



News Release

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Mississippi Valley Division/
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Mississippi Valley Division Awards Day

VICKSBURG, Miss., June 13, 2005 -- The Mississippi Valley Division/Mississippi River Commission (MVD/MRC), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, held its annual awards ceremony Monday, June 13. The following awards were presented:

GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES



Mr. Dan W. Renfro was posthumously inducted into the Mississippi River Commission Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees.

A special ceremony was held following the Engineer Day Awards ceremony, where a plaque with an engraved portrait of Mr. Renfro was placed on a gallery board displaying plaques of previously selected members.

The Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees was established in 1970 as a means of recognizing outstanding retired civilian employees of the Mississippi Valley Division/Mississippi River Commission.

Mr. Renfro retired in March 2000, as Chief of Construction-Operations Division, with over 35 years of federal service. He was the 49th inductee to the gallery since its inception.

Mr. Renfro provided 26 years of distinguished service and support to the Mississippi Valley Division/Mississippi River Commission, which included nine years with the Memphis District, 13 years with the Vicksburg District and four years at the MVD/MRC headquarters.

After his retirement, and until his death in August of 2003, Mr. Renfro was a dedicated partner and continued supporter of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers serving as the Executive Vice President of the Mississippi Valley Branch of the Associated General Contractors of America.

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Mr. Renfro was a recognized leader and team builder. His many achievements and reputation are the result of his lifelong commitment to serving the Nation and the Army through the many Corps' offices he worked. He is deeply missed by all who had the distinct privilege of working with him during his many years of dedicated service to MVD and our great Nation.

ERNEST P. BLANKENSHIP AWARDS

The Blankenship awards are among the highest honorary awards presented to Mississippi Valley Division employees by the local commander. The awards cover three categories: engineer/scientist, professional and technical/administrative. Established in 1987, they memorialize the commitment, dedication and knowledge of the long-time Mississippi Valley Division Executive Assistant, who died in 1973.

Engineer/Scientist Award



Mr. Ben G. Ruff, Jr., was the recipient of the Ernest P. Blankenship Engineer/Scientist Award. He is a civil engineer in the Programs Directorate.

Mr. Ruff was recognized for his exceptional service to the Corps of Engineers as project manager for the Upper Mississippi River–Illinois Waterway System Navigation Feasibility Study.

Mr. Ruff exhibited extraordinary vision, innovation, selfless service and determination in the successful restructuring and completion of this complex feasibility study. The study recommends a dual-purpose navigation efficiency and ecosystem restoration plan that is one of the first of its kind, and will help ensure the long-term economic viability and environmental vitality of this nationally significant river system.

Mr. Ruff's outstanding regional level perspective provided an essential ingredient to the successful completion of the study's feasibility report and environmental impact statement.

Professional Award

Ms. Pat Daniel received the Ernest P. Blankenship Professional Award. Ms. Daniel, a management analyst in the Business Resource Division, was recognized for the significant contributions she made to enhance the division's operating performance during the past year.

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3-3-3 Awards Day

Ms. Daniel accepted the challenge to lead the division's effort for the Command Management Review, the Management Control Program and the Army Suggestion Program. She also facilitated and assisted on many special programs -- in particular regional rates implementation for the division.

Technical/Administrative Award



Ms. Cassandra Lee was the recipient of the Ernest P. Blankenship Technical/Administrative Award. Ms. Lee is an office automation assistant in Business Management Division.

During the past year Ms. Lee was moved from an administrative support position to a lead administrative assistant position. This challenge was very complicated since she was required to provide administrative support to two separate divisions within the directorate, both with large staffs.

Ms. Lee ensured employee requirements were met and in compliance with all applicable regulations. She initiated many actions to educate the staff on various regulations and developed new ways of doing business to streamline the administrative needs and purposes to benefit all.

WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD



Ms. Ann Bargains was the recipient of the Mississippi Valley Division Woman of the Year Award. She is the division's Equal Employment Opportunity Manager.

Ms. Bargains was recognized for her service over the past year to employees and students within the Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg District and the Engineer Research and Development Center regarding educational and professional development.

She often met with non-scientific employees to discuss career paths, helping them work through issues related to higher educational attainment and financial planning to achieve higher education.

Ms. Bargains advised employees regarding developmental assignments and provided guidance that assisted female employees in reaching the high point of their careers. In addition she coached students, encouraging them to stay in school or to enter academic programs that would better prepare them for employment opportunities and advancement in their chosen career fields.

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4-4-4 Awards Day

In addition to volunteering for various events and activities at the division, Ms. Bargains also volunteered in the community, assisting at the Vicksburg Child Abuse Prevention Agency and the Abused Women's Shelter. She also worked with the Vicksburg-Warren County Jackson State University National Alumni Association to raise money for scholarships provided to students in the Vicksburg community.

COMMANDER'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY



Colonel Richard B. Jenkins, Deputy Commander for the Mississippi Valley Division, was the recipient of the Commander's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO).

Col. Jenkins was recognized for his support to the EEO Office before, during and after the transition of the division EEO Manager from division staff to Corps headquarters staff.

His insistence that the EEO Office sustain no collateral damage in the transition was manifested in the changes he made to new policy – policy which required that all support to the division EEO office be provided by Corps headquarters.

Col. Jenkins changed the new policy to ensure that the division's EEO Manager received support from within the division. He worked diligently to ensure there were adequate resources, at all times, for meeting the needs of the EEO Office in responding to the division, its districts, its customers and the community.

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Certificates of Achievement were presented to Ms. Becky Brown and Mrs. Cecilia Robertson.

Ms. Brown is the administrative support assistant to the Deputy Director of the National Center for Ecosystem Restoration.

During the past year, through initiative and personal diligence, Ms. Brown coordinated and managed the development of the center's logo, web site, portable display and brochure.

In addition, she exhibited high levels of skill and initiative by developing a document suspense tracking system. Her exemplary work habits significantly contributed to the ecosystem center's high performance and morale.

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Mrs. Robertson is the administrative support assistant to the Chief of Business Technical Division.

During the past year, Mrs. Robertson continually demonstrated skill and initiative in developing better budget-tracking programs related to effective management of overhead costs and training/travel budgets for the division. She also volunteered to provide administrative support to the Regional Business Directorate and the Executive Office.

She demonstrated the highest level of personal diligence and mission responsibility, always willing to work late and work on challenging assignments.

COMMANDER'S AWARD FOR CIVILIAN SERVICE

Commander's Awards for Civilian Service were presented to Mrs. Babs Hearn and Mr. Stan McAlpin.

Mrs. Hearn was commended for the performance of her duties during the past year as the budget analyst in the Budget Office. She exhibited outstanding professional abilities, quality leadership and noteworthy initiative in carrying out her responsibilities.

She demonstrated forward thinking and planning to achieve efficiencies in obtaining and capturing budget data that assisted with multiple tasks. In addition, Mrs. Hearn was a mentor to numerous co-workers and an exceptional team player.

Mr. McAlpin was recognized for his efforts that went above and beyond his normal duties as a project manager on the division's Memphis-Vicksburg District Support Team.

During July 2004 to June 2005, Mr. McAlpin served as the project manager for both the Memphis and Vicksburg Districts. With minimal assistance, Mr. McAlpin professionally used his skills, talents and expertise to ensure the vital missions of the job were accomplished in a timely manner.

His dedication, professionalism and spirit of working toward the success of the Corps mission were continuously demonstrated.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

Thirty-two employees, representing 875 years of federal service, received length of service certificates, ranging from 15 to 40 years of service.