

World Bank delegation visits the Mississippi Valley Division for information exchange

By Pamela Harrion, MVD Public Affairs, and Jim Pogue, Memphis District Public Affairs

The Mississippi Valley Division and Mississippi River Commission hosted 15 World Bank-sponsored officials from the south Asian nations of Bhutan and Bangladesh to the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) footprint. The officials visited New Madrid, Memphis, Greenville and Vicksburg (the MRC/Engineer Research and Development Center) between Nov. 18-20.

The purpose of the visit was to exchange information and to learn more about how MVD and its local partners work together to manage the Mississippi River.

The Brahmaputra River is about 1,800 miles long. It originates in glaciers on the northern side of the Himalayas of Tibet as the Yarlung Tsangpo River in China. From there it winds through Bangladesh, is fed by tributary rivers in Bhutan and finally joins with the iconic Ganges River before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

Like the Mississippi River, the Brahmaputra River is prone to frequent flooding, often on a devastating scale. Bangladesh's Minister of Water Resources Anisul Islam



MVD Chief of Public Affairs Bob Anderson and MVD Hydraulic Engineer Jonathan Ashley standing in front of the MRC building with the World Bank delegation Nov. 20. (Photo by Pamela Harrion)

Mahmud was the senior member of the visiting group. He said in a typical flood season as much as 38 percent of his country is inundated by water. In a severe flood, this can rise to as much as 62 percent.

Mississippi River Commission Director Stephen Gambrell was the official host for the group's visit to the Mississippi Valley region.

"Our relationship with the World Bank and the countries of Bangladesh and Bhutan provides a dialogue setting where we learn and challenge critical water

approaches and investments together," Gambrell said. "As thinking practitioners we help each other better define more comprehensive water approaches and encourage the development of solutions that include the local people's voice and knowledge. Our future of working

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Around the Bend



Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr
Commander,
Mississippi Valley Division

President,
Mississippi River Commission

MVD Team,

This month was highly productive and included a congressional roundtable; two waterways symposiums; and site visits from an international delegation from the World Bank, the China Minister of Water Resources Chen Lei and the Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Mark A. Milley. All of the activities required a great team effort and vital support from our MVD Team.

I also spent two days in St. Paul as part of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMBRA) group meeting, as did the district commanders from the upper three districts. UMBRA facilitates dialogue and cooperative action regarding water and related land resource issues and is very supportive of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program and navigation. The visit also gave me the opportunity honor Lt. Col. Thompson at the end of his tour as the St. Paul deputy commander.

In addition, the MVD regional team was notified that we have been selected to provide engineering and contracting support services for two projects located in Afghanistan. The project delivery teams for the engineering effort have been established and are comprised of engineering staff from all six districts in MVD. A plan of execution is being developed.

A delegation from the World Bank, with members from Bangladesh and Bhutan, visited the MR&T project footprint Nov. 18-20 with stops and discussions at New Madrid, Memphis, Greenville and Vicksburg.

The flexibility and professionalism displayed by Col. Hansen’s team in New Orleans continues to greatly impress. Just one week after the highly successful Transportation and Infrastructure Congressional Delegation roundtable and tour, the district pulled off another immensely successful mission involving the China Minister of Water Resources, Chen Lei.

The MVD Team is establishing continuity during transitions at the districts. Rock Island and Memphis districts recently held corporate level hiring panels to select new deputy program managers (DPM) to replace Gary Meden upon his retirement and Jim Bodron upon his move to the MVD Programs Directorate.

In addition, the MVD Team welcomed the Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley in New Orleans, Louisiana, Dec. 11. Gen. Milley attended the World War II Museum Ribbon Cutting for the new “Road to Tokyo” exhibit hall. He also did a flyover of the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.

Deborah and I wish all of you a safe and blessed holiday season.

Building Strong,
MG Mike Wehr



Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr and Gen. Mark Milley view the back side of the surge barrier gate in its closed configuration. Window view shows eastern half of the sector gate.



