



*Remarks by Brigadier General Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.
Commander, Mississippi Valley Division,
at the Vicksburg District Change of Command
Ceremony, Vicksburg, Mississippi, 7 June 2001*

Let me start by commending Vicksburg District employees Cynthia Sims and Barry Sullivan, as well as the 412th Engineer Command's Color Guard. They were all fantastic. Please join me in a round of applause for their performance.

It's a pleasure for me to be here today and participate in this solemn transfer of authority and responsibility.

It is important that we take time to recognize your outgoing commander and to welcome your incoming commander.

I have great respect for Colonel Bob Crear. He has done well on his watch at the helm of the Vicksburg District.

- Hometown Commander.
- Support for community.
- Enthusiasm, leadership
- Sincere concern.

During his command tour, the district acquired numerous awards, to include:

- The Chief of Engineers' Design and Environmental merit award for the Dredge Disposal facility in Upper Yazoo Projects
- Over the past two years, the District has garnered two Vice Presidential Hammer awards. The first was for the Electronic Design Documentation System.
- The second Hammer award was for the district's efforts in assisting the U.S. Coast Guard in the conceptual development and deployment of the inland waterway portion of the Maritime National Differential Global Positioning System Network.

- In addition, the district received two awards from the Mississippi Consulting Engineers Council. In 1999, the council presented the Vicksburg District with the Engineering Excellence Award for the district's contribution to flood protection in the lower Mississippi Valley. Then last year, the district was awarded the council's 2000 Grand Conceptor Award for their soil nail work on the Natchez Bluff Stabilization project.

Other accomplishments during Colonel Crear's tour include:

- Creation of an annual Business Conference for key customers and suppliers
- Establishment of a Retiree Council and Union Partnership Council
- Partnering agreements were signed with the Association of General Contractors and the Choctaw Nation
- Arkabutla Lake was selected as the 2000 USACE Project of the Year

- Support of emergency efforts in response to Hurricane Floyd, as well as in Kosovo and Macedonia
- Completion of the Lower Pearl River Restoration Project
- The Natchez Bluff stabilization project and Southeast Arkansas Feasibility Study were initiated
- Implementation of the Malcolm Baldrige criteria-based business framework
- The Community Champions program was established - and won the Keep Mississippi Beautiful award
- On-the-Job Training program for the River Unit was established
- Safety Plus Program launched to focus on construction contractor safety

These are, of course, but a few of Colonel Crear's accomplishments. There are many more, and they all reflect the outstanding leadership abilities of an exemplary engineer officer.

Colonel Crear has embodied the core values of integrity, quality, caring, and professionalism that are deeply rooted in this district's culture.

His performance has only been exceeded by that of Reatha -- his resilient, supportive, and steadfast companion in life. To both, I extend the gratitude of a grateful Corps, nation, and this community.

Bob, once again, thanks for a job well done. I wish you health, happiness, and continued success in your next assignment -- as Chief of Staff for the Chief of Engineers.

I know the job won't carry the thrill and excitement of command, but I have no doubt it will only be a holding ground for you enroute to your next command opportunity.

As you leave us, let me extend mine and Margaret's best wishes to you, **Reatha**, and your four children: **Kristi**, **Kimberly**, **Robert Jr.**, and **Reginald**. Come back and visit anytime, but don't bring the HQ staff with you! Godspeed!

Now for your new commander -- Colonel Rick Clapp, I think I've seen him around!

He and his family, wife Robin and children, Rick, Catherine, and Tim, have been in Vicksburg for almost a year with Colonel Clapp serving as the Deputy Division Engineer since last August.

Before coming to MVD, Colonel Clapp served as the Deputy Division Chief of the Joint Warfighting Center's Joint Interoperability Training Division in Norfolk, Virginia.

He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy. He holds master's degrees in civil engineering and construction management. And he has served in combat engineer units as well as other Corps of Engineers facilities.

With the obvious talent and variety of experience he brings to this command, I have every confidence that Colonel Clapp is well suited for the challenges ahead.

Over the past year, he has come to know the valley and the city of Vicksburg. I know he is ready to start this command.

Rick, as you know, the Vicksburg District is an outstanding organization -- trained, experienced, and ready to face the exciting and unique challenges of the 21st Century. Indeed, you have the rare privilege and honor to assume this command.

Lastly, I leave Colonel Clapp with a challenge of my own -- to continue the outstanding traditions of this district, of serving the people who live and work in this great Mississippi River Valley. But don't get lost in the myriad of challenges you will face. Your journey as commander will be quick, savor it -- there is not a better job in our profession. Have fun! Good luck to you and Robin.

Good to be with all of you today. Thank you, and Essayons!