

Division leaders grapple with massive leadership assessment to better understand future job applicants

Division Public Affairs Office

“Attitude: The difference between an ordeal and an adventure.”

Human Resources Strategic Advisor Kim Gauntt, and more than a dozen division leaders, recently participated in a five-hour, 180-question leadership skills assessment; designed by the Office of Personnel Management to help managers with hiring decisions based on assessment responses.

“Following the completion of the assessment, we (managers) will have a better understanding of how an applicant thinks, and how well they will fit into our organization,” Kim said.

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The actual assessment will be less than 100 questions and based on real-world scenarios that test an applicant’s leadership qualities, including those related to accountability, decision making, strategic thinking, collaboration, flexibility and creativity.

“Because the questions are based on real-life Corps events and situations, we will be able to make more informed hiring choices,” Kim added.

The new OPM guidelines for corporate recruitment were issued in December 2014, and the final

hiring assessment will go into practice this coming summer.

Based on feedback received, the long-term benefits of the assessment appear to provide less turnover in key positions, higher productivity and less tension due to the uncertainty that comes with frequent leadership changes.

The new assessment comes at a critical juncture for the division’s future management health, as the headquarters will experience significant senior leadership turnover in the next year.





Around the Bend



Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr
*Commander,
Mississippi Valley Division
President-nominee,
Mississippi River Commission*

MVD Team:

April has been a busy month, with no signs of slowing down in May!

The division leadership visited the Rock Island District to discuss regional governance actions, meet with stakeholders and re-align milestones to assure success for the remaining quarters. While there the division/district team had good interaction with the Illinois Corn Growers Association, discussing the future of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program and its authorization life, as well as locks (LaGrange and Peoria) that relate to risk and reliability of the Illinois Waterway.

During the leadership's trip to the New Orleans District, Tom Holden, Col. Rick Hansen and I visited with crucial stakeholders at some district project sites in order to gain clarity on some tough issues, to include the

Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System levee lift/armoring and the Southwest Coastal Feasibility Study.

While there, USACE and the Lake Charles Harbor and Terminal District executed a Project Partnership Agreement for the new start construction of dredged material placement facilities along the Calcasieu River. The total cost of construction is projected to be \$218.8 million, subject to annual funding appropriations.

Additionally, Will Veatch, a hydrologist in the district, is performing valuable work for others with the U.S. Army Engineer Institute for Water Resources, as he was personally selected by the IWR to assist in their sea level rise guidance and methodology, and to perform an Agency Technical Review on the IWR inland hydrology climate change guidance. His work is creating valuable contacts for continued strategic partnerships.

In preparing for the future, twelve Emerging Leaders traveled to Washington, D.C., and had a fantastic learning opportunity to better understand the development and defense of the Corps budget as well as observe the inner workings of the U.S. Congress.

In our good news stories, the St. Louis District participated in a STEM to celebrate National take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day. The teams' children visited the district to learn about USACE and what their parents do at work. Children visited informational booths, participated in water safety activities, viewed a levee model and built a bridge. They also toured the Veterans Curation Program laboratory where they were able to view ancient artifacts and learn about curation.

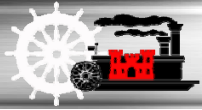
During our visit to the St. Paul District we helped celebrate Earth Day at Blackhawk Park by assisting our Park staff and three board members from the Friends of Pool 9 plant 15 Swamp White Oak trees.

Finally, division leadership is aligned with Human Resources and the Public Affairs Office to increase our Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey response rate that starts May 4. We will be tracking responses and reminding you all that engagement on this survey helps USACE recruit and retain the best talent in the nation.

Building Strong,
Maj. Gen. Mike Wehr

Capt. Matt Miller briefing Maj. Gen. Mike Wehr on armoring installation in the vicinity of Bonnet Carre' Spillway.





393rd Session of the Mississippi River Commission

Charles Camillo
MRC Historian

The 393rd session of the Mississippi River Commission took place from March 22-27, 2015. The annual high-water inspection of approximately 660 miles of the lower Mississippi River between New Madrid, Mo., and Baton Rouge, La., coincided with a significant spring flood crest emanating from heavy rains along the upper Mississippi River and Ohio River.

A total of approximately 2,200 people, representing boards, agencies and associations with memberships and constituencies numbering in the tens of thousands, partnered directly with the commission through various engagements during the high-water inspection. Approximately 1,000 of these participated in open house sessions on the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI in Memphis, Tenn., and New Madrid, Mo.

