Open Channels
http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil
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MVD continues drought fight on middle Mississippi River

By Pamela Harrion
MVD Public Affairs

Keeping the Mississippi River channel open for commercial barge traffic between Cairo, Ill., and St. Louis, Mo., is currently number one on MVD's priority list. A long-term, multi-pronged low-water campaign by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the navigation industry and the U.S. Coast Guard has successfully kept the channel open since the start of the 2012 Drought.

Loading a spud barge—The removal of 890 cubic yards of limestone from the navigation channel on the Mississippi River near Thebes, Ill., began Dec. 17, 2012. This is just one phase of the action the Corps is taking to improve the navigation channel for the river industry.

In a joint effort, USACE and its partners continue to provide a navigation channel for safe, reliable river commerce between the Gulf of Mexico and St. Louis despite historic lows on the lower and middle Mississippi, through a combination of engineering improvements, innovative use of water storage and hard work to deepen the channel.

The channel deepening work has included engineering permanent improvements like dikes and other river training structures, rock removal and six months of continuous dredging, channel patrols, channel marking, around-the-clock water control operations, surveys and mapping, as well as releases from upper Mississippi River reservoirs.

USACE, Coast Guard and the barge industry also continue to coordinate and communicate with daily phone calls, regular briefings with industry executives, public meetings with elected leaders and real-time updates as conditions change along the river.

The continuous updates include close monitoring of forecasts, rainfall and snowmelt runoff expectations, and latest channel survey information for the 180-mile stretch of middle Mississippi River between St. Louis and Cairo.

The first phase of the most critical rock removal work on the Mississippi River near Thebes, Ill., was completed Jan. 12, ahead of schedule, providing mariners with an additional two feet of depth in the navigation channel.

"The Corps is especially pleased with the efficient and effective performance of the rock removal effort, which deepened the navigation channel by two feet in just three weeks," said St. Louis District Commander, Col. Christopher Hall.

The work removed approximately 365 cubic yards of limestone from the water-starved river to reduce the risk for vessels in the

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Around the Bend SNAPSHOT

The USACE Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick (center), joined Mississippi Valley Division Commander, John W. Peabody (right), and St. Louis District Commander, Chris Hall (left) in Thebes, Ill., on Jan. 6 to inspect the rock removal work that will deepen the river by up to two feet and aid navigation on the Middle Mississippi River. On Jan. 7, Illinois Senator Richard Durbin and Congressman Bill Enyart held a roundtable discussion in the historic Thebes Courthouse with the Corps, Coast Guard and industry to discuss the latest river updates and forecasts. *(Photo by MVD Public Affairs)*

Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody disembarked a survey boat that docked at Thebes, Ill, on Jan. 6. The USACE Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, joined the MVD Commander and St. Louis District Commander, Chris Hall, to inspect the rock removal work on the Mississippi River. *(Photo by MVD Public Affairs)*

The USACE Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick (center), Mississippi Valley Division Commander, John W. Peabody (left), and St. Louis District Commander, Chris Hall (right), meet Jan. 6 to inspect the rock removal work in Thebes, Ill., that will deepen the river by up to two feet and aid navigation on the Middle Mississippi River. *(Photo by MVD Public Affairs)*

Maj. Gen. Peabody (right), Commanding General for the Mississippi Valley Division, drives an anchor for High Performance Turf Reinforcement Material (HPTRM) that will be used to armor levees in Southeast Louisiana while project manager, Sohelia Holley, and her team review his work. *(Photo by New Orleans District)*

MVD continues drought fight... (continued from page 1)

channel during low water. The rocks were part of a large formation that impedes the navigation channel during extreme low water. The initial phase of the work addressed areas that had the most immediate impact on navigation and additional rock removal work is ongoing.

The Dredge Potter, one of the Corps' dustpan dredges, removes sediment from the mainstem Mississippi River channel to keep commercial navigation flowing during extreme low-water conditions between St. Louis, Mo., and Cairo, Ill. (Photo by the St. Louis District.)

