



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

New York District Times

BUILDING STRONG.

December Edition 2012

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District



New York District Change of Command

The New York District Times

is a publication of the
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New York District



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New York District

**Commander and
District Engineer**
Col. Paul E. Owen

Chief, Public Affairs
Kenneth Wells
Kenneth.Wells@usace.army.mil

Editing and Design
Mary C. Stavina
MaryC.Stavina@usace.army.mil

Graphics and Images
Daniel Desmet
Daniel.Desmet@usace.army.mil

Inside this issue

Colonel's Corner	Page 3
New York District Change of Command	Page 4
Marsh Island	Page 5
FENIB	Page 7
Army Divers at Caven Point	Page 8
Estuary Day	Page 9
National Disability Awareness	Page 10
Building Strong means Building Safe	Page 11

Authorization: The New York District Times is an authorized unofficial newsletter of the New York District. It is published in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.

Circulation: 1500 copies per issue in print and available on internet at: www.nan.usace.army.mil

On the Cover...

Colonel Kent Savre, North Atlantic District Commander presents organizational flag to Colonel Paul E. Owen, incoming commander, while Colonel Boulé outgoing commander looks on during Change of Command Ceremony.

Story Page 4

Contents: Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or this command. All photos, unless otherwise credited, are official U.S. Army photos.

Submissions: The Public Affairs Office welcomes comments and opinions about the information published in the New York District Times. News, tips, ideas, suggestions and articles may be sent to: kenneth.wells@usace.army.mil



Colonel's Corner

Teammates

This is my first column as the New York District Commander. Let me say up front how privileged I am to be given the opportunity to lead this historic organization with an incredible legacy of mission accomplishment. I'm writing this column at just about the 30-day mark since taking command. I've had a chance to meet many of you, but haven't quite made my way around to all branches and sections in the district. I look forward to getting out and meeting everyone and gaining a better understanding of how you contribute to the District's mission.



Col. Paul E. Owen
Commander

I know I am the beneficiary of a high performing organization. The District's accomplishments over the past three years are numerous and impressive. I don't plan on making any significant changes until I've had a chance to fully understand how the New York District and North Atlantic Division conduct routine operations. I expect this will take about 90 days, which will take us through the holiday season. In November, USACE Headquarters will visit North Atlantic Division for a Command Strategic Review. After this session, we'll have a firm vision from our new Division Commander, Colonel Kent Savre, on the way forward. I firmly believe the entire Corps of Engineers is on the cusp of a strategic shift based on two major factors: The End of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and fiscal constraints not seen since the early 1990s. With Civil Works Transformation efforts and a new USACE Campaign Plan due out in December, I plan to re-assess our District Campaign Plan as we turn the corner on the New Year. Your insights and contributions will be important to this process. The efforts and flexibility associated with the "soft landing" following the completion of the Mark Center make me confident we will effectively manage our workload to workforce requirements through the uncertain times ahead. Our New York District program remains strong. We have an extremely diverse program across many business lines that give us a unique ability to successfully manage our workforce to workload fluctuations from year to year.

There is one significant change that will happen before the New Year. After more than three years of distinguished service, LTC Mike Clancy is departing New York District to assume command of the 7th Engineer Battalion at Fort Drum. Mike has been a tremendous asset to the District and will be missed. The Army only picks the very best to be Battalion Commanders and we all know Mike fits into that category. Captain Mike Goddard has temporarily re-located from the West Point Area Office to fill the gap between LTC Clancy and his replacement, LTC John Knight. LTC Knight is arriving from an assignment in Washington DC with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). He should be on board by the first week in December. Please take the time to say farewell to LTC Clancy and welcome LTC Knight as we make another transition in key leaders in the Executive Office.

Also, congratulations to all for a very successful year end close-out. It was definitely a team effort. The hard work in Contracting, Resource Management, Real Estate and many other sections and branches ensured our success during this highly scrutinized and intense time period. Great job.

Finally, I encourage you to take some quality time with your family and loved ones during the upcoming holiday season. You and your family deserve it.

Essayons!



New York District Change of Command

On September 14, a Change of Command Ceremony for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District was held at the U.S. Custom House. In this ceremony, command of New York District was transferred from Colonel John R. Boulé II, commander, to Colonel Paul E. Owen.

The change of command ceremony is rooted in military history dating back to the 18th century during the reign of Frederick the Great of Prussia. At that time, organizational flags were developed with color arrangements and symbols unique to each particular unit. To this flag and its commander, the soldiers of the unit dedicate their loyalty and trust. When a change of command was to take place, the flag was passed to the individual assuming the command. This gesture was accomplished in front of the unit so that all could see and witness their new leader assuming his dutiful position. He who held the flag also held the soldier's allegiance. This symbolic tradition has survived throughout military history.

