Los Angeles District
NewsCastle

Vol. 42 No. 6 A monthly publication of the Los Angeles District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers June 2012

Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick assumes command of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mrs. Renee' Bostick (left), and Gen. Lloyd J. Austin, U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff places the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pin on Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick's collar after Bostick officially assumed the role as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Engineers and Commanding General. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Dana M. Clark)

WASHINGTON — Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick became the 53rd U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general and U.S. Army chief of engineers during an assumption of command ceremony today at Baruch Auditorium, Fort Lesley J. McNair. Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III hosted the event.

"I absolutely believe Lt. Gen. Bostick is the right person to lead the Army Corps of Engineers," Austin said during his remarks. "He is one of the smartest, most gifted general officers of our time, with the ability to do well and thrive in any environment."

At USACE, Bostick serves as the senior military officer overseeing most of the nation's civil works infrastructure and military construction. He is responsible for more than 37,000 civilian employees and 600 military personnel who provide project management and construction support to 250 Army and Air Force installations in more than 100 countries around the world.

Bostick also oversees USACE's diverse missions such as hundreds of environmental protection projects; the regulatory permit program to protect, restore and enhance thousands of acres of wetlands; and the emergency response mission to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In addition, as the chief of engineers, Bostick advises the Army on engineering matters and serves as the Army's topographer and the proponent for real estate and other related engineering programs.

"Now, more than ever, the nation needs a lean, agile, strong, capable, competent and trusted Corps of Engineers. One that serves the Army and nation; and one that truly teams with our many military, federal, state, local government, host nation governments, tribal, academia, industry and non-government partners to solve the engineering and scientific challenges facing the joint force, the nation and the global community," Bostick said.

"I'm committed to working with all our partners to continue the rich traditions of the Corps, meet the needs of this country and always deliver," he added.

Lt. Gen. Bostick graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He holds a master's in civil engineering and mechanical engineering from Stanford University, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.

District hosted soon to be commander

Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick (center), U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, is briefed by Resident Engineer Mike Siu on construction work by the Corps at Joint Forces Training Base Los Alamitos during a visit May 18. District Commander Col. Mark Toy (far left) and Military Programs Branch Chief Debra Ford (far right) look on. (USACE photo by Brooks Hubbard)

By Brooks Hubbard

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles District welcomed Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, currently the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, during his visit here May 18.

Bostick was recently confirmed at the rank of lieutenant general and to be the 53rd Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Chief Engineer of the U.S. Army.

Bostick was in the area to attend the City of Torrance's 53rd Annual Armed Forces Day Celebration and to administer the Oath of Enlistment to area future soldiers in a public enlistment ceremony.

Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District commander, and his staff took Bostick on a ground and aerial tour of some of the District's projects.

"I'm very happy that General Bostick saw the opportunity to visit his first District, as he was here in his capacity as the current G-1," said Toy.

The District tour highlighted the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Study area, the lower Los Angeles River, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and culminated with a walking tour of the Armed Forces Reserve Center construction site at the Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos.

"I was really impressed with the leadership Colonel Mark Toy provides and all the camaraderie in the people," said Bostick. "You can really see that it's a team."

"Everything in the Army is based on the leadership and the team that they lead," Bostick further said. "Obviously, you have great leaders here; you have a great team and they are doing fabulous work."

Bostick took command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers May 22.

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The NewsCastle is published monthly under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the employees and extended Engineer Family of the Los Angeles District, USACE.

Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the District or of the Department of Defense.

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COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear District Teammates,

In the month of June, "***CHANGE***" is in the air. The biggest change of all is that for the first time in 44 years, Brian Moore, will not be working in the District. In a memorable luncheon for our Deputy District Engineer and Chief of Programs and Project Management, who served admirably in this capacity since 1989, we bid farewell and good luck. The outpouring of well wishes and support for Brian and his wife Nancy were tremendous. For those of you who were able to attend the event, my personal thanks. Replacing Brian Moore was no easy task. After weeks of advertisement, short-listing, interviews, board consultation and thought, Brig. Gen. Wehr selected David Van Dorpe.

In David Van Dorpe, the District promotes and elevates from within our own ranks. As Chief of our Civil Works Branch, Programs and Project Management Division, I saw first-hand the outstanding work of David and his civil works team. David is ready for the DPM job and eager to tackle this upcoming challenge. He has an outstanding reputation with all of our sponsors, partners, and stakeholders; and I know that, more than anything, he will ***TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE!***

Another big change in the District is the departure of our Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Steve Sigloch. After two years of serving as my 2IC, Steve heads to the University of Memphis where he will serve as the Professor of Military Science. I'm incredibly proud of Steve's selection to this prestigious post. In his new capacity as PMS, Steve will be responsible for growing and nurturing the future officers of our United States Army. The Army could not have selected a better command team than Steve and Dara Sigloch. We wish Steve, Dara, and their daughters Andrea and Emily, all the best and a safe trip to their new duty location. Go Memphis Tigers!

Succeeding Lt. Col. Steve Sigloch as the new Deputy Commander is Lt. Col. Alex Deraney. Alex will be coming to the District in August with his Family upon completion of his duties as Rear Detachment Commander for a Brigade Combat Team in Germany. Until Alex's arrival, Daryll Fust will step up from his duties as our District Safety Chief, don the U.S. Army uniform once again as he is re-activated, and serving as Col. Daryll Fust , Acting Deputy Commander.

Even with two major changes in our Executive Office, the mission continues. I very much appreciate the feedback that I received from all of you at our recent town hall sessions in May. Our question and answer sessions were very helpful and reinforced for me the idea that "People are the foundation for everything we do!" As your Commander, I will continue to keep us on course with my vision and strategic direction. With a focus on ***PEOPLE, TRAINING*** and ***FACILITIES***, and our seven people initiatives: in/out processing and sponsorship, awards and recognition, training, performance management, mentoring, project management and facilities, the District will move forward in a positive way as we continue **BUILDING STRONG AND *Taking Care of People!***

Warm Regards,

COL Toy

Col. R. Mark Toy

Change is constant

Brian Moore retires after nearly five decades with the Corps

By Daniel J. Calderón

LOS ANGELES — The end of the month of May also brought the end of an era as Brian Moore, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's former Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, retired after serving with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for almost 50 years.