Work began Dec. 16, with the initial rock removal performed by heavy excavators. Blasting operations began Dec. 21, taking place during daylight hours with the U.S. Coast Guard coordinating notices to mariners and directing barge traffic from their mobile command post in nearby Cape Girardeau, Mo. Since December 10, the Unified Command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard and river industry have used their collaborative Vessel Management Group to keep 630 vessels and 6,123 barges moving on the river.

Rock removal on the six-mile stretch of river was accomplished through two contracts awarded by the Corps' St. Louis District: Newt Marine, Inc., of Dubuque, Iowa, removed the rock formation upstream of Thebes; and Kokosing Construction, from Fredericktown, Ohio, removed the rock formation downstream of Thebes.

"The Corps has used every resource available to us to successfully sustain navigation," said Maj. Gen. John Peabody, Mississippi Valley Division Commander. "The success of the rock removal work, combined with recent and forecast rain, increases our confidence we will sustain an adequate channel through this spring," he added.

Removing the rock formations was one of many operations the Corps and U.S. Coast Guard initiated along the narrowing river to maintain a nine-foot-deep channel for river navigation. Dredging has been ongoing since early May 2012 to preserve the channel, as well as continued surveys and channel patrols to keep commerce safely moving on the middle Mississippi River. The Vicksburg District, for example, used $26.8 million in supplemental funds last year for port and harbor dredging; an additional $6 million has been budgeted for fiscal year 2013.

The Corps worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Missouri Department of Conservation to avoid and minimize impacts to the environment during the rock removal process, and is also in constant communication and coordination with the Coast Guard and the river industry as the drought has reduced water levels throughout the Mississippi River Basin to historic lows.

For more information, the Corps' St. Louis District posts regular drought updates, including photos and video links: www.mvs.usace.army.mil/lowwater.

TAD team member goes extra mile to help soldier during family crisis

By Pamela Harrion
MVD Public Affairs

During a family crisis, William D. Northcutt, engineering technician for the Afghanistan District-North (Transatlantic Division), sprung into action to assist Robin Broils-Cox, Mississippi Valley Division employee, locate her son, Sgt. First Class Jason Broils.

"When his grandmother passed away suddenly, we had no idea how to reach Jason," said Robin.

Robin first called the Red Cross and was told that they would get a message to Jason within 24 hours or at the latest, 48 hours.

Then, Robin discovered that Jason's wife just happened to have Northcutt's office number on their caller ID cell phone. "We decided to try to reach the Corps number [Northcutt], and [he] delivered," said Robin. "From the time I left the message on [his] voicemail, and Jason calling us was about 10 minutes. Jason said [Northcutt] came and found him," she added.

William D. Northcutt, engineering technician for the Afghanistan District-North (Transatlantic Division), recently helped an MVD employee locate her son during a family crisis.

According to Northcutt, he didn't hesitate to find Jason. "When I received Robin's voicemail, I knew I had to find Jason and the thought of not doing so never crossed my mind," said Northcutt. "Having lost my mother-in-law in September, I know the importance of family. Over here, we are family and I did not do anything that any other American wouldn't have done for one of our countrymen."

"As a Corps member, I am so grateful that [Northcutt went] the extra mile to help our troops. As a mom, I am grateful for [his] act of kindness towards my son. It is those small acts of kindness that we all remember. Essayons!"

MVD Retirements - "Essayons!"

The Mississippi Valley Division honored several MVD employees who retired between December 2012 and January 2013. **Patti Beard** (center), who retired Jan. 25, 2013, served as secretary for several MVD commanders over the years. Pictured are Maj. Gen. Peabody (left), Patti and Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers (1995-1997) holding face plates of the other MVD commanders who Patti served but were unable to attend the special ceremony in her honor. The face plates include (from left to right) Maj. Gen. Pat M. Stevens, IV, 1992-94; Brig. Gen. Eugene S. Witherspoon, 1994-95; Maj. Gen. Philip R. Anderson, 1997-2000; Maj. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, 2008-11; Brig. Gen. Don T. Riley, 2002-04; and Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, 2004-08. *(Photo by Alfred Dulaney)*

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MVD Retirements - "Essayons!" *(continued from page 6)*

Col. Dvoracek presented Charlene Squire with a retirement certificate during a ceremony held in her honor, Dec. 20, 2012.