As a symbol of relinquishing command, Colonel Boulé, the outgoing commander, received the organizational colors from Mr. Joseph Seebode, the Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management and senior civilian for New York District. He then presented the colors to Colonel Kent Savre, North Atlantic Division Commander, who, in turn, presented them to Colonel Owen, the incoming commander. Colonel Owen then took responsibility for New York District by accepting the organizational colors. Colonel Owen then handed the colors back to Mr. Seebode, symbolizing the continuity and strength of the civilian work force.

Although this was a formal ceremony a fond farewell was given to Colonel Boulé who retired from the U.S. Army after more than 26 years of dedicated service to the Nation.

Since graduating from West Point in 1990, Colonel Owen's service has taken him to Germany, Afghanistan, California, Missouri, and twice to Iraq. He also served as the deputy district engineer for the Corps of Engineers Chicago District and participated in Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts as the Operations Officer for the Louisiana Recovery Field Office.

He comes to New York District after serving at the U.S. Army War College as a Secretary of Defense Corporate Fellow with duties at Cisco Systems San Jose, Calif.



Army Corps Restores Rulers Bar and Marsh Islands

By Vincent Elias, Public Affairs

It is estimated that approximately 1,400 acres of tidal salt marsh have been lost from the marsh islands in Jamaica Bay, New York since 1924, with the system wide rate of loss rapidly increasing in recent years. From 1994 and 1999, an estimated 220 acres of salt marsh were lost at a rate of 47 acres per year.

With the Manhattan skyline less than 10 miles to the north, the eight by four mile marsh islands complex is an integral part of the Bay, which has been targeted for restoration by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service (Gateway), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the National Resources Conservation Service and the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program.

To quell further erosion of the islands, and adding to an already impressive list of habitat restoration projects in the Bay, the Army Corps commenced the placement of sand from the Harbor Deepening Project's Ambrose Channel contract in August 2012 to restore Black Wall and Rulers Bar marsh islands.

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection is leading a community based planting effort with the Littoral Society, EcoWatchers and Jamaica Bay Guardian to vegetate the marsh after sand placement.

The District maximized the beneficial use of dredged material for the last sand contract of the New York/New Jersey Harbor Deepening Project. Over 125 acres of wetlands at Elders East Marsh Island in 2007, Elders West Marsh Island in 2010 and Yellow Bar Marsh Island in 2012 have been restored. Black Wall and Rulers Bar Marsh Islands were both funded 100 percent by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

The Army Corps has a strong commitment along with our partners and stakeholders to restore critical habitat within Jamaica Bay, maintain the ecological integrity of the New York and New Jersey Harbor Estuary, with the economic benefits of deepening the Port of New York and New Jersey," said Lisa Baron, Project Manager.

"The region continues to work together to achieve our vision of a World Class Harbor Estuary for future generations."

"Leveraging programs and maximizing restoration opportunities should be seized at every opportunity - especially when funds are limited", she said. "We hoped to reduce construction costs of 35 more acres of wetlands in the Bay at these two additional islands since the Corps



Photo: Andrew G. G. G. G.

Cont'd page 6



was in the field constructing Yellow Bar. Agencies were able to take advantage of already mobilized dredges and sand placement infrastructure (pipeline) which was expected to result in a cost savings to the overall program.”

The Gateway National Recreation Area is at the heart of Jamaica Bay and is a highly productive habitat that supports more than 300 species of birds, and over 100 species of fish, marine animals and reptiles. These species breed and use the area as a nursery for juveniles, and hundreds of migratory birds that reside in the area during winter, and migratory birds that stop-over during fall, and ‘fly way’ spring migrations.

“Wetlands loss is a major concern in the Bay,” added Baron, “We are very proud to be in a position to work with other organizations and with New York State to begin the monumental task of creating, restoring and conserving these habitats that are critical to our marine resources.”

The complex has experienced greater wetlands loss than almost anywhere else in the Bay and marsh island habitat continues to disappear at a rapid rate.

“These habitats are at the very core of a healthy marine system and it is critical to not only stop losing wetlands, but also start to rebuild them where they have disappeared,” said Baron. “This type of restoration project is essential if we are going to continue to enjoy the incredible marine resources we have in the Bay.”