"Through all my career, I've worked on almost every project and study you can think of here from the Santa Ana Project to Santa Paula Creek to Lower Mission Creek to White Water to a lot of projects on military installations and a lot of projects for our Interagency and International Services customers," he said. "The scope and breadth of these projects – you just can't get it anywhere else. The variety is just absolutely amazing. And then the ability to work with local politicians and local sponsors, congressional interests. It's just been the type of work I don't think you can get in any other agency other than the Corps."

Moore began with the Corps in 1968 as a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. A representative from the San Francisco District interviewed and hired him into the intern program. The Corps agreed to move Moore to Los Angeles from San Francisco and he began his career. He had a brief hiatus from the Corps when he was drafted into the Army. However, after he applied for and passed Officer Candidate School and received his commission, Moore served as the director of public works for an Army installation in Charleston, S.C. Once his time in the military was completed, he returned to Los Angeles and his career with the District.

Upon returning, his career began in earnest. He moved from Planning, which was a branch of the Engineering Division at the time, as a study manager assistant to section chief, to water resources branch chief to assistant chief soon after Planning became its own division. Moore also met his wife in the Corps when she came in to train. They married in 1974. Still moving up through the ranks, Moore served as assistant Planning division chief, and then moved into his current position.

Moore briefing Maj. Gen. Bo Temple, then acting Chief of Engineers, over the helicopter intercom headset. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

Moore remembers nearly every one of the projects he's worked on. He's worked on dams, hospital projects and on airfields and barracks at military installations and on the border fence in California and Arizona. He said the Santa Ana Project is one of the most memorable projects he's worked on, even though it isn't even complete yet.

"The project wasn't moving forward at the time I was involved and the district commander at the time, Col. Jack Foley, put me in charge of the project. This was back in 1978 or 1979," Moore explained. "I was involved in re-studying the entire project. It had an element in the original authorization called Mentone Dam, which is up near San Bernardino. That was a controversial element. As a result of the re-study and further work and effort, Mentone Dam went away and Seven Oaks dam became the dam that replaced it. It was moved further up into the canyon and was less visible and had less impact to the community. Getting that project started was incredible and then actually seeing it constructed was even more incredible. So, I went all the way from working on the planning part of it almost all the way through construction. It's probably about 80 percent done right now."

It is that tenacity that has remained an endearing aspect for some of the District team members Moore has mentored through his years with the Corps. Drew Savage, a senior project manager with the District, said Moore's perseverance has been an inspiration for him.

"Brian has taught me to rarely accept

Moore had a brief hiatus from his civilian career when he was drafted into the Army. He applied for and passed Officer Candidate School and received his commission. (Courtesy photo)

'no' for an answer," Savage said. "In this time of seemingly ever-increasing regulations, getting even simple items approved is a daunting task. Brian constantly reaffirms that there is nearly always a way to move a project forward and that persistence will be rewarded. He has also taught be that it is always better to be as direct and as honest as you can be in life. If things look sour and start to head south, it will not necessarily help to plot an unrealistic path forward."

To be sure, Brian Moore is not without his sense of humor. Many of the people who have known him more than a day have remarked about how funny he can be and how his peculiar sense of timing can simply add to the moment.

"I remember driving through the mountains up to Flagstaff in a passenger van with three division chiefs, two branch chiefs, three sections chiefs, and a project manager," began Savage. "Brian, very dryly, makes the statement about how devastating it would be to the district if we all died in a fiery crash. The silence was priceless."

Another team member recalled another time Moore's humor and good nature were on display. And, it involved Col. Mark Toy, the District commander.

"A few years into my time with the LA District (and the Corps) I started tacking 'Dilbert' cartoons on my cube wall, especially those featuring the 'pointy-haired boss' and his 'interesting' managerial skills and practices," began a recollection from District employee Pete Kroese, "These were pinned on the inside of the cubicle walls (for obvious reasons) adjacent to the entry so folks could only see them if they actually walked into my cube. Came the day when Brian had occasion to do just that and, as he turned to leave, he saw the Dilbert cartoons. He stopped, read them all, laughed - a lot - and then turned to me and said 'that's the Colonel, isn't it?'

"Now I'm not the smartest guy in the world but Brian was my boss at that time so I said 'of course. Amazingly enough a short while later the Colonel had occasion to visit me, he too actually came into my cubicle. As with Brian, when he turned to leave, he too saw the cartoons. Like Brian he read them all, laughed as much as, if not more than, Brian, turned to me and said 'that's Brian isn't it.' I saw no reason to change my answer."

Moore's sense of humor and tenacity have been constants through a changing career and a changing organization. He said he has seen the organization change itself to ensure it maintains pace with the times even though some of that change is painful.

Los Angeles District Commander Col. R. Mark Toy presents Moore with a plaque of appreciation representing his nearly 50 years of contributions to the Los Angeles District. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)

"I think things are more difficult to accomplish now because there are more issues and more people, more groups, involved in decisions," Moore said. "I remember when I first started out, you could plan, design and build a concrete flood control channel and you had very little contact with anybody but the sponsor and maybe a few folks in the community and that was it. Of course, that's changed. The Corps is much more sensitive now to the needs of everybody. I think it's made a better organization; but, it's made it much more difficult to get things through the system. But, when all is said and done, you end up with something that serves a lot more purposes than maybe just a single-purpose."

Moore said the changes through the years have allowed the Corps to become more adaptable and more open to the needs of the people its members serve. With more input, Corps projects serve a variety of purposes from environmental restoration to flood control to recreation. Moore has seen evidence of those projects and their positive influences throughout his career. However, the work is not what he will miss most.

"I'm going to miss the people, he said. "There's great people in the Los Angeles District and I'm going to really, really miss them a lot. It's been a lot of fun working with them and it's been great seeing people grow as I've been working with some folks and helping their careers along. I'm going to miss the sponsors we deal with. We have a lot of great sponsors out there. They're very sophisticated people, not only in civil works but in military and our I&IS program as well. It's been great working with them. They're great people to work with. Together we've accomplished an awful lot. I'm going to miss all of them."

So, what has he learned? What wisdom would he like to pass on to the current and future generation of District team members?

"The thing I've said, and will always say, and the thing that's motivated me is that I think the work we do is important," Moore said. "It doesn't matter where you are in the organization, no matter what kind of job you have. Whether you're a budget analyst, or public affairs officer or whatever, you're a part of that machine, part of that group that makes things possible. Keep in mind that whatever you're doing on a job, it's for a purpose – an important purpose – and it is to serve somebody. Our projects result in not only making life better for people. It makes life safer for people. We help the economy and help the environment. You need realize you're part is a very important piece of this puzzle that you put together and it ends up being something very important for somebody."