Maj. Gen. Peabody presented Larry Kilgo (center) with the MVD Commander's coins during his retirement ceremony held Jan. 15, 2013, .

Maj. Gen. Peabody (left) presented Basil Arthur with a retirement certificate during a retirement ceremony, held Jan. 17, 2013.

Maj. Gen. Peabody presented Yolanda Arthur with the Superior Civilian Service Award during a retirement ceremony, Jan. 17.

Maj. General John W. Peabody (left) presented Allen Perry with his retirement certificate during a ceremony held in his honor, Jan. 17, 2013.

Maj. Gen. Peabody presented Beth Guynes with the MVD Commander's coins during her retirement ceremony, Feb. 4, 2013.

Maj. Gen. Peabody presented Michael Warren with a retirement certificate during a ceremony held in his honor, Feb. 4, 2013.

MVD welcomes 2013 USACE Planning Associates

The 2013 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Planning Associates visited the Mississippi Valley Division, USACE, Feb. 5, 2013, to be oriented on MVD's vision for the region and as well as its program, unique challenges and regional planning delivery model. Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody, MVD Commander, and Eddie Belk, MVD Director, Programs Directorate, gave the Welcome address. The visit included a history and overview of the Mississippi River Commission, an overview of the 2011 Flood as well as the 2012 Drought, the use of science and technology to inform decision making in the Mississippi River Basin, a tour of the MRC building, the National Ecosystem Planning Center of Expertise, SMART planning – experiences and lessons learned, environmental analysis under SMART planning, planning regionalization in MVD and across USACE, and leadership. Pictured (from left to right) are Janet Cote, ecologist, Planning and Policy Branch, Norfolk District; Jason Norris, plan formulator/Silver Jackets coordinator, Project and Program Management Branch, Alaska District; Andrew Roach, project manager/biologist, Planning Division, Baltimore District; Thomas J. Maier, fisheries & wildlife biologist and planner, Planning & Environmental Branch, Pittsburg District; Sara Brodzinsky, planner, Economic Formulation and Analysis Section, Planning Branch, Chicago District; Rachel Mesko, lead plan formulator/project manager, Planning Branch, Seattle District; Martha (Marci) Jackson, senior water resource planner/study manager, Water Resources Branch of the Planning Division, Sacramento District; Courtney Reed, lead economist, Regional Planning and Environmental Division South, New Orleans District; Travis J. Creel, lead plan formulator, Regional Planning and Environmental Division, New Orleans District; Sierra Schroeder, plan formulator, Regional Planning and Environmental Division North, St. Paul District; Joseph "Thomas" Topi, economist, Planning Branch, Kansas City District; and Byron Rupp, lead plan formulator/project manager, Planning Branch, New England District. *(Photo by Pamela Harrion, MVD Public Affairs)*

Monthly Security Update: OPSEC Awareness

By Patrick Flowers
MVD Security Office

OPSEC is critical everyday, and everywhere operations security is a key component of antiterrorism and force protection, helping protect service members, employees, families, facilities and equipment everywhere by denying information.

Good OPSEC practices are important, especially now due to the threat of terrorism against the United States. Simply put, OPSEC is all about denying the adversary (bad guys) information so people can be protected and maximize mission effectiveness.

When people identify and protect critical information (military operations, capabilities, limitations, intentions, personnel, programs, etc.), OPSEC becomes a proactive means by which adversaries are denied this important advantage.

Regardless of your work assignment, OPSEC applies to all. Everyone possesses critical information the adversary wants. References to this information are maintained on a critical information list, commonly known as a CIL. The list should be kept in a secure area. Unit OPSEC managers are responsible for tailoring the CIL to their particular work areas and distributing it throughout their units.

If people need to discuss critical information, they should use secure means such as Security Terminal Equipment. When discussing critical information, remember an appropriate security clearance does not constitute a valid need-to-know. Ensure the other party or parties have both the clearance and the need to know. Also keep in mind government telephones are subject to monitoring at all times.

Since force protection and antiterrorism protect the U.S. Army, the Corps of Engineers' most precious asset - our people - personnel must scrupulously apply OPSEC everywhere, everyday.