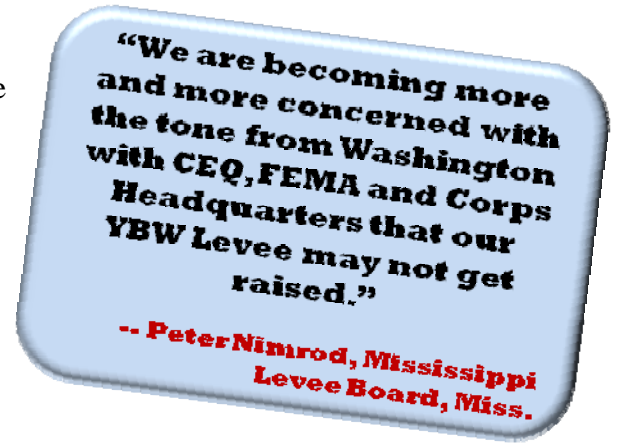
Levee districts from all seven states bordering the Mississippi River and Tributaries project footprint expressed strong concern over several federal initiatives or policies under various stages of development and implementation:

- Federal Flood Risk Management Standards—Executive Order 13690.
- Proposed federal rules to define and regulate “Water of the United States.”
- Corps of Engineers guidance for engineer districts to issue Section 408 permits for work on levee rights of way owned by the local levee districts.
- National Flood Insurance Program.
- Rulemaking regarding the PL 84-99 program.

Regionally, the commission heard testimony regarding:

- The need for the Corps of Engineers to maintain federal drainage ditches under its jurisdiction in the St. Francis Basin.
- Support for the St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway Project.
- Support for raising the Yazoo Backwater Levee to its authorized height.

(See “393rd Session,” next page)



Mississippi River Commission members during the New Madrid, Mo., public meeting. From left to right: Brig. Gen. John Kem (MRC member), Rear Adm. Gerd Glang (MRC member), Maj. Gen. Mike Wehr (MRC president) and Dr. Norma Jean Mattei (MRC member)





Open Channels

393rd Session (continued)

- Concern over the lack of a comprehensive flood control program for the upper Mississippi River.

During the five days traveling down the Mississippi River, commission members and staff made site visits to:

- St. John's Bayou and St. John's Floodway,
- Cherokee Point (levee and bank repair) below Tiptonville, Tenn.,
- Floodwall, Pyramid and Construction of Bass Pro Shop, Memphis, Tenn.,
- St. Francisville, La., concrete mat construction yard,
- Old River Control Overbank Structure, and
- Sidney A Murray Jr. Hydroelectric Plant.



Students from the 6th grade class at Presbyterian Day School in Memphis, Tenn., attended the Mississippi River Commission's Memphis public meeting March 24.



Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, U.S. Army Chief of Engineers, addresses meeting attendees aboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI March 24 during the Mississippi River Commission's public meeting in Memphis.

These policies "are working in unison to create conditions not only in this great valley but throughout the nation THAT WILL SET BACK FLOOD CONTROL and navigation for generations to come."

-- Mike Reed, Sny Island Levee and Drainage District, Ill.



Memphis floodwall inspection



Division Emerging Leaders visit “The Hill,” attend Government Affairs Institute

by Pamela Harrion, MVD Public Affairs

The Mississippi Valley Division’s Emerging Leaders visited Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., April 13-17 to attend the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University. Eleven of the division’s ELs were given the opportunity to participate in the GAI course, “Congressional Briefing for the Army Corps of Engineers,” as part of their ongoing leadership development program.

During the course, ELs received briefings on several topics, including, but not limited to, “The Nature of Congress,” “Leadership and Organization in the 114th Congress,” “Key Stages in the Legislative Process,” “The Role of Congressional Committee Staff,” “The Congressional Appropriations Process,” “Staffing a Personal Office,” “The Congressional Budget Process,” “The Politics of the Budget Deficit,” “The Congressional Research Service: Supplying Information to Congress” and “Congress and the Media.”