Around the Bend (continued from page 2)



(Left) Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr, MVD commander, tours the construction site of the St. Croix River Bridge, which will connect Oak Park Heights, Minnesota, and St. Joseph, Wisconsin, when it is completed in the fall of 2016. (USACE photo by Ben Watson)



(Right) Col. Dan Koprowski, St. Paul District commander, presents the Meritorious Service Medal to Lt. Col. Chris Thompson at his farewell ceremony Nov. 19. Thompson is leaving the St. Paul District to take command of the 864th Engineer Battalion, Fort Lewis, Washington. (USACE photo by Emily Chavolla)



(Center) Cpl. Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams, the last surviving Medal of Honor (MoH) recipient from Iwo Jima, was awarded the WWII MoH at the National WWII Museum Dec. 11. Gen. Mark A. Milley, 39th Chief of Staff of the Army, was the keynote speaker at the event. Also pictured is MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr (left) and his Aide-de-Camp Zachary Rozar.



World Bank delegation... *(continued from page 1)*

together is strong because of Junaid Ahmad and his team of professionals at the World Bank.”

During the group’s visit to the region, they met Memphis District Commander Col. Jeff Anderson and other leaders, the Hon. R.D. James (MRC member), and Dustin Boatright (chief engineer of the Little River Drainage District); toured the Mississippi River Commission building; listened to a presentation from Jonathan Ashley, MVD hydraulic engineer, on the “Room for the River” approach to Mississippi River management, MVD’s work to minimize flood risk and the economic impact of the river on the nation, as well as a presentation from Dr. Barbara Kleiss, Mississippi River Science and Technology director, on the MR&T’s Mississippi River Geomorphology and Potamology Program; and toured the Lower Mississippi River Museum and USACE Engineer Research and Development Center.



(Right) Dr. Barbara Kleiss, Mississippi River Science and Technology director, presents information on the MR&T’s Mississippi River Geomorphology and Potamology Program to World Bank officials during their visit at the MRC building Nov. 20. *(Photo by Pamela Harrion)*

Retirements



(Right) MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr presented Rayford Wilbanks (Lower District Support Team leader and chief/planning director, Ecosystem Planning Center of Expertise), with a MRC print and MVD coins during Wilbanks’ retirement ceremony Dec. 8, 2015. *(Photo by Alfred Dulaney)*

(“Retirements” continued on page 7)



Arlington to restore historic gates for future use

By Matt Bernfeld, ANC
Public Affairs Office

Arlington National Cemetery is working with a Seattle-based team of forensic and preservation experts and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Curation and Archives Analysis Branch, St. Louis District, to assess the condition and restore the historic stone columns that were once used for the Ord-Weitzel and Sheridan Gates. The gates were used as the cemetery's entrances on its eastern boundary for near 100 years.

Once restored, the columns will be reassembled and reused in the cemetery; the exact location future location is still being determined.

The columns were originally erected in the portico of the old War Department building in Washington, D.C. After that building was demolished in 1879, Brig. Gen. Montgomery Meigs, who was then the Quartermaster of the Army, had them moved to Arlington.

As the cemetery grew, so did the vehicles traveling in and out of its entrances. By the mid-1900s, the gates were no longer able to accommodate the trucks and construction equipment that were vital to the cemetery's expansion. When Arlington's boundaries were extended to include the south post area of Fort Myer in 1971, the



Pictured are urns prior to restoration.



Pictured are urns after restoration.

gates became obsolete and the columns were placed in the cemetery's outdoor storage area located on the border of the cemetery and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

In July, contractors moved the disassembled columns from their former outdoors storage area to the cemetery's maintenance area for further evaluation.

Forensic investigators and historic preservation experts, Mark Liebman, and his son, Alec, then

cataloged and assessed the condition of the columns. The team used several state-of-the-art techniques to extensively evaluate the columns and the integrity inside the stone, including ground penetrating radar, ultrasonics (uses sound waves), impact echo (uses stress waves) and microscopy. They also used a technique called drill resistance which has been used in restoration efforts on the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Pisa, Italy. The techniques showed that the columns were predominantly intact.

“Now that we know they can be reconstructed, we are documenting where repairs and replacements need to be made and cataloguing the pieces so they can be put it back together, like a jigsaw puzzle,” said Mark Liebman.