While OPSEC has received increased attention lately, it's important all the time. The adversary isn't just seeking information during times of conflict. He is patiently waiting and collecting it all the time.

Here are some OPSEC tips to apply everyday: One person's trash is another's treasure. Be extremely careful of what is thrown in the trash. When possible, use a shredder.

Cell phones are extremely convenient. They are also one of the easiest means of communication for the bad guys to monitor. Never discuss critical information on a cell phone.

Everyone has a role in OPSEC, including family members. While there is no critical information list for family members, everyone should stop to consider if what they are talking about would be of interest to someone collecting information. Information such as the cancellation of leave or work schedules can provide the adversary with another piece of the overall puzzle he/she is trying to piece together. It's everyone's job to protect their piece of the puzzle.

OPSEC also focuses on observable actions. An adversary creates a profile by simply observing people's daily activities. People increase the value of that profile to the adversary if their activities are predictable. The observable action becomes yet another piece of the overall puzzle.

If the adversary observes the same action carried out in the same way at the same time, then they can easily identify not only routine activities, but deviations as well. For example, if the same exact patrol route was followed at the exact same time every day, the patrol would quickly become predictable. If suddenly the patrol was not there, its absence could be an indication of a change to the mission.

The purpose of OPSEC is to keep the adversary guessing about our capabilities and intentions.

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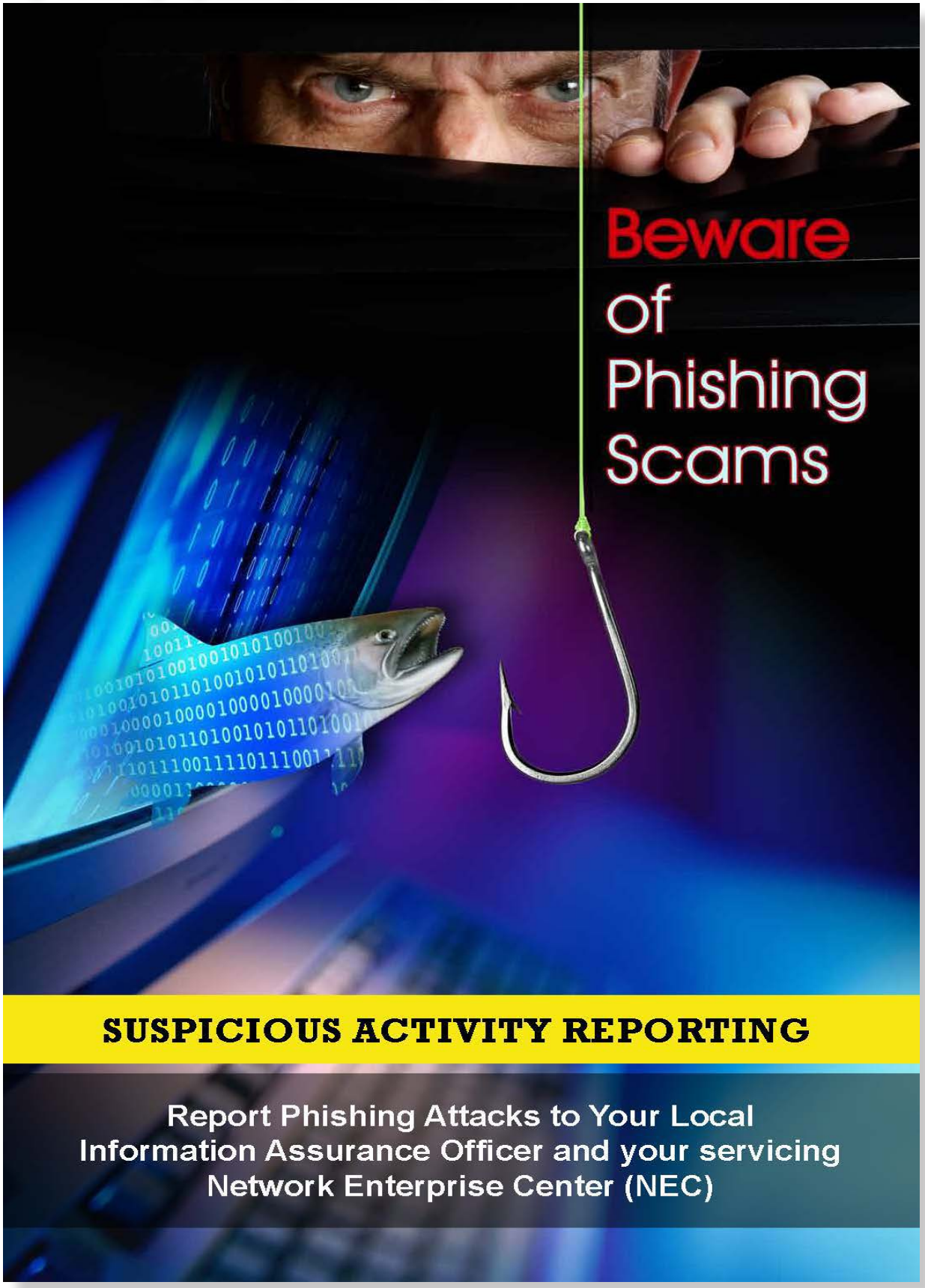
Monthly security update (continued)