Corps breaks ground for replacement hospital project

Brig. Gen. Mike Wehr (right center), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander, breaks ground for the 216,000 square-foot Weed Army Community Hospital May 30. On Wehr's left is Maj. Gen. Richard Thomas from the Army's Western Medical Command. The new facility is to be the first net-zero, carbon neutral medical facility in the nation. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Dave Palmer

FORT IRWIN, Calif. — Groundbreaking ceremonies held May 30 marked the start of construction for a replacement to Ft. Irwin's Weed Army Community Hospital, built more than 40 years ago.

"It should be noted that this is, in fact, one of the Army's largest military construction projects breaking ground this year," said Brig. Gen. Mike Wehr, South Pacific Division commander.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District manages the nearly $160 million contract awarded to Turner Construction Company of Washington, D.C. The 216,000 square-foot facility is to be the first net-zero, carbon neutral medical facility in the nation.

"You've got a consolidation of clinics, a more robust facility in terms of earthquakes and it's powered by solar power, over 5 acres worth of solar collection... not only taking care of our Soldiers, but taking care of the environment," said Wehr.

Since 1978, the USACE Medical Center of Expertise has supported more than 425 medical treatment and research facilities, including new hospitals at Fort Hood, San Antonio, Fort Belvoir and Fort Knox.

"This is more than a building; it is a national commitment to the strength of our Army, which is based in our Soldiers and the families that support them," Wehr said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Nathan Buckner (left), the command sergeant major for the National Training Center and Fort Irwin, speaks with Brig. Gen. Mike Wehr, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander, at the groundbreaking ceremony for the 216,000 square-foot Weed Army Community Hospital facility May 30. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

District returns to Armed Forces Day in Torrance

By Brooks O. Hubbard IV

Col. Mark Toy, wife May, daughter Kayla and son Brandon carried the District's banner, followed by the Emergency Command and Control Vehicle operated by Alex Watt, Fany Anderson of the District's safety office and Bobber the Water Safety Dog, along the two-mile parade route for the 53rd Annual Armed Forces Day Celebration May 19. (Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)

TORRANCE, Calif. — The Los Angeles District returned to the City of Torrance to participate in its 53rd Annual Armed Forces Day Celebration here May 19.

The District's new Emergency Command and Control Vehicle, operated by Alex Watt, made its debut appearance and was led by the District's commander, Col. Mark Toy, wife May, daughter Kayla and son Brandon. The Toys carried the District's banner, followed by the ECCV, Fany Anderson of the District's safety office and Bobber the Water Safety Dog, along the two-mile parade route.

"Seeing the people along the route and seeing the support they give us [Soldiers] just reminded me of how much families mean to the Army, supporting its Soldiers," said Toy.

The parade is an official Department of Defense event and is the city's way of expressing respect and reverence for the personnel who served in the Armed Forces, according to the city's website.

The three-day celebration included festivities at the Del Amo Mall, where visitors viewed and toured a host of static military displays, including tanks and helicopters from the National Training Center and Fort Irwin, and were also able to get a firsthand look at the ECCV.

Bobber the Water Safety Dog waves at spectators along the two-mile parade route during the City of Torrance's Armed Forces Day Celebration May 19. (Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)

Anthony Henson, also from the District's Safety Office, along with Project Manager Ed Louie, manned information tables passing out water safety coloring books, safety stickers and Frisbees, along with advice on how to remain safe during the upcoming summer's water recreation activities.

Joining the festivities this year was the next U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Commanding General and Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick. Bostick is currently the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, and was in the area to attend the celebration and to enlist area future soldiers in a public enlistment ceremony. Bostick led those future soldiers down the parade route.

Immediately after the parade, Bostick administered the oath to more than 200 future soldiers as their families and friends watched.

Fit to Win: Dave Coltharp's journey

By Cecy Ordonez

LOS ANGELES — *What catalyzed your weight loss efforts?*

Dave: The Fit to Win Fitness Assessment we did in June of 2011 was an eye opener. You pointed out that my body mass index was in the obese level, my body fat percentage was high, and more importantly my health was reflecting my poor food choices resulting in my high cholesterol. I started exercising; however, I still hadn't focused on my food so I wasn't making any change. In January 2012 my sister introduced me to a weight loss program. After seeing immediate results with very little time and effort – I was hooked.

According to my measurements from last year until now, you have lost 23.5 inches (your waist alone went from 42 to 32 inches), 6.6% body fat, 53 pounds and your total cholesterol went from 230 to 147. How did you accomplish this?

Dave: It was incredibly easy. I ate and continue to eat six times per day and drink a lot of water. This in turn increased my metabolism and energy levels.

How has your life changed?

Dave: This has changed my life in so many ways. First, I am healthy and I feel good. I sleep better, have increased energy level, increased passion about life and I am more mentally focused.

What has been the best compliment you have received?

Dave: Everywhere I go where I see people that I have not seen in a few weeks or months are telling me how great I look. The best compliment I have received lately is two different friends telling me I look 20 years younger – and I feel it too!

Now that you are on maintenance, what are you doing differently to keep your new healthy lifestyle?

Dave: I have a nutritional breakfast every morning followed by 10oz of water. I try and drink another 10oz of water while driving in to work and driving right past the fast food place where I used to buy 2 breakfast burritos every morning. I eat 4 small nutritious meals every day, followed by a "Lean and Green" dinner (steak, chicken or fish with salad and vegetables) and desert (chocolate or banana pudding) every night. I will always eat and drink some of the program's meal replacements each day because they are very easy to prepare and provide great nutritional balance.

If you can give three easy tips our team members can incorporate in their every day life, what would it be?

Dave:

1. Drink between 80 and 120 ounces of water every day. This will flush out old dirty water and toxins as well as any fat recently burned.
2. Eat small nutritionally balanced meals, fruits and vegetables every three hours.
3. Enjoy life, smile, share the love and help other people in any way possible!