Following the preservation analysis, the National Park Service's Historic American Building Survey will scan, measure, and

develop drawings for the column restoration. A team of iron conservationists will also be brought in to assess the wrought iron components of the gates.

Dr. Michael Trimble, chief of the archives analysis branch, is overseeing the project and he, along with the other experts, will put together a report by October that includes a restoration plan.



St. Paul District hydraulic engineer recognized for floodplain management

By Shannon Bauer, St. Paul District Public Affairs

Terry Zien, St. Paul District hydraulic engineer, received the annual Floodplain Manager Award for distinguished service in floodplain management at the Minnesota Association of Floodplain Managers, or MnAFPM, conference in Moorhead, Minnesota, Nov. 19.

He was nominated by a number of Minnesota state agencies. The MnAFPM annual conference attendees consist of federal, state and local government officials, planners, engineers, consultants, researchers, educators, watershed organizations, realtors, appraisers and insurance agents. The conference agenda focuses on hydrologic



Terry Zien

and hydraulic modeling, recovery programs, flood control projects, stream restorations, case studies and mapping.

For the past nine years, Zien has managed the Flood Plain Management Services and Planning Assistance to States programs at the St. Paul District. Mr. Zien has also served as the St. Paul District Silver Jackets Coordinator for Minnesota and Wisconsin and as a co-lead for North Dakota for the past seven years. Silver Jackets is a program that provides an opportunity to consistently bring together multiple states, federal, tribal and local agencies to learn from one another in the area of flood risk management and apply this knowledge to reduce risk.

Thatcher Shepard drowns the competition with record-setting swims

By Bob Anderson, MVD Public Affairs

Retired Col. George (Thatch) Shepard, new deputy chief, Upper District Support Team, could claim that his exceptional talent as the St. Andrew's Episcopal School swimming coach led to his son Thatcher's selection to the Mississippi Preps' Boys All State Swimming First Team. But he's not that kind of person or coach – he's just proud his son has worked extremely hard to become one of the best swimmers in the state and region.

And what an exceptional swimmer he is – Thatcher recently won the High School 200-meter free style (1:48.82) and 100-meter breaststroke (1:03.14) at the Class I championships. As the team captain, Thatcher also led St. Andrew's to gold medals in the 200 medley and 400 free relays.

Just this season alone, Thatcher accumulated four gold medals at the state championship in Tupelo, where he also holds one individual state record (500 Free) and two relay records. This year also marks the 3rd state championship for the St. Andrew's team. (Maybe Coach Shepard is a pretty good teacher after all.)

Thatcher has also been an excellent overall athlete during his high school career (swimming, cross country and track). He has earned 13 varsity letters, eight MHSAA State Championships, seven All-State selections, nine gold medals, six silver medals and three bronze medals.

When you add in all of daughter Molly's athletic successes (she was a school MVP at St. Andrews), the Shepard's will need an addition to their home to hold all of the family's trophies.



Thatcher Shepard



Retirements *(continued from page 4)*



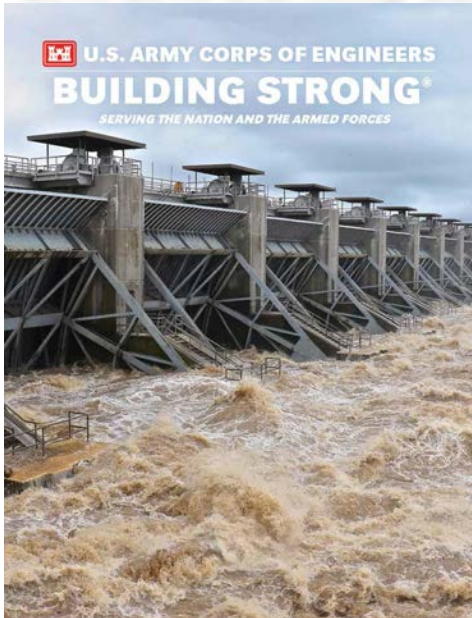
MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr (4th from right) and staff recently presented Vicksburg District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Rhudy (4th from left), who has retired from the district, a two-star note and MVD coins during a gathering at the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) building Dec. 10. Also pictured (from left to right) are MVD Executive Secretary Becky Fuson, Vicksburg District Deputy for Programs and Project Management Patricia Hemphill, Maj. Jeffrey D. Shultz (who will be replacing Lt. Col. Rhudy), Vicksburg District Commander Col. John Cross, MVD Deputy Commander Michael Derosier, MVD Aide-de-Camp Capt. Zachary Rozar and MVD Business Resource Division Chief Joe Lemons. *(Photo by Pamela Harrion)*