MVD Employee Spotlight: Bradley Hayes

Bradley Hayes, MVD Office of Counsel, was recently named "Ambassador of the Quarter" by the Vicksburg-Warren County Chamber of Commerce! Congratulations, Bradley!!! HOOAH!

MVD employee's Dachshund shines in the spotlight, wins titles

Special to MVD

Leah Harris' standard smooth Dachshund, Dual Champion (DC) Shadowdachs' New Attitude, Canine Good Citizen, Therapy Dog International, Certificate of Gameness (CG), Junior Earthdog (JE) (underground scent tests in tunnels), "Ballard," won several new titles over the past year in noteworthy performances.

"Ballard" won several new titles over the past year in noteworthy performances.

Ballard earned his CG and JE titles, both of which are below the ground scent tests in tunnels by which "go to ground" dogs are judged on their scenting abilities in a natural setting. In competing for Certificate of Gameness, Ballard, winning over 50 dogs, finished with a score of 100% for the day, earning him a "High in Trial," in a performance that seasoned judges had rarely seen.

Ballard also earned his final 6.75 points and a First Place at the Dallas/Ft. Worth Dachshund Club Field trial last month, completing his Field Champion title, in an above ground scent test on rabbits. The Field Champion title entitles him to carry the title of "Dual Champion (DC)," since he was already finished in the Conformation Ring. With this placement, he was entitled to advance even further and compete against the winners of the Field Champion stake where he took "Absolute," over the Field Champions, earning him the following distinguished awards: The Dachshund Club of America's Sunburst Medallion and statuary bronze plaque by Katherine Ward Lane, Sculptor (1940's); and his name appended to the Garry Newton limited edition bronze piece entitled Dancing with Angels, offered by the Dallas - Fort Worth Dachshund Club and Ashley Dumas in memory of Ryan aka DC Can Champion Valona's Orion Companion Dog Canine Good Citizen CG.

At home, Ballard is a companion and assistance dog to the hearing impaired and plays frisbee in his spare time.

Corps of Engineers hosts Patriot Deer Hunt

By Alice Bufkin
Vicksburg District

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Vicksburg District recently hosted their first annual Patriots Hunt at the Louisiana Field Office (LFO) recreational area near Columbia, Miss. The event, part of the Wounded Warriors Project (WWP), provides outdoor experiences to military service members with injuries.

The WWP works to provide support and raise awareness of the needs of the men and women who have paid a physical and mental price for our country's security. To be eligible to participate, hunters had to be registered as WWP alumni. Participants included Purple Heart recipients and disabled Soldiers.

Eight hunters from across Louisiana participated by using primitive muzzleloader type guns. A total of eight deer were harvested during the hunt. These hunts support the wildlife management practices in place and are an integral part of the plan for the area. They also provide a unique opportunity to this very special group of participants.

Corps rangers worked with John Nolan, Jr., of the WWP and other generous sponsors to provide the hunters with gift bags, lodging, meals and hunting equipment. On the day prior to the hunt, the Ouachita Parish Sheriff Department's gun range facility was made available to provide the hunters the opportunity to learn to shoot and sight-in their muzzleloader.