According to Peter Wepler, Chief, Coastal Ecosys-

tem Section, using lessons learned from Elders East, Elders West and Yellow Bar marsh islands are being used to construct Black Wall and Rulers Bar marsh islands through the beneficial use of dredged material. “One hundred and fifty-five thousand cubic yards of sand from Ambrose channel will be used to restore Black Wall resulting in 22.2 acres of marsh and 95,000 cubic yards of sand to restore Rulers Bar Marsh Island for an additional 12.2 acres of marsh,” said Wepler.

“There is a considerable amount of engineering construction that goes into a project like this, but the method has a proven success at Elders East, West, Yellow Bar and others,” said Melissa Alvarez, Project Biologist.

“The Bay is a particular area of concern, but we are committed to turning the tide on habitat loss there and restoring it to its full potential.”

Jamaica Bay and the Hudson Raritan Estuary is home of the first urban National Park, a key component and focus of the President’s America’s Great Outdoors initiative. The Bay is recognized as a coastal habitat deserving preservation and restoration, which contribute to sustaining and expanding the region’s native living resources. The overall Hudson Raritan Estuary was designated in 1988 as an Estuary of National Significance, and more recently designated as a ‘Great Water’ within the National “Great Waters” Campaign, and is one of the Army Corps’ priority ecosystems of national significance.

“To maximize benefits, partners and funding we are using the sand from the HDP to remediate, restore and protect the invaluable infrastructure within the estuary. After Black Wall and Rulers Bar sand placement are completed, the pipeline will be moved to Plumb Beach, New York to stabilize the shoreline and protect the Belt Parkway,” added Baron.

The Army Corps is just one of many partners in this collaboration of Federal, New York State, New York City, environmental, and private organizations to revitalize the Hudson-Raritan Estuary in order to advance the goals and targets of the broader Hudson Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan.

Federal Employee News in Brief

Sequester: Civilian personnel in the Defense Department will be “seriously affected” if a budget sequester takes effect next year, the Pentagon’s top budget official said recently. There will be a “high probability” of both a hiring freeze and furloughs of current employees should Congress allow the sequestration process to go forward, said Robert Hale, undersecretary of Defense and chief financial officer

Government Credit Cards: Congress passed a bill to toughen oversight of agency purchasing cards, codifying new penalties on federal employees who abuse the cards. The bill requires agencies that issue credit cards and convenience checks to, among other actions, improve record-keeping; train employees in use of the cards; perform credit checks on employees issued cards; require prompt payments to avoid interest charges; invalidate cards for employees who depart the agency; and conduct periodic reviews of which employees should be issued the cards.

Pay: On September 28, President Obama signed the continuing appropriations resolution that authorizes the government to spend money for another six months. It is called the “Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2013” and it replaces the previous continuing appropriation resolution passed earlier this year. It continues funding the government until late in March 2013. In effect, this means that the existing pay freeze for federal employees will remain in effect, probably until the Spring of 2013. We do not, of course, know what will happen after that time.

Health Benefits: Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Premiums will rise 3.4 percent overall in 2013, the Office of Personnel Management said recently. But enrollees in FEHBP’s most popular plan — the Blue Cross Blue Shield standard option — will see minuscule increases next year. The average dental coverage premium will go up less than 1 percent next year. Vision premiums will decline slightly on average.

Flexible Spending Accounts: Beginning next year, health care flexible spending accounts will be capped at \$2,500, instead of \$5,000. That reduction was mandated as part of the Affordable Care Act health care reform bill. Dependent care flexible spending accounts will remain capped at \$5,000

Open Season: The open season to sign up for health, dental and vision benefits and flexible spending accounts will go from Nov. 12 to Dec. 10. FEHBP will offer 230 health plans, up from 206 plan choices available in 2012. OPM said 13 of those plans will be open to all eligible employees and retirees. OPM added five new health maintenance organization plans this year.

Thrift Savings Plan: The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board is in the early stages of deciding whether or not to allow Thrift Savings Plan beneficiaries the ability to direct a portion of their assets to private mutual funds. FRTIB is researching the option and will present a paper on the issue in the next year.



Army Divers Perform Waterfront Repairs at Corp's New Jersey Marine Terminal

By Vince Elias, Public Affairs

With the Manhattan skyline in the distance, a specialized group of Soldiers were busy during the month of August working at the Army Corps' Caven Point Marine Terminal located along the New York Harbor in New Jersey.

The Soldiers are Army divers from the 86th Engineer Dive Detachment home based in Fort Eustis, Va. who deployed to accomplish training, pier waterfront infrastructure operations, carpentry, surface and underwater cutting and jetting along the shoreline docking facilities used by the Corps' marine fleet of vessels.

Army divers and the Corps have a longstanding mutually-supportive relationship and were once again eager to train on a wide variety of tasks and in the process, provided the Corps with a high-quality product.