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr (7th from left) and staff recently presented Donna Roberts (5th from left) with a building print and MVD coin during a retirement ceremony in her honor Dec. 16. Also pictured (from left to right) are Mincer Minor, Rayford Wilbanks, Donna Roberts' husband George, Don Balch, Jim Bodron, Brian Chewning, Becky Brown, Sarah Palmer, Matt Mallard, Gary Young, Stephen Stuart and Lee Robinson. *(Photo by Pamela Harrion)*



2015-2016 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Building Strong®



The new 2015-2016 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Building Strong®: Serving the Nation and the Armed Forces digital publication is now available ([click here](#)). Building Strong is a great overview of recent USACE work.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



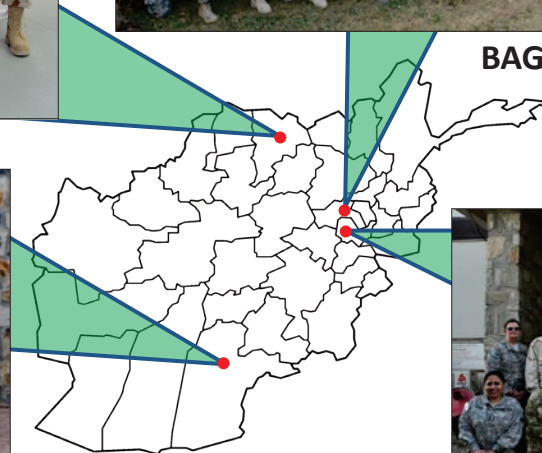
MARMAL



BAGRAM



KANDAHAR



KABUL

FROM THE USACE TAA FAMILY



Welcome Aboard!



Joey Windham
Watershed Division Chief

MVD congratulates Joey Windham as the next chief, Watershed Division at MVD! Joey is currently transitioning into the position and will replace Chuck Shadie in January 2016.

Mr. Windham brings a broad range of experience in river engineering and water management with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He comes to MVD from his current post as chief, Hydrologic & Hydraulics Branch, Vicksburg District. Prior to his current post, he served as the chief, Modeling, Mapping and Consequence Production Center (MMC) and played a major role in both creating and standing up the MMC organization from its start. His leadership contributed greatly to the MMC becoming the nation's leading organization for developing hydraulic models and consequence analysis of the Corps inventory of dams and levees and developing its highly respected reputation as a National Mandatory Center of Expertise. He has a solid record of demonstrated leadership in river engineering and water management issues and the ability to articulate those issues in a clear and understandable manner to senior leaders, stakeholders and local partners to support this nation's vital civil works missions.

Again, a huge congratulations to Joey and his family as he takes on this critical position on the team for the Division, USACE and the Mississippi River Commission!

MVD also congratulates John "Chris" Brock as the new antiterrorism (AT) specialist (HQUSACE contractor) assigned to the MVD Security & Law Enforcement Office.

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 Commander Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr (center) and MVD's district commanders recently attended the Mississippi Flood Control Association meeting Dec. 3-5 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Pictured (left to right) are Memphis District Commander Col. Jeffery A. Anderson, Rock Island District Commander Col. Craig Baumgartner, St. Louis District Commander Col. Anthony Mitchell, New Orleans District Commander Col. Richard L. Hansen, MVD Deputy Commander Col. Michael C. Derosier and Vicksburg District Commander Col. John W. Cross.

**The Mississippi Valley Division
wishes you and your families...**

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



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