)



CITY OF ST. LOUIS
INDIVIDUAL EARNINGS TAX RETURN
 (RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT)
 Telephone: (314) 622-4403

CALENDAR YEAR 08

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS IN THE SPACE BELOW

Social Security No. _____

St. Louis City collects a city income tax. It is one percent of your gross (before tax) pay. It is assessed for each day you actually work in the city of St. Louis – even if it is only a partial day. It is assessed to pay for services such as police and fire protection and use of the city’s libraries. Even if you do not live in St. Louis, you are covered by these services while you were at work.

However, if you live outside of the city, you can apply for a refund of taxes on money earned while you were assigned to work outside of St. Louis. This includes going TDY to meetings and conferences or of greater impact, deploying for emergency duties or overseas for the Global War on Terrorism. The key is that you were under orders. Vacations and other personal time away from work cannot be used to qualify for a refund.

To get your refund, you will need to fill out a St. Louis City form E-1. It is available at: <http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/collector/taxforms05/E-1.pdf>

If you earned only normal pay during your absence – no overtime, danger pay or other added amounts – you can follow the instructions on the back of the form E-1. It provides a formula to determine your refund, based on the ratio of days in St. Louis to days working elsewhere.

If you earned overtime, etc., it too was taxed at the one percent rate and you will not receive your full refund by following the formula on the E-1 form. Instead, you will need to justify your request by submitting evidence of the actual amounts you

earned while deployed. The best source of this data is your LES (Leave Earnings Statement). For this reason and for other reasons, employees should go to “My Pay” and print and retain a copy of their LES – forever.

Your application for a St. Louis City Tax refund must be accompanied by a filled out form E-1, your W-2 and a cover letter on District letterhead, signed by your immediate supervisor, stating that you were required to be out of St. Louis for the indicated time on Corps duties. If you are applying for a refund based on other than the “per day” formula, you should explain that as well, and include copies of your LESs for the stated period to document your claim.

“You cannot claim this refund if you reside in St. Louis, because the city’s services were provided to your property, family, etc., while you were absent, Larry Unger, a senior office manager in the St. Louis City Tax Office said. “This option is available only to nonresidents of the city,” he emphasized.

The refund process takes additional time if you are applying for a refund based on other than the number of full days you were ordered to duty outside the city. You can best ensure the most efficient handling of this if you carefully and completely document your specific situation and supply all of that information to the city in your first filing.

Ask Pat Wohlschlager in RM for help if you want to apply for this refund or do not know how to get into “My Pay” for pay records. As Elliott Davis says on Fox-2 TV, “It’s your money.”

Tax day is Wednesday, April 15. Don’t wait until the last minute. If you need to file an extension, visit the IRS’s website at: www.irs.gov or stop by the Post Office and pick up a form.



You're Invited!

(To join the Corps Golf League)

The Corps (handicap) Golf League invites you to join us on Tuesday evenings, April-August, at Clinton Hill Golf Course in Swansea, IL.

All district employees and retirees, as well as employees of the Coast Guard and IRS are welcome.

Teams consist of 6-9 players. Only 4 play each week, so part time is the norm.

2009 LEAGUE OFFICERS:

President - Mel Baldus
melbaldus@live.com

Secretary - Shelly Huels
314-331-8096
Shelly.I.Huels@usace.army.mil

Treasurer
Paul Nadziejko
pbnadz@charter.net



Annual Spring Tournament

Friday, April 17, 2009
Emerald Greens
North County

**Call now to
sign up!**

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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ST LOUIS MO 63103-2833**