The 86th Engineer Dive Detachment's support to the operation allowed for real world training in various mission essential collective and individual skill tasks. Capt. JohnPaul Navarro, Commander of the 86th Engineer Dive Team emphasized the importance of training and the work being performed.

"The practical application of the mission provided the divers with a unique opportunity to sharpen

skills, stay mission ready, perform pier side and underwater repairs, as well as, perform dry dock and hull inspections of Corps watercraft," said Navarro. "We're jetting underneath the dry dock – using a fire hose to blast away sediment and mud that collects underneath the dry dock preventing it from operat-



ing at its full range. The jetting is performed every year by the divers at Caven Point."

The divers replaced deteriorated cross and lateral bracings used to maintain the structural integrity of the piers, reattached damaged rubber bumpers that protect vessels from the pier, and replaced damaged sacrificial lumber which protects the structural lumber from wave action and vessels.

"We also removed nearly 125 tons of floating debris using ad-

vanced underwater equipment, such as the hydraulic chain saw and exothermic cutting torch which burns at 10,000 degrees," added 1st. Lt. Ezra Swanson, Executive Officer, 86th Engineer Dive Team.

Staff Sgt. Chaise Turner, Platoon Sergeant, 86th Engineer Dive Team added, "The team was also able to install 12 by 12 foot lumber piles on the side of the pier that gets worn by vessels and wave action over time."

Col. Kent Savre, the Army Corps' North Atlantic Division Commander met with the divers along with Lt. Col. Michael Clancy, the Army Corps' New York District Deputy Commander following a tour of the six acre facility accompanied by Tom Creamer, Chief of Operations, New York District and Walter Scott, Chief, Physical Support Branch that operates and maintains the facility and manages the Drift and Floatables Collection Project, and the Operations Support Branch Survey Section performs bathymetric surveys. The group also visited the main building, Construction Division Metro Area Offices and the Kill van Kull Channel Deepening Project offices including a tour along the waterfront. Savre also took the opportunity to meet with the divers and personally acknowledge their efforts by presenting them with a Commander's coin.

Army Corps and Partners Celebrate “Estuary Day”

By Vince Elias, Public Affairs

Balancing the Port and the environment are two components of a world class estuary – and on October 12, 2012 an alliance of partners with the support of elected officials conveyed this important initiative to hundreds of area school students at the 10th annual Estuary Day celebration.

Held near the Elizabeth River at the Peterstown Community Center in Elizabeth, New Jersey, students arrived by the bus load in what turned out to be a very successful interactive experience.

Orchestrated by Future City Inc., and sponsored by the Elizabeth River/Arthur Kill Watershed Association, the event’s success is attributed to a concerted effort and steadfast partnership with strong local support. The program demonstrated the importance of education and community participation in preserving the environment.

Partnering organizations included the Elizabeth River/Arthur Kill Watershed Association, City of Elizabeth mayor’s office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Harbor Estuary Program, New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection, NY/NJ Baykeeper, Green Infrastructure and support from the offices of U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez and Rep. Albio Sires (NJ-13).

In a setting which was not a typical classroom, participating agencies staffed table displays and served as instructors, discussing with students their respective organization’s mission as it relates to the port, harbor, estuary and about environmental stewardship.

Commitment to selfless-service is one of the Army’s core values, and volunteers from the Army Corps’ New York District exemplified this value by sharing their expertise with students and affording them an opportunity to better comprehend the history of the estuary and its environmental state.

Using a variety of visual aids, William Slezak, Chief of the Army Corps’ New York Harbor Programs along with Lisa Baron, marine biologist lectured at the Corps’ education workshops about the New York and New Jersey harbor estuary and the significance of balancing the Port and the environment, ecosystem restoration and activities associated with restoration projects and studies.

Melissa Alvarez, Lisa Baron, Chonteau Johnson, Amanda Switzer and Thomas Wyche staffed the live marine animal interactive exhibit as Stephen Knowles interacted with students nearby at his model of an estuary exhibit.

“The Army Corps and its partners have many roles, and focus on improving the New York and

New Jersey Harbor Estuary. This is another great opportunity to learn about the Estuary,” said Slezak at the opening ceremony. “It is our hope that each and every one of you can leave from today’s workshops with a little bit more knowledge about the estuary and ways we can affect changes in our watershed.”

“Estuaries are national treasures -- vital ecological and community resources whose health affects our health and the vibrancy of our communities and economy,” said Baron who has been a participant for the past five years. “Estuary Day 2012 was another fabulous event that exemplified strong partnership with a common goal to inform our future leaders about the importance of sustaining and improving the health of the estuary.”