Follow the same formula Dave did to achieve these dramatic results--it's simple; move more and eat less. If you find yourself wanting to conquer your weight loss battle, come by and see me. I will help you move to a healthier you. ~ CeCy

Construction Control Representative Valencia Wynn oversees construction on the second of two 4-million-gallon reservoir tanks on Vandenberg AFB, Calif. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

Building big for water at Vandenberg

By Dave Palmer

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — Vandenberg Air Force Base is currently home to the second largest reinforced concrete dome in the world. By summer's end, they may have some bragging rights anyway; a twin is on the way.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District has the first of two, 4-million-gallon reservoir tanks online, with the second scheduled for completion in September.

Surprisingly they aren't adding capacity as much as economies of efficiency. The previous reservoir tanks were built in the 1940s, when the base was the Army's Camp Cooke, and they were leaking like sieves.

"The biggest hurdle we faced was drying out the site," said Construction Control Representative Valencia Wynn. "The water table was already pretty high in this area, but it was obvious the tanks had been leaking for years."

Wynn mentioned the previous reservoirs did enjoy some longevity, but the replacements will be in service for a century and she intends to check up on them for some time to come.

"We'll place approximately 1,700 cubic yards of concrete per tank," said Greg Tague, a quality control manager for SOLTEK Pacific Construction. "Once we completed the first tank… we calculated that the roof alone weighs 940 tons."

The new reservoirs support a population of more than 18,000; military, family members, contractors, and civilian employees.

For some perspective, the U.S. Geological Survey says if you built a pool to hold a million-gallons it would need to be 267 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 10 feet deep. You're on your own for any higher math.

Corps contractors construct the second of two new 4-million-gallon water reservoirs May 11 at Vandenberg AFB, Calif. The new water tanks support a population of more than 18,000 military, family members, contractors and civilian employees at the base. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

Summertime, the heat is on

By Steve McCombs

LOS ANGELES — Summertime is upon us. In fact, summertime has already hit us in a number of Project Offices! Hooah to Fort Irwin, Creech, Nellis, Yuma, El Centro, Tucson, Fort Huachuca, High Desert, Edwards, Phoenix, Tres Rios and our O&M crews! Point is, it's getting really warm out there and will only move from warm to HOT! So, as you may have already guessed, my topic de jure is Heat Stress.

Safety Steve Science Guy must once again enter at this point. Our bodies operate in a range of temperatures that is surprisingly small. On the upper end, once your body temperature reaches 104 degrees Fahrenheit, you are going to have big problems. Below 95 degrees and you're in the opposite kind of trouble. So we have roughly a 10-degree range of body temperature where we can function. This will vary from person to person depending on metabolism, body weight and other factors. But what we all have is a "Hypothalamus." This gland sits inside your noggin and controls a number of bodily functions, including regulating your temperature. As you begin to heat up, the hypothalamus will kick your sweat glands into gear and increase the blood flow to your skin to increase evaporative cooling. It's essentially your body's thermostat. Reptiles don't have a hypothalamus, which is why they sun themselves to warm up.

The least dangerous is **Heat Cramps.** Heat cramps are painful, involuntary muscle spasms that usually occur during heavy exercise in hot environments. Most often they occur in the leg muscles, but can occur in any large muscle group. Your body is telling you to rest, cool down, stretch and increase your fluid intake.

Heat Exhaustion is the next level up and, if not treated properly, can ramp up to the life-threatening condition of Heat Stroke. Heat Exhaustion is recognized by heavy sweating, dizziness, weak and rapid pulse, cramps, nausea and headache. Again, your body is telling you to rest, cool down and increase fluids. If you don't pay attention to these symptoms, your body will simply shut down for a bit.

Heat Stroke is the killer. Your brain temperature becomes so high that your hypothalamus shuts down. This is an absolute medical emergency and 911 call. Heat Stroke victims have a high temperature, a lack of sweating, rapid and bounding pulse and usually some sort of change in consciousness – confused, seizures, hallucinations and even coma. It is vital to cool these people down immediately. Get them in the shade, remove clothing and wet the victim with cool water, then start fanning them any way you can to allow evaporative cooling. Then it's off to the Emergency Room in an ambulance.

The key to preventing all of these types of Heat Stress is to maintain your level of hydration with good old, plain, WATER. It is vital to stay hydrated in hot climates, especially if high humidity is a factor. Rest periods in shaded areas are required for employees when temperatures and humidity levels increase to certain levels. Loose, light clothing is preferred. Avoid strenuous activity during the hotter times of the day. And always keep an eye out for your companions.

To learn more, go to the following page at the Centers for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/

As always, drive safe, drive sober and buckle up!! ~ *Steve*

Corps completes Vandenberg Child Development Center

Child Development Center Director Verna Brown (left), Col. Paul McArthur, 30th Space Wing vice commander, Rep. Lois Capps and Col. Kelly Kirts, 30th Mission Support Group commander, cut the ribbon to the new CDC May 11. The $9.7 million, 23,390-square-foot facility consolidates the CDC's operations into one building while nearly doubling the floor space of the previous facilities. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Dave Palmer

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — Rep. Lois Capps joined Vandenberg family members and senior leaders for the dedication of the base's new child development center May 11. Representing the District were John Keever, chief of the Los Angeles District Construction Division and Debra Ford, chief of the District's Military Branch and the Corps' base project delivery team; Priscilla Perry, Project Manager and Valencia Wynn, Construction Representative.

"This is a great day for the Vandenberg Air Force Base family and I stress the word 'family,'" said Capps. "For those who are serving in harm's way... I know from conversations with many of them... that the number one thing on their mind is; is my family well, are my children thriving."

Capps spent 20-years as a nurse and public health advocate for the Santa Barbara School District and has served her district since March 17, 1998.

"This child development center is a matter of local pride because this community is very proud of the relationship that we all have with the base," added Capps. "We want the best for their families."

Staff Sgt. Francesca Fleming is a military mom who liked what she saw at the new facility.

"Safety! I like that the playgrounds are right outside the door, they have eyes on the children," said Fleming. "And art, my daughter loves art, that's something I know she's going to go straight to and express herself more freely here."

The $9.7 million, 23,390-square-foot facility consolidates the CDC's operations into one building while nearly doubling the floor space of the previous facilities. Infants from six weeks, pre-toddler, toddler and pre-school children enjoy rooms, furnishings and outdoor play areas that are age appropriate in design and features.

"Classrooms are organized with various learning centers that provide specific age groups with the appropriate toys and activities designated to enhance their learning and developmental skills," said Wynn. "It has been a pleasure to witness the overwhelming joy and appreciation that the director, staff and families have expressed for the new CDC."