The thousands of acres that the Vicksburg District manages offer an array of safe recreational opportunities that include fishing, boating, camping, hiking, bicycling, swimming and photography. The LFO encompasses more than 200 miles along the Ouachita River from Camden, Ark., to Jonesville, La., and provides 24 parks and boat ramps. These parks host more than 700,000 visitors annually and bring approximately $13 million and more than 200 jobs to the local economy.

Daniel Jackson of New Orleans, Louisiana participated in the Hunt and took his first buck. Jackson is a Veteran and Purple Heart recipient of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2006-2007.

To learn more about the many recreational opportunities offered by the Vicksburg District, visit their webpage at http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/lakes/index.php.

Engineering and construction employee selected as the Division hard hat of the year

Eric Johnson is MVD's 2012 Construction Hard Hat of the Year.

By Patrick Moes
St. Paul District

The Mississippi Valley Division recently announced Eric Johnson, engineering and construction, as the recipient of its 2012 Construction Hard Hat of the Year Award.

The division presents the annual award to recognize excellence in construction quality management by its construction field personnel. Johnson was selected as the recipient over contenders from the entire division.

A Winona, Minn., resident, Johnson was recognized for his actions as construction representative in the Lock and Dam 3 Project Office in Red Wing, Minn. While working there, he was responsible for contract administration and quality management for both the navigation improvement project and the lower embankment project. Both contracts, the largest American Recovery and Reinvestment Act-funded projects in the division, were valued at nearly $47 million.

"Eric's leadership, construction expertise and superior work ethic combined for the successful execution of these projects to the highest quality standards, on-time and within budget," said Tom Johnson, St. Paul District Eastern Area Office, or EAO, supervisor. "With over 38,000 Corps of Engineer employees, only nine receive this prestigious award."

Johnson has worked for the Corps of Engineers for 25 years. He currently works as a construction control inspector at the EAO in Winona, Minn.

Welcome Aboard!

Rex Ostrander
Acting Chief of the MVD Regional Business Directorate

Mr. Rex Ostrander arrived at MVD on January 4, 2013, to backfill Mr. Al Lee during Mr. Lee's six-month deployment to Afghanistan.

Mr. Ostrander comes to us from the Kansas City District where he serves as the chief of the Construction Division. His career includes private sector experience in the oil and gas arena. His 20 years of federal service have been entirely with the Corps of Engineers, serving in positions in all three major areas of military, civil and environmental programs.

Mr. Ostrander has several advanced degrees, including a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Nebraska (1978); a master's degree in environmental engineering from Oklahoma State University (1994); a master's degree in business from Oklahoma State University (1999); and a master of arts degree in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College (2010).

He participated in numerous leadership development assignments and programs and recently graduated with the inaugural DoD Senior Leader Development Program, a two-year program to include attendance at the Naval War College.

Mr. Ostrander has received numerous awards over the years for his service, to include the Bronze de Fleury in June of this year.

He has been married to his wife Christy for 34 years. She is a project manager with the Kansas City District. They have two daughters: Monica, the youngest, works in D.C.; and Michelle, the oldest, works for USACE, Tulsa District, is married to Matt, and they have one son, Ethan.

His hobbies include golf, reading, college football and his grandson.

Wilford Fleming
ULA/MVD Regional Logistics Manager/Specialist/Assistant

As a Regional Logistics Management Specialist, I am responsible for providing technical and administrative logistic support to the division Headquarters and district Logistics delivery points. I was born in Aurora, Ill., and spent most of my childhood in a small town called Byhalia, Miss. I currently reside in Vicksburg, Miss. I have a total of 30 years in the military, of which 27 years were as a federal goverment employee of the Tennessee Air National Guard. My experience entails 18 years in logistics with a background in supply, transportation, and as a military logistics planner. As logistics planner, I was activated to Ramstein, Germany, for Operation Enduring Freedom where I managed a Deployment Control Center.