It was especially rewarding for the Corps and another opportunity to provide pupils with information about the Corps its many environmental initiatives in the region. By sharing their knowledge, volunteers imparted how important the estuary is to the region and the nation and students were able to take with them their newfound knowledge to share with their friends and families on what they experienced and learned at Estuary Day.



Sand is pumped onto Plumb Beach in Brooklyn Monday October 22, 2012 as the Plumb Beach Coastal Storm Risk Reduction project is underway. In the photo, you can see bulldozers moving the freshly pumped sand toward the shore to build a beach that is designed to provide a buffer of protection for the busy Belt Parkway, visible to the left. The Belt Parkway is a critical piece of New York City's infrastructure and before the project got underway it was being protected from coastal storm surge by the black sandbags visible at the bottom of the photo where the shoreline was before construction. The first phase of the project includes the pumping of approximately 127,000 cubic yards of sand being beneficially reused from the deepening of Ambrose Channel in the New York and New Jersey Harbor. Installation of a temporary Geotube groin is also part of the first phase to help prevent erosion until the second phase begins. Two permanent stone groins and a stone breakwater will be constructed in the second phase to prevent erosion in the long term.

Photo by Chris Gardner, Public Affairs

Plumb Beach Brooklyn, NY

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

On October 2, 2012 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District was nominated as an ideal employment partner in federal government by providing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Each year during National Disability Employment Awareness Month a celebration is held to recognize outstanding employers who have excelled at instituting programs that have enhanced the vocational rehabilitation, independent living services and business services needed by persons with disabilities.

Nominated by Abilities, Inc. the Corps was recognized for the continuing efforts of Estelle Capowski and Jean Lau, EEO, in supporting business skills training for member of Abilities Inc.

Working with the staff of Abilities, Inc. curriculum development was enhanced and new and innovative skills and training programs were developed to meet the needs of employers in a challenging job market. Capowski provided practice human resource interviews on a quarterly basis for the Business Skills training participants and Lau recently did "Career Coaching" on networking and resume writing. These coaching sessions have resulted in increased job placements and increased hiring opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Estelle Capowski, Jean Lau, of EEO, along with Michael Dolan, Program Manager, Abilities.org



Building Strong means Building Safe

By JC Delgadillo
Afghanistan Engineer District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers believes a safe work environment is a basic right. Throughout the Afghanistan Engineer District-South area of operations, where dozens of Afghan National Security Forces installations are under construction, safety and occupational health specialists visit job sites daily to make sure laborers are protected from unnecessary risks.

“A person ought to be able to go to work, earn a living and return in the same condition he left home in, said Bruce Barrett, Chief of Safety and Occupational Health for the Afghanistan Engineer District-South.

The safety of the Afghan people and Coalition forces continues to be the highest priority for NATO’s International Security Assistance Force. The USACE is building dozens of high-quality facilities throughout Afghanistan where Afghan National Security Forces will live, work and train. Construction is one of the most dangerous industries, not only in Afghanistan, but world-wide. As such, safety and occupational health specialists inspect sites, equipment, and practices to ensure safety standards and regulations are followed.



Jeff Ice, a safety and occupational health specialist who deployed to Kandahar from the USACE New York District shows an Afghan construction worker how to detect a fake fire extinguisher. Some counterfeit ones, instead of releasing the normal fire-stopping agent they are supposed to release, spit out flour or other non-effective substances. (Photo by JC Delgadillo)

“Nobody should have to labor in a reckless environment,” said Barrett, who deployed to Kandahar from the USACE Southwestern Division where he serves as the Division’s Chief of Safety and Occupational Health. Barrett has more than 40 years experience in the industry and has managed the Safety and Occupational Health programs to excellence at four of the nine divisions and several of the Districts within USACE.

“The people of Afghanistan have suffered decades of conflict which has ravaged the country’s public infrastructure and resulted in a deteriorated construction industry and a weak safety and occupational health program,” explained Geronimo Gomez, a safety and occupational health specialist with more than 35 years experience making workplaces healthier and safer. Gomez has taught safety and occupational health courses at the University of Texas and served at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, too.

continued on page 12



“I look at scaffolding, fall protection, ladders, electrical work, excavations, protective systems and much more when I’m at a site,” said Jeff Ice, a safety and occupational health specialist who deployed to Kandahar from the USACE New York District. “I observe the workers, I check their equipment, I ask questions and I listen,” he said.

“Safety and occupational health is influenced by social, economic, and cultural factors,” said Ice.

For more information about the standards and regulations governing USACE workplace safety and occupational health, check out the USACE Safety and Health Requirements Manual, EM 385-1-1.