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Striving for Excellence in Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion

Eugene Moy from the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California based his presentation on a recently published book, "Portraits of Pride II," which features the personal stories of eight Chinese-American Nobel laureates. The District headquarters hosted a one-hour program championing this year's theme "Striving for Excellence in Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion" on May 10. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Dave Palmer

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles District honored the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans with an observance May 10 here. District Commander Col. Mark Toy said it caused him to reflect on his own Chinese heritage.

"A little bit of history, back in the 1890s my great-grandfather Din Toy came from China and settled in Helena, Mont., opening up a general store," said Toy. "He eventually came and settled in Bakersfield, Calif., not very far from here."

A fourth-generation American, Toy mentioned he recently lost his grandmother, whose restaurant he remembers playing in as a child. His grandfather was a high school graduate and his grandmother only completed the eighth grade. Their hard work ensured a better life for their children, with all three of their sons graduating from college.

"It all starts with those that come before us, to make life better for us. That is something deeply rooted not only in the Chinese community, but in the Asian community in general," added Toy.

It's a theme that President Obama championed in his Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month proclamation.

"Generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have helped make America what it is today. Their histories recall bitter hardships and proud accomplishments -- from the laborers who connected our coasts one-and-a-half centuries ago, to the patriots who fought overseas while their families were interned at home, from those who endured the harsh conditions of Angel Island, to the innovators and entrepreneurs who are driving our Nation's economic growth in Silicon Valley and beyond."

The keynote speaker for the day was Eugene Moy from the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. His presentation focused on a recently published book, "Portraits of Pride II," which features the personal stories of eight Chinese-American Nobel laureates.

"One of the goals that we have as a Chinese Historical Society is, really, to personalize the history and to identify those who have been un-sung heroes who have been working in the background, quietly, never really taking credit but, at the same time, they have enriched the country," said Moy.

The book, "Portraits of Pride II," features more than 30 essays about outstanding Chinese Americans from many fields of endeavor. To date the society has donated 7,000 copies of the first book in the series, "Portraits of Pride," to school and public libraries with an overall goal of 20,000 for the new effort.

The remembrance is held in May, because it coincides with two milestones in American history; May 10, 1869 marks the completion of the transcontinental railroad through contributions of Chinese workers, and May 7, 1843 when the first Japanese immigrants arrived.

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Inaugural award presented to District employee

By Daniel J. Calderón

LOS ANGELES — Quana Higgins, a lead planner in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Arizona-Nevada Area Office, received the first Kevin Inada Employee of the Quarter award during a ceremony held at the District headquarters May 4.

"I feel extremely humbled and grateful," Higgins said of receiving the award named for Kevin Inada, the District's former deputy chief of construction division until he passed away Jan.1. "It was also very unexpected, because my colleagues make for some very tough competition. It's still a surprise to me, and there are no words to express the honor of being the first award recipient in memory of a great SPL [Los Angeles District] employee."

Higgins has been with the District since June 2009. She began her career as a Department of the Army intern. During her internship, she worked in several different branches and disciplines within the District and "found a home" in her current position in 2011.

"My work is mainly focused on the plan formulation required to authorize projects for construction or budget increases," Higgins explained. "About half of my time is spent working with the Sacramento District working on dam safety studies."

Col. Mark Toy, the District commander, said the award Higgins received recognizes the outstanding accomplishments of a District employee.

Quana Higgins, a lead planner in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, receives the first Kevin Inada Employee of the Quarter award from Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Steven Sigloch during a ceremony held at the District headquarters May 4. (Photo by Richard Rivera)

Toy said awardees demonstrate traits exemplified by Kevin Inada during his time with the District.

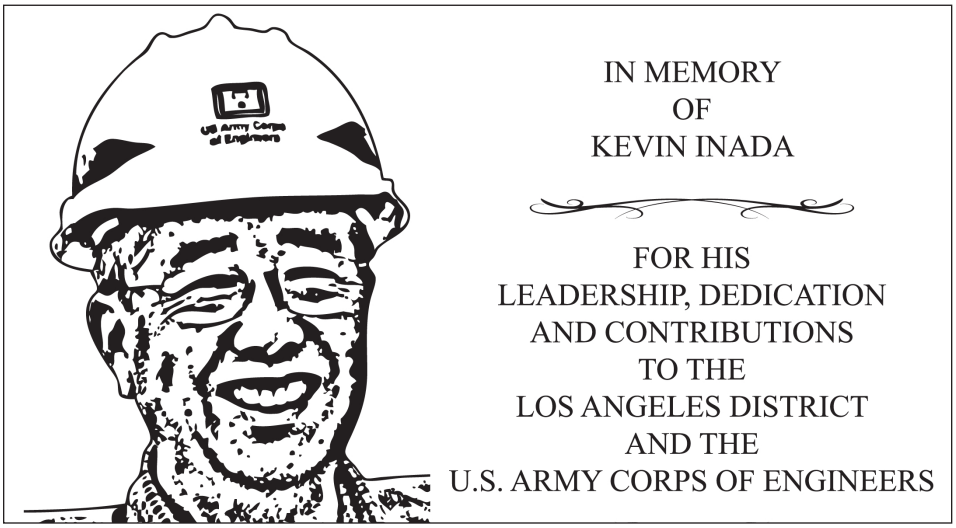
"Ms. Quana Higgins is an excellent initial recipient," said Toy. "Since there will be only four identified per year, being singled out as the best employee in any given quarter is significant. Given the number of deserving employees in the district, this is a great accomplishment."

Inada's widow, Judy Inada, and their son Ben were on hand for the presentation. Higgins said, as the first recipient of the award, she was initially nervous; but, she felt more comfortable as the ceremony went on.

"It was sort of surreal even at the end of the event," she said. "It was a very humbling experience, overall. The significance of the ceremony and the award was sincerely felt through the kind words of Lt. Col. [Steven] Sigloch [the District's deputy commander] and John Keever [chief of the District's construction division]. It was also a great honor to meet Kevin's wife, Judy, and son, Ben.

Toy was pleased to award Higgins the District's first honor. He is looking forward to recognizing other deserving employees in the future.

"As you know, the focus on 'awards and recognition' is one of the seven people initiatives that we've adopted in the Los Angeles district as part of our dedication to [the theme] 'Building Strong and Taking Care of People!'" Toy said. "This award is one among many awards that we use to recognize the great work that people do throughout our District. I can't wait until we award the second deserving individual."