Course speakers included Susan Sullivan Lagon, Ph.D., senior fellow at the GAI; Lucian L. Niemeyer, retiree from the Senate Armed Services Committee; Taunja Berquam, democratic staff to the Committee on Energy and Water issues; Kristin Nicholson, chief of staff to Congressman James Langevin (D-RI); Robert J. Wittman (R-VA, 1st District), member of the U.S. House of Representatives; Timothy J. Alberta, senior political correspondent and former leadership reporter for the National Journal; Mark Harkins, senior fellow at the GAI; David Wasserman, House editor of “The Cook Political Report;” Josh Gordon, policy director of The Concord Coalition; John T. Anderson, staff director for the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives; Nicole T. Carter, specialist in Natural Resources Policy, Congressional Research Service; and Matthew Fuller, who covers House leadership for CQ Roll Call.

In addition to attending the GAI, the ELs observed committee meetings at the Rayburn House Office

building as well as floor action in the Senate and House of Representatives, visited the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters and toured the Pentagon in Arlington, Va.



Front row: Charles Carson (MVD), Rachel Lopez (MVS), George Stringham (MVP), Pamela Harrion (MVD), Wesley Morgan (MVN) and LeeAnn Riggs (MVK).

Back row: Michael Krehely (MVN), Joshua VerDught (MVS), John Campbell (MVN), Kathryn McCain (MVS) and Andrew Goodall (MVR).



Emerging Leaders meet with USACE Senior Leaders at Headquarters

by Kat McCain, Ph.D.
St. Louis District

After a week of learning about how Congress works, Mississippi Valley Division ELs, along with ELs from the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, South Atlantic Division and South Pacific Division, had an opportunity to meet with senior leaders at USACE headquarters. ELs received leadership insights from Yvonne Prettyman, deputy chief, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division’s Regional Integration Team; James Dalton, chief, Engineering & Construction; Doug Lamont, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, Project Planning and Review; Bob Leach, Operations and Regulatory;

Mark Mazzanti, chief, Programs Integration Division; Wes Coleman, chief, Office of Water Project Review; Dave Wettington, Future Directions Branch; and Maj. Gen. John Peabody, deputy commanding general, Civil and Emergency Operations. The re-occurring themes shared by USACE senior leaders included the importance of communication, taking care of people, maintaining a passion for what you do and as Maj. Gen. Peabody stated, “Lead from the Front – Focus, Decide, Delegate and Deliver.” The interaction among the ELs and senior leaders was a great learning opportunity.

Vicksburg District – Upcoming Recreation Events

MISSISSIPPI

Arkabutla Lake

- May 16-22 – National Safe Boating Week activities.

Enid Lake

- May 6 – Water Safety Awareness Day, Hickory Ridge.
- May 16-22 -- National Safe Boating Week activities.
- May 22-24 – Southern Traditional Archery Tournament, Persimmon Hill.

Sardis Lake

- May 9 – Magnolia Crappie Tournament, Engineer Point.
- May 16-22 – National Safe Boating Week activities.
- May 24 – St. Jude’s Bass Classic, Engineers Point.

Grenada Lake

- May 2 – Duathlon, Dam Area Central.
- May 16-22 – National Safe Boating Week activities.
- May 23 – Josh Anderson Memorial Shoot, Piney Woods.

ARKANSAS

DeGray Lake

- May 2-3 – Off Road Triathlon, Iron Mountain Trail System.
- May 16 – Arkansas Team Bass Trail, Spillway.
- May 16-22 – National Safe Boating Week activities/
- May 29-30 – Fire Boat School, Spillway.

Lake Greeson

- May 16-22 – National Safe Boating Week activities.

Lake Ouachita

- May 9 – 9th Annual Perry Kilby Fishing Tournament, Joplin.
- May 16-22 – National Safe Boating Week activities.

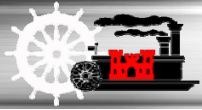
LOUISIANA

Louisiana Field Office

- May 16-22 – National Safe Boating Week activities.

J. Bennett Johnston Waterway

- May 8-9 – 10th Annual Water Resources Festival.



St. Louis District Volunteers Make a Difference

Romanda Walker
St. Louis District Public Affairs

Volunteers play an invaluable role in helping the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers meet our recreation and environmental stewardship program goals. Each year, volunteers give their time, expertise and resources to serve the more than 17 million visitors who enjoy St. Louis District managed lands and waters.

Corps of Engineers volunteers are people who want to give back to their communities and are interested in the work of the Corps natural resource management program. They are parents who want to bring their family out for a day of service together, retirees willing to share a wealth of knowledge and experience, outdoor enthusiasts wishing to create and maintain their favorite recreation opportunities, and concerned citizens of all ages interested in making meaningful contributions.

“Volunteers with the Corps of Engineers are a vital part of the natural resource management program. With limited resources, volunteers allow us to stretch our manpower, helping us to increase our interaction with visitors and the community,” Erin Hilligoss-Volkman, park ranger and

Whether it is an environmental ethic, a love of parks, or enthusiasm for the outdoors, like-minded volunteers gather to share their passions while contributing to the good of their communities. (Photo by Wappapello Lake)



volunteer coordinator with the Rivers Project Office said.

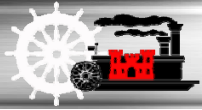
Whether it is an environmental ethic, a love of parks, or enthusiasm for the outdoors, like-minded volunteers gather to share their passions while contributing to the good of their communities. They also provide a valuable service to the nation. During the 2014 fiscal year 3,231 total volunteers donated 74,961 hours in the St. Louis District. The dollar value of their service totaled \$1,690,370. More than 186 partnerships also provide volunteers to help support the work of the St. Louis District – with the value of volunteer services being \$699,952.

Volunteers serve as park and campground hosts, staff visitor centers, lead tours and educational activities, clean shorelines, restore fish and wildlife habitat, manage cultural resources, perform administrative duties, work with computers and other technical equipment, maintain Corps facilities, and much more.

If you are interested in finding volunteering opportunities with the Corps of Engineers, there are a numbers of ways to do so: You may contact the lake or river project nearest to you; visit the Volunteer Clearinghouse, a national information center at www.corpslakes.us/volunteer/; visit www.volunteer.gov; or call: 1-800-VOL-TEER (800-865-8337).



Volunteers help staff at the Riverlands Project Office during National Public Lands Day. (Photo by National Great Rivers Museum)



Monday, May 25th

Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day and was initiated to honor the soldiers for the Union and Confederate armies who died during the American Civil War.

Celebrations honoring Civil War heroes started the year after the war ended. The establishment of a public holiday was meant to unify the celebration as a national day of remembrance instead of a holiday celebrated separately by the Union and Confederate states. By the late 19th century, the holiday became known as Memorial Day and was expanded to include the deceased veterans of all the wars fought by American forces. In 1971, Memorial Day became a federal holiday.

The original national celebration of Decoration Day took place May 30, 1868. When Memorial Day became a federal holiday, it was given the floating date of the last Monday in May. Since many companies close for the holiday, Memorial Day weekend is three days long

for most people. It is the unofficial beginning of the summer vacation season that lasts until the first Monday in September, which is Labor Day.

During the Memorial Day weekend, many families visit war memorials and military cemeteries to honor the dead veterans especially if they include relatives. At Washington, D.C.'s Arlington Cemetery, members of the U.S. Army and volunteers place small United States flags at exactly the same spot at each tombstone. The nationwide display of patriotism is touching and inspiring.

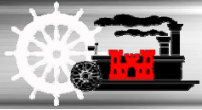
Lately, families also visit civilian cemeteries to honor dead relatives who never served in the armed forces.

Many people spend the weekend boating at a local lake.

Family reunions are frequently held on Memorial Day. Extended families gather to eat, barbecue, play games and enjoy the company of their loved ones.

In Vicksburg: The Memorial Day Parade of Veterans will travel north along Washington Street from Belmont to Jackson streets beginning at 10:00 a.m. The memorial service begins at 11:00 a.m. at the Vicksburg City Auditorium, 901 Monroe Street. The wreath-laying ceremony will begin at 1:00 p.m. in the National Cemetery with a motorcade to the cemetery by way of Fort Hill Drive.





Spring and Summer Safety

Ed McNamara
MVD Safety Officer

Despite the sometimes cooler weather, spring is now here. Clocks have “sprung forward” and days are longer. We and our neighbors will be more visible after emerging from our winter cocoons. Activities will increase.

It’s difficult to write about spring safety for those in our area of the country. Spring and summer merge so suddenly that they are almost one season! With that in mind, here are some reminders to include risk management with the seasonal changes:

PHYSICAL SAFETY

Many become more active as winter fades to warmer weather. Whether its exercise or strenuous home projects, be mindful of body limitations. Risk management compels us to consider our strength, flexibility and balance. Know your boundaries.

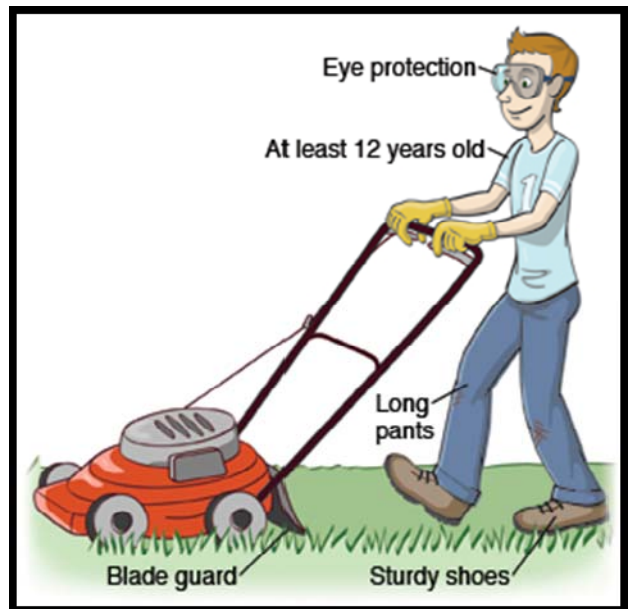
HOME SAFETY

This is the time of year to break out the ladders; therefore, please note that Emergency Rooms treat about 145,000

people each year due to a variety of ladder mishaps. Risk management compels us to consider what, where and how we are using our ladders. Of course, this assumes the ladder is in good condition! Also keep in mind that children and grandchildren can be very inquisitive; so ensure all tools and chemicals are inaccessible.

LAWN SAFETY

Every year, more than 50,000 people are injured while using mowers, trimmers, edgers, pruners and power saws. Risk management compels us to read and follow the manufacturer’s guidance. Wear appropriate protective clothing – shoes, safety glasses, hearing protection, etc., as needed. Also, be mindful of lawn chemicals used: read and follow the manufacturer’s guidance.



✓ Risk Management compels us to be environmentally aware Don’t be ignorant of biological hazards - poison ivy, poison sumac, ticks and even chiggers can bring an unpleasant conclusion to a very enjoyable outing.

✓ When swimming or boating, know your limitations and those of your children and grandchildren. Always use appropriate personal floatation devices.

✓ Protect your skin with a good sunscreen or long-sleeved shirt and hat.

RECREATION SAFETY

Recreation includes an abundance of activities – sports, camping, boating, grilling and more.

✓ Check your gear; ensure it’s in good condition

Most of us know and follow these safety tips. Some we learned on our own, some by watching another’s mistake!

This is just a gentle reminder to consider risk management as we re-enter long days, sunshine and more activity.



Welcome Aboard!



Matt Mallard
Planning Specialist,
Regional Planning &
Environmental Division
South (RPEDS)

Matt is from Enterprise, Miss. He and his wife, Jennifer (*chief of Regulatory, Vicksburg District*), have two sons, Evan (5) and Owen (3).

Matt's past assignments include lead plan formulator, Watershed Studies Section RPEDS; biologist, Upper Delta Environmental Planning Section RPEDS; and biologist, Environmental and Economic Analysis Branch, Vicksburg District. Matt served in a developmental assignment as a project manager, Project Management Branch, Vicksburg District, and also served as the acting chief, Upper Delta Environmental Planning Section RPEDS since March 2013.

Matt enjoys spending time fishing on the Chunky River and adds that "any day spent in the woods is a good day."



Capt. Zachary Rozar
Aide-de-Camp to the
Commanding General

Capt. Rozar is from Cookeville, Tenn. He comes to Vicksburg from Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Prior to that he was at Fort Bragg, N.C., and served in the 82d Airborne Division.

Rozar went to school at Tennessee Tech University, and just this month earned his master's degree in engineering management from Missouri University of Science and Technology. Congratulations!!

He and his wife, Jenna, have a daughter, Hallie Grace (3.5), and a son (Alex) due in August.

His hobbies include wood-working, shooting, camping and brewing beer.



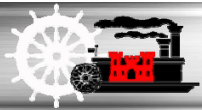
Marlan Snodgrass
Assistant Director,
Office of Small Business
Programs

Marlan comes to the division from Bahrain where she served as the contracting officer for the Naval Support Activity. She has 25+ years of contracting experience.

