

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

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Mississippi Valley Division Awards Day

VICKSBURG, Miss., June 20, 2008 -- The Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, held its annual awards ceremony Thursday, June 19. The following awards were presented:

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. Duane Stagg, a licensed civil engineer in the Business Technical Division, was the recipient of the Ernest P. Blankenship Engineer/Scientist Award. Mr. Stagg was recognized for the outstanding performance of his duties as part of the Corps' Dam Safety team.

During the past year, he served on three national committees responsible for charting the future of dam safety in the Corps of Engineers. As a member of the National Dam Safety Steering Committee, he helped determine the future of the Dam Safety Program and assure that the concerns of Corps district offices are properly represented.

Mr. Stagg was involved in the communications efforts at Corps headquarters level as a member of the Dam Safety Policy and Procedures Committee; and served as a Dam Safety Representative for Corps headquarters on the Flood and Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Committee where he helped prioritize the research and development efforts within the Corps.

Mr. Stagg is also the Corps headquarters proponent for the Dam Safety PROSPECT Class where he modifies the class yearly to stay in tune with changes to the Dam Safety Program. He also teaches portions of the class.

Due in large part to Mr. Stagg's efforts, the Mississippi Valley Division has one of the most successful Dam Safety Programs within the Corps of Engineers.

Professional Award



Mrs. Lexine Cool received the Ernest P. Blankenship Professional Award. Mrs. Cool is a Program Analyst in the Civil Works Integration Division.

As executive secretary of the regional Program Review Board, Mrs. Cool was not only a key participant in the standardization of regional meetings, but she implemented numerous improvements, as well.

Operating under tight budgets and limited funding, she worked within available resources to steadily improve the regional reporting and tracking of mission and organizational goals.

Mrs. Cool identified and documented a number of regional processes, then developed a database which led to standardization of monthly regional program review board meetings. She also maintained a database of legislative language, greatly increased the standardization of the Command Management Review quarterly reports, and was instrumental in documenting the region's accomplishments for preparation of the annual report on civil works.

Administrative Award



Mrs. Ann Laird, an Executive Assistant in the Programs Directorate, received the Ernest P. Blankenship Technical/ Administrative Award.

In addition to the continued outstanding performance of her assigned duties, Mrs. Laird was recognized for her expert management of the Program Directorate's constantly changing short- and long-term challenges. She ensured that realistic and attainable operating budgets were prepared, and utilized her extensive writing and editorial skills to prepare and review higher level documents, thus reducing the demands on the Directorate staff. Through her own initiative, Mrs. Laird advanced and enhanced the productivity and professionalism of the Programs Directorate.

WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD



Mrs. Beth Guynes received the 2008 Mississippi Valley Division Woman of the Year Award. She is the division's Regulatory and Environmental Compliance Program Manager.

The purpose of this award is to give special recognition to the woman who has evidenced outstanding achievements in her career field, assistance to other women in their advancement, guidance to youth, and/or outstanding community service.

Mrs. Guynes was recognized for her outstanding support to the Mississippi Valley

Division Commander and his staff on controversial regulatory matters, including many that received visibility at Corps headquarters level, as well as for her support to the division's six district regulatory offices.

During the past year, Mrs. Guynes was also a strong supporter of her church and the Vicksburg community; she served as: a member and past president of the Corps of Engineers Chapter of the Vicksburg Warren County Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary, a member of the vestry at St. Alban's Episcopal Church and the president of the St. Alban's Episcopal Church Women organization.

Mrs. Guynes served as a role model for other female employees. She began her career with the Corps Vicksburg District as a GS-5 biological technician, and as a supervisor, Mrs. Guynes fully supported the hiring, training and advancement of women and minorities. She also participated in the Corps mentoring program, showing full support of the program and encouraging others to take advantage of opportunities to improve in their career fields.

COMMANDER'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN EEO



Mr. Charles Barton was the recipient of the Commander's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity.

Mr. Barton was presented the award for his efforts in recruiting, employing and developing minorities and women in increasing levels of responsibility. Through his leadership and personal efforts, opportunities were provided for accomplishing extremely high-priority work, with visibility at the national level.

He displayed outstanding leadership and achievement in implementing effective recruitment strategies which led to improvement in the division's EEO Program. Mr. Barton continually searched for opportunities to improve and enhance development, growth and career advancements among the workforce. His contributions to the EEO program have resulted in increased productivity.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

Twenty-three employees, representing 580 years of federal service, received length of service certificates, ranging from 10 to 40 years of service.