Maintenance dredging project will restore federal channels in lower Newport Harbor

A clamshell dredge begins a five-month project May 2 to remove up to 350,000 cubic yards of material from the federal channel in Newport Harbor, Calif. The Port of Long Beach will use about one-third of the dredged material for its middle harbor redevelopment project. (Photo by Chris Miller, Newport Beach Harbor)

By Greg Fuderer

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began a five-month, $6.5 million maintenance dredging project May 2 when a clamshell dredge started removing up to 350,000 cubic yards of material in an effort to restore safe navigation to federal channels in lower Newport Harbor.

The contractor, R.E. Staite Engineering of San Diego, Calif., will operate two clamshell dredges and up to four scows, or barges, to remove the material and place it at one of two locations. About one-third of the material will go to the Port of Long Beach middle harbor redevelopment project and about two-thirds to an EPA-approved offshore placement area.

"This project was a big challenge for us," said Col. Mark Toy, commander and district engineer of the Corps' Los Angeles District. "We're dealing with some contaminated sediment, and that could be cost-prohibitive for a project this size. Fortunately, we have an opportunity with parties in Long Beach to use that material. That will reduce the cost of the project and make maximum benefit of the federal dollars."

Over the years, some of the channels in the harbor have shoaled in, creating a navigation hazard and resulting in groundings of some vessels. The project will return the federal channels to their design depths of minus 10 to minus 20 feet, improving navigation safety in the federal channels within the harbor.

"Safe navigation is the big benefit of this project," said Chris Miller, the harbor resources manager for Newport Beach. "We've been working on this for many, many years. We've been working together with Corps for nearly 10 years, and have had a lot of upper level support. We're very happy with the cooperative nature of the project."

Miller said sediment testing was one of the major factors in determining how the project would proceed.

"As with all projects, one of many hurdles is funding," Miller said. "We had to figure out what material was suitable for ocean disposal and what was not suitable. We had to get the best value for our dollar on this project, which I believe we have. So we're very excited about this project."

"It's been a multi-year process to get to this point," said Scott John, who manages the project for the Corps. "Newport harbor is pretty large. We have six different areas we'll be dredging, from 3,000 cubic yards to 60-, 70-, 100,000 cubic yards. They're prioritized by depth. The areas most shoaled in are the highest priority, and we worked with city of Newport Beach to establish those."

"We'll monitor water quality at all dredge areas to ensure we're honoring our environmental commitments," Scott said. "We're working closely with the environmental resource agencies to ensure the project is as beneficial to the environment as it is to the boaters of Newport Beach."

The lower harbor dredging project will also benefit from work previously done upstream.

In 2010, the Corps completed a $47 million ecosystem restoration project in the adjacent Upper Newport Bay, dredging 2.3 million cubic yards of material and creating a basin designed to capture sediment entering the upper bay for the next 21 years.

"Whatever happens in the upper bay affects the lower bay," John said. "By dredging in the upper bay, we can store more material there and prevent it from entering the lower bay. It's all interconnected."

"This project was a long time coming," said Ralph Rodheim, chairman of the Newport Beach Harbor Commission. "The harbor's not been fully dredged in 70 years. We're a safe harbor, so any boats in distress will now be able to come in and not worry about running aground. This is a critical project."

Rodheim called Newport "the largest small boat harbor in the world" and said it is homeport for 10- to 12,000 boats.

"This harbor is clearly one of America's jewels," Rodheim said. "It's a mixed use harbor, and we're very proud of it."

Toy said the Newport Harbor project is similar in some respects to some other Corps projects, like the dredging taking place at Marina del Rey that also will place material at the Port of Long Beach.

"The strength of the district is its relationships with partners, stakeholders and sponsors," Toy said. "The strength of Corps is that long after I'm gone, we'll have the great employees and relationships to continue work like this."

Los Angeles River: location, location, location

Chief of Planning Division Josephine Axt (right) joins the Friends of the LA River's 23rd Annual La Gran Limpieza: The Great Los Angeles River CleanUp on April 28. In all 4,000 volunteers spread out over 15 community sites to remove tons of debris from the river's channel. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Dave Palmer

LOS ANGELES — Rio de Los Angeles, a state park, named for a river it has limited access to – such is the story of the LA River.

The area adjacent to the park was one of three sites featured for informational talks given by key stakeholders during the Friends of the LA River's 23rd Annual La Gran Limpieza: The Great Los Angeles River CleanUp on April 28. In all, 4,000 volunteers spread out over 15 community sites to remove tons of debris from the river's channel.

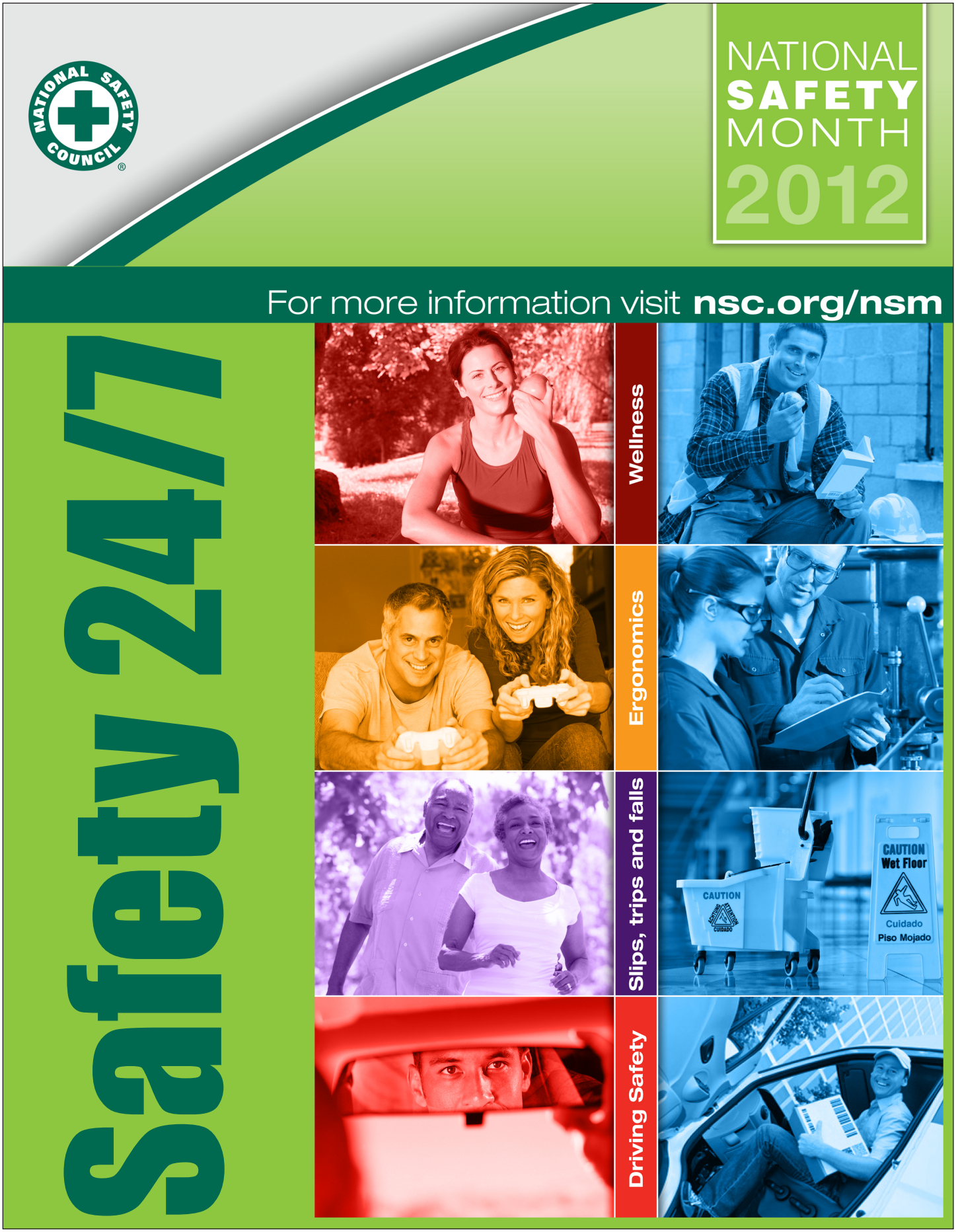
"We know, because millions of people live in the historic floodplain of the river, that we're never going to be able to take out all the concrete, but we can change it," said Dr. Carol Armstrong, Bureau of Engineering, Los Angeles River Project Office. "One of the reasons the Army Corps' study and the city's master plan focused on this area, in terms of concrete removal, is that you already have stuff to work with, in terms of no concrete and in terms of habitat."

The "Army Corps" study mentioned is the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hopes to conclude by next summer. Armstrong explained that in the 1930s, this portion of the LA River, near the Taylor Rail Yard, didn't get a concrete bottom because of the high water table.

"The Corps' mission is aquatic ecosystem restoration," said Chief of Planning Division Josephine Axt. "We really feel like this is [a place], albeit in an urban environment with a lot of constraints, [where] we can make the case here that it's worth federal dollars to do some restoration."

The river has also benefited from recent federal attention through America's Great Outdoors Initiative and the Urban Waters Federal Partnership that named the Los Angeles River Watershed one of seven pilot locations to receive financial help because of existing programs and work in-progress.

The city marked the five year anniversary of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan May 9. To learn more about their many projects, visit http://www.lariver.org.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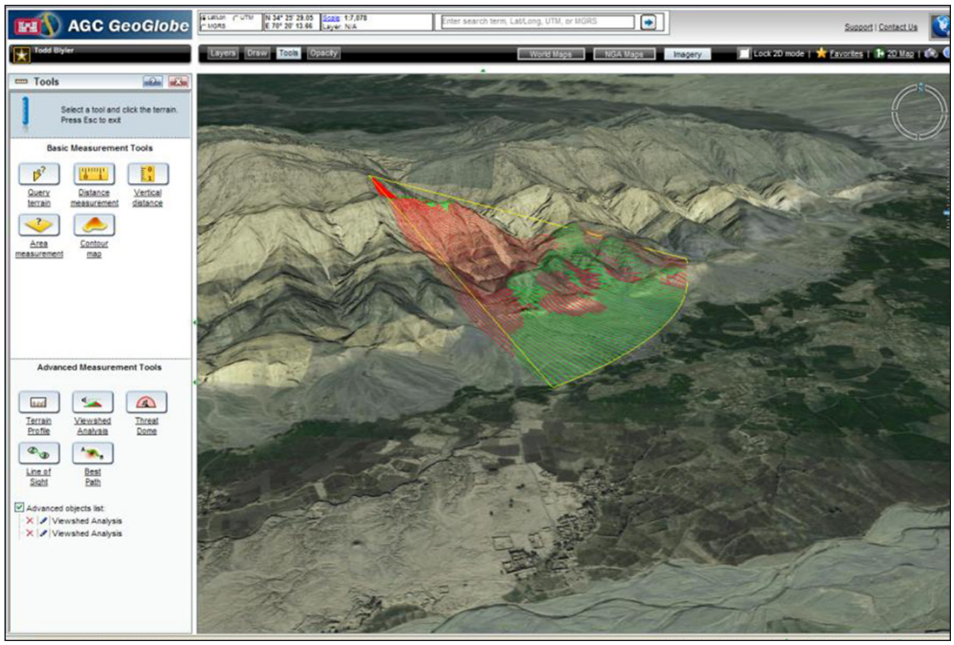
U.S. Army Geospatial Center: Enabling Geospatial Information Dominance



What is it?

The AGC, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Major Subordinate Command, coordinates, integrates and synchronizes geospatial information requirements and standards across the Army. It also develops and fields geospatial enterprise-enabled systems and capabilities to the Army and Department of Defense as well as provides direct geospatial support and products to Soldiers.

What has the Army done?

Geospatial information consists of data associated with geographic and temporal references. This includes information about the earth, its subsurface, surface, bodies of water, atmosphere and adjacent regions of space. The Army relies heavily on geospatial information and services for all of its operations to the point where they are now considered to be a key commodity, critical to its ability to plan and execute its missions. The AGCs programs and expertise are helping to build the standardized, shareable geospatial foundation required to generate the high-fidelity common operating picture (COP) Soldiers use to plan contingency, crisis response and humanitarian missions stateside and abroad. As the Armys Knowledge Center for Geospatial Expertise, the AGC supports its LandWarNet/ Mission Command on-the-move concepts, capabilities and systems - facilitating dissemination of relevant geospatial information to every echelon throughout the dynamic battlefield environment.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?

The AGC will continue to provision the AGE-an integrated system of technologies, standards, data and processes that delivers a standard and shareable geospatial foundation. The center will also continue to provide domain expertise, thought leadership as well as conduct research, development, testing and evaluation to ensure that the Department of Defenses ground forces and mission partners have the right information, at the right time, at the right place.

Why is this important to the Army?

The AGCs collection, creation and provisioning of high-resolution imagery, geospatial information and mission-related products in support of unified land operations ensures that ground forces are able to develop, exploit and share a feature-rich COP, extending the Soldiers combat edge to humanitarian and operational missions across the globe. Its efforts to deploy an enterprise solution across the force will help to eliminate geospatial information interoperability deficiencies, which will ultimately reduce redundancy, improve the probability of mission success, and save lives.

Honors: Hospital Replacement Project Team

South Pacific Division Commander Brig. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, during his visit to Ft. Irwin for the hospital groundbreaking ceremonies, took time to honor two project team members May 30. Randi Elder (left photo) received the Superior Civilian Service Award for his role as senior project manager. Jonathan Stratton (right photo) received the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service as the project manager for the mission essential Hospital Replacement Project. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

Graduate Landscape Architecture Studio

University of Southern California School of Architecture's Assistant Adjunct Professor Alex Robinson (standing), invited Steve Dwyer (cardinal and gold tie), to be a juror for final reviews of the Graduate Landscape Architecture Studio on May 8.

Established in 1919, the USC School of Architecture was the first of its kind in Southern California. Educational offerings include architecture, landscape architecture, building science and historic preservation. (Photos courtesy of architecture student Yingjun Hu)

How I spent my two weeks away

By Daniel J. Calderón

Some people take time away from work to dash off to exotic locales like Fiji, Spain or Australia. They do things like go swim with rays; dive off of cliffs or explore the wilds of some deep dark jungle or unknown city. Some people opt instead to spend time at home when they take a break from work. They putter around a nascent garden in the hopes of growing veggies or flowers; finish up a project in the house that they've been meaning to get to for a while or maybe they just sit by their pool and read books until they go inside and take a nap.

What did I do during my two weeks away from work? I went to Thailand. Yeah, I know it sounds glamorous and exotic; but, I didn't go on a vacation. I went for my two weeks of Navy training. I'm a Reservist.

I spent two weeks covering CARAT Thailand 2012. If anyone wants to see the photos, you can check them out here http://www.flickr.com/photos/compacflt/sets/72157629809361700/ and leave any comments you'd like. Was it fun? Yeah. I have to admit it was a good time. It was really cool to hang around with our Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen along with Royal Thai Navy personnel as they performed drills, exercises and community events.

A couple of the most fun things I did were cover riverine exercises and a band concert at a school near Pattaya City. Riverine exercises are in small boats that go really, really fast. They're designed to work best on rivers; however, the river we were supposed to use for our exercise was low so we had to do the exercises in the bay. The boats can still move really well; however, the bounce factor is significantly higher on the ocean. I nearly bounced out of the boat on a few occasions as I tried to get the "perfect shot" and my knees were scraped up a bit from the non-skid surface. Oh well.

The concert was pretty wild. We had nearly 4,000 students and teachers in attendance. The U.S. Navy band played first. It's not what you might imagine. It was a contemporary music ensemble so they had a couple of guitars, drummer, keyboard, horns and a vocalist. He sang songs like "Baby, Baby," "Hotel California" and a popular Thai song in its original Thai. He learned it specifically for the Thai audiences. Then, the Royal Thai Navy Band came out and played. Then, they played together. By this time, the kids were on their feet dancing and singing along. It was an amazing thing to see. Really. If I had ten pages to tell the story, I still don't think I could do it justice. There's just no way to accurately describe the joy in the faces of these kids. They were genuinely excited to see our Sailors play and were genuinely thrilled to get their autographs after the show was over. Being there, seeing all this and being able to capture even the small bit that I did on camera was great for me.

It's one of the important things about being a Reservist. I had no idea what I was going to be doing this year for my training. I didn't know where I'd be going or exactly what I'd be doing. But, that's what it means to be a Reservist. There are still those who feel Reservists are somehow lesser Sailors (using that because it's what I know, but it can probably apply to every branch of service) than Active Duty Sailors. I dispute that notion very strongly.

We put our names on the line and agree to be at the Nation's call when needed. We, and our families, agree that we will leave our jobs and our lives behind when we are needed. It's different than being on active duty. Yes, there is a Navy Operational Support Center here in Phoenix; but it's not the same as having a fleet presence in San Diego, Norfolk or any number of coastal towns. As a Reservist, we don't have as much to fall back on when we deploy or go on our training as our Active Duty counterparts. We don't have that sense of community that active duty Sailors have when living in military housing. It's an ineffable thing, but it is pervasive as well.

I see signs and hear people say how they support the troops; but, I still see a division between Active Duty and Reserves. I think it's disappointing in the airport to hear the call for "uniformed military personnel" to get priority boarding. I laugh because most of the time my orders call for me to travel in civilian clothes and I'm sure it's the same for a lot of my brothers and sisters in arms. It seems to me the call is to assuage the airline's conscience so they can claim they support the troops. It seems more a marketing ploy than an actual acknowledgment of the less-than-one-percent of the population that has agreed to stand as the nation's defenders.

So, how did I spend two weeks away from work? I spent them, as a Reservist, away from hearth and home. I spent them working. I spent them with Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen in Thailand. I spent them preparing and training with a group of men and women using their days to train to defend our nation and our allies. I spent them well. Just a thought...

Corps of Engineers, June 16, 1775

The Continental Congress authority for a "Chief Engineer for the Army" dates from June 16, 1775. A corps of Engineers for the United States was authorized by the Congress on March 11, 1779. The Corps of Engineers as it is known today came into being on March 16, 1802, when the President was authorized to "organize and establish a Corps of Engineers ... that the said Corps ... shall be stationed at West Point in the State of New York and shall constitute a Military Academy." A Corps of Topographical Engineers, authorized on July 4, 1838, was merged with the Corps of Engineers on March 1863. Editors Note: Image is a 1942 U.S. Army Engineer recruiting poster designed by Jes Wilhelm Schaikjer.