Previous assignments include contracting officer for the Naval Air Station, Lemoore, Calif.; contracting officer for the Dept. of Defense Dependent Schools, Pacific Division, Okinawa, Japan; and administrative contracting officer for Edwards Air Force Base, Edwards, Calif.

Marlan and her husband, Henry (a retired Marine) have five adult children.

Marlan has come full circle as a Dept. of Defense civilian, having worked for the Army (USACE), Navy, Air Force and Marines over the past 32 years.



Welcome Aboard!



Sam Treubel
Emergency Management
Assistant, Readiness &
Contingency Operations

Sam comes to the division from the Engineer Research and Development Center where she worked for the Resource Management Office and Environmental Laboratory.

Prior to joining the federal government, Ms. Treubel held positions in a variety of administrative capacities including serving with the Mississippi Gaming Commission's Enforcement Division and Applied Research Associates, Inc.

Sam attended Hinds Community College and has more than 15 years of combined administrative support and budget/financial experience.

Ms. Treubel is a native of Vicksburg, Miss. She and her husband, Leon Pugh, have two sons, Ty (16) and Gage (12). In their spare time, Sam and her family enjoy the outdoors, camping, hunting, fishing and watching movies.



Jill Jackson
Office of Research &
Technology Transfer
Liaison, Readiness &
Contingency Operations

Jill was recently selected for a six-month developmental assignment from ERDC as the Office of Research and Technology Transfer liaison to the division RCO office.

As a request for information & training coordinator for the USACE Reachback Operations Center (UROC), Ms. Jackson will assist in providing technology transfer, emergency management assistance, training and equipment readiness for all hazards contingency operations in support of the division.

Ms. Jackson received her bachelor's and master's degrees in geology from the College of Arts and Sciences at Mississippi State University in 1999 and 2002, respectfully.

Jill has two sons, Will and Colby, and spends her weekends at the baseball fields watching her boys play ball.



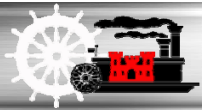
Keysha McDonald
Management Analyst,
Business Management
Division

Keysha has joined the division for a 90-day detail assignment. She will serve as the regional conference manager, coordinate all conference requests received from the district conference coordinators and MVD staff, provide guidance and training to division and district staff on preparing conference approval packets, and make regular contact with HQUSACE to track status and obtain the latest guidance.

Ms. McDonald will also serve in a support capacity to the regional business director and the chief of Business Management Division for the purpose of facilitating regional business center operations and development activities within the division headquarters.

Ms. McDonald has two children: a son, Dewayne (16), and a daughter, Kemari (13).

Her hobbies include spending time with family and working out (anything fitness related)!



Welcome Aboard!

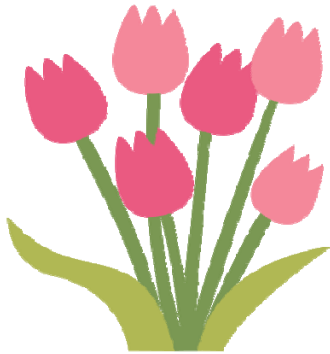


Staff Sgt. Anthony Pee
Operations
Noncommissioned Officer,
Readiness & Contingency
Operations

Staff Sgt. (P) Pee has been in the Army for 11 years. He is married to Specialist Tarrah R. Pee and they have one son, Gabriel.

In his spare time he enjoys working on cars, computers and spending time with his family.

HAPPY Mother's DAY



Don't forget
Mother's Day -
Sunday, May 10th



Cinco de Mayo (Spanish for "fifth of May") is a celebration held on May 5. It is celebrated in the United States and in Mexico, primarily in the state of Puebla, where the holiday is called *El Día de la Batalla de Puebla* (English: The Day of the Battle of Puebla). Mexican Americans also often see the day as a source of pride; one way they can honor their ethnicity is to celebrate this day.

The date is observed to commemorate the Mexican army's unlikely victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, under the leadership of General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo is sometimes mistaken to be Mexico's Independence Day—the most important national holiday in Mexico—which is celebrated on September 16.

The Battle of Puebla was important for at least two reasons. First, although considerably outnumbered, the Mexicans defeated a much better-equipped French army. The 4,000 Mexican soldiers were greatly outnumbered by the well-equipped French army of 8,000 that had not been defeated for almost 50 years. Second, since the Battle of Puebla, no country in the Americas has subsequently been invaded by any other European military force.



Open Channels
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

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Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr

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