My education background includes a degree in logistics and bachelor's degree in business administration. I have one son attending third grade in Grapevine, Texas. My hobbies include camping and remote control helicopters/airplanes with my son; travelling to Europe; and I shoot a good game of billiards.

We would also like to welcome/congratulate the following new MVD employees and/or promotions as well:

- Brian Chewning - District Support Team Deputy Chief
- Ben Robinson - Programs Directorate-Operations (temporary assignment); and MVD Regional Integration Team in Washington (temporary)
- Rex W. Ostrander, Acting Chief of MVD Regional Business Directorate
- Mark Hogue - New Orleans District Chief of Engineering Division

If you have a new employee in your office, or if you ARE a new employee to the Mississippi Valley Division, please contact the Public Affairs Office at cemvd-pa@usace.army.mil, so that we can introduce you to everyone in Open Channels.

Around the Division

MVD staff provided a cake and well wishes to Al Lee (center), MVD Chief, Regional Business Directorate, during a farewell ceremony Jan. 9, honoring him as he deploys to Afghanistan for six months. Rex Ostrander, Kansas City District Chief, Construction Division, will serve as acting chief in Lee's place while he is deployed.

Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody receives a birthday surprise from MVD staff employees on Jan. 14. Pictured is Kathy Garrick giving a big hug to MG Peabody during the gathering. Happy Birthday, MG Peabody!!! Hooah!!!

Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

Division Engineer
Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody

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Dates to Remember

Holidays in February

Feb. 14—Valentine's Day - The roots of Valentine's Day goes back to ancient times, when people paid honor to the Roman God of Fertility. This was known as the Feast of Lupercalia, and was celebrated even then on February 14th. The traditions of Valentine's Day are broad and many. It is a time to exchange cards or small gifts. Chocolates and jewelry are the big hits of this holiday, as is romantic dinners.

Feb. 18—President's Day - Since 1968, it is celebrated on the third Monday in February. President's Day is a day set aside to honor all of the U.S. presidents. We often think of two great presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, when we celebrate this holiday as it falls by design between their birthdays. But more and more of us look at this day as a tribute to each and every person who has ever served in the office as President of the United States of America. It is a national holiday, although most businesses and industry do not recognize it as a paid holiday.

Did you know?

- From the spring of 1862 until July 1863, Ulysses S. Grant and the Union forces waged a campaign to take the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg, Miss., which lay on the east bank of the Mississippi River, halfway between Memphis to the north and New Orleans to the south. Both sides wanted to control this city because of its prominence on the mighty Mississippi River. To control Vicksburg was to control river traffic and keep the supply line open. Six months after the Union troops laid seige to this city, the Confederate forces surrendered on July 4, 1863. In protest of the conditions faced by the city, July 4th would not be celebrated for 81 years. *[Sources: voices.yahoo.com and www.history.com].*

Engineers Week Luncheon

Valentines Day Pancake Breakfast and Membership Drive

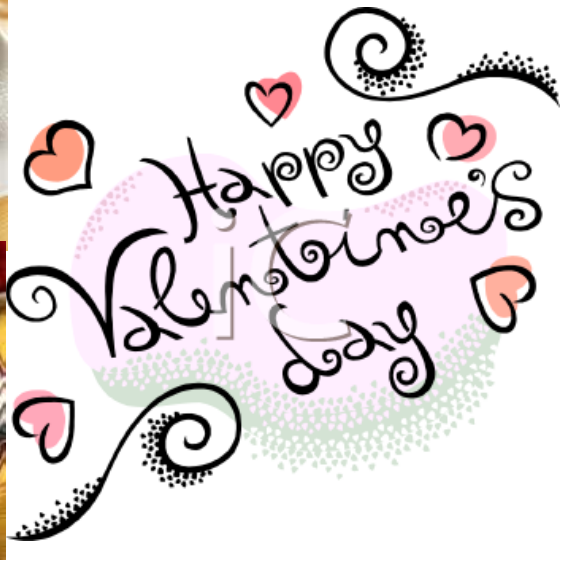
Happy Valentine's Day!!

MRCBA Valentine's Day Pancake Breakfast and Membership Drive

February 14th

7:30-9:00 a.m.

Oasis



MRCBA Membership Dues—$10

"Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget."