



# The New York District Times



Summer 2001

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

## Col. O'Dowd takes the helm

Col. John B. O'Dowd became the 47<sup>th</sup> commander and New York District Engineer at a Change of Command ceremony held July 16 in the U.S. Customs House in downtown Manhattan. He replaced Col. William H. Pearce, who retired.

Col. O'Dowd is also the Supervisor of New York Harbor. He is a native of Bergenfield, N.J. He was commissioned into the Army after graduating from the United States Military Academy in 1978. He earned a masters degree in Environmental Engineering from The Johns Hopkins University in 1989.

His military education includes the Engineer Officer Basic and Advance Course, the United States Army Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. His most recent assignment was as an Army War College Fellow at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University in Boston.

Col. O'Dowd has served in numerous command and staff positions during his career. He commanded the 30<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Topographic) at Fort Bragg. He served as the Executive Officer for the Engineer Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, Republic of Korea.

He was assigned as the Operations Officer (S-3) for the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade (Combat) (Airborne Corps) during Operation "Uphold Democracy" in Haiti and also served as the Executive Officer, 30<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Topographic). His

Col. John B. O'Dowd, 47th District Engineer, grasps the Corps guidon at the Change of Command ceremony July 16.



Photo: George Lamboy

early assignments include Operations Officer (S-3) for the 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Airborne) and Commander of C Company, 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Airborne) at Fort Bragg where he participated in numerous operations in Central America. He has also served as the Deputy Director of Public Works at Fort Bragg and as an Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Col. O'Dowd's military awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (with four Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the Master Parachutist Badge.

Col. O'Dowd is married to the former Molly Kathleen Fitzgerald of Spokane, Wash. They have a son, Scott and two daughters, Elizabeth and Katie.

*Change of Command photos, page 2*

### Inside ...



*President's Quality Award Program*

*page 14*



**New York District Times**

Newsletter of the  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,  
New York District  
Vol. 26, No. 4  
Summer 2001

**Commander and  
District Engineer**  
*Col. John B. O'Dowd*

**Chief, Public Affairs**  
*Peter H. Shugert*  
*peter.h.shugert@usace.army.mil*

**Editor, Layout & Graphic  
Design**  
*Vince Elias*  
*vincent.elias@usace.army.mil*

**- Authorization:** The New York District Times is an authorized unofficial newspaper of the New York District. It is published in accordance with provisions of AR-360-1.

**- Circulation:** 1500 copies per issue in print and available on the world wide web @ [www.nan.usace.army.mil](http://www.nan.usace.army.mil)

**- Submission:** News, features, photos and art are solicited. Direct queries to: Editor, Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District, 26 Federal Plaza, Room 2113, New York, NY 10278-0090.

**- 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.



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



# Change of Command



**U.S. Customs  
House  
New York City**  
**July 16, 2001**



Photos: George Lamboy

## Operations boat crew recovers whale



A dead whale was spotted by boaters in July off the coast of Staten Island, N.Y. New York District swung into action and dispatched the vessel *Driftmaster* to the site to remove the mammal. The *Driftmaster* crew secured the black and white baby humpback alongside the vessel and towed it to Caven Point, N.J., to be examined by experts. The discovery marks the sixth dead whale found in or around New York Harbor and removed from the water by New York District in the past year.

## District supports FEMA after Tropical Storm Allison



Beth Nash and Herman Wine hard at work while working with FEMA in Texas.

A team from New York District deployed in June to Houston, Tex. on temporary assignment to augment the Federal Emergency Management Agency in response to Tropical Storm Allison. The storm plagued a number of counties. The team was comprised of Herman Wine, action officer; Norman Blumenstein, mission manager; Steve McDevitt, mission specialist; Bob Hass and Patrick Cahill, real estate specialists; Howard Rubin and Beth Nash, environmental specialists; Assegid Gezahegne, site engineer, and Andrew Chan, electrical engineer. The team was prepared to design new site for mobile homes, while a Savannah District team was tasked with locating and installing temporary trailers at existing home sites.

McDevitt collected GIS information from existing maps and verified data with field surveys as part of the team's daily functions.

"We also met with local officials and spoke with them about any concerns that might arise," said Chan. "Our other tasks included talking with local contractors concerning potential construction work in some of the sites we surveyed."

Mary Stavina's

## Tidbits



**Did you know ?** The Pentagon covers 29 acres of land and encompasses over 6.6 million square feet of floor space (3 times the floor space of the Empire State Building). The original site was nothing more than wasteland, swamps and dumps. Five and one half million cubic yards of earth and 41,492 concrete piles contributed to the foundation of the building. Dredged from the Potomac River was 680,000 tons of sand and gravel that was processed into 435,000 cubic yards of concrete and molded into the Pentagon form. The building was constructed in 16 months and completed January 15, 1943, at an approximate cost of \$83 million. It consolidated 17 buildings of the War Department and returned its investment within seven years.

# A better way to do business

## New personnel action and record computer software system

By Sue Hopkins

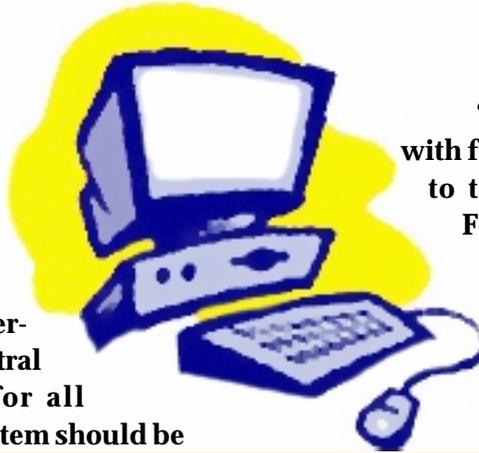
Supervisors and administrative support personnel throughout New York District are learning the Modern way to handle personnel actions.

The hard copy Official Personnel Folder remains as the central permanent record of actions for all civilian personnel, and the new system should be transparent to most employees.

But the people using the new software will see a Modern system with expanded historical files for each employee and improved tracking of personnel actions, all in a system that's both faster than the old Legacy system and easier to use. Drop-down menus and pop-up windows make the system user friendly, and data can be displayed in a variety of formats that can be modified, filtered, sorted and exported for use in other applications such as an Excel spreadsheet.

With the introduction of the Modern system (actually, the modern Defense Civilian Personnel Defense System), Army organizations serviced by the Northeast Region, Civilian Personnel Operations Center join units throughout the Defense Department. When all Army and Defense Department units are using the system, the electronic master file of each employee will easily flow from assignment to assignment, and into retirement.

"One of the advantages of the new system is that everyone involved in the civilian personnel process (managers, supervisors, resource managers and human resource personnel) can access the system, and data will flow quickly and efficiently to organization and geographic locations," said Denise Copeland, a personnel management specialist with the Civilian Personnel Operations Center Management Agency at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.



"Our staff is working one-on-one with frequent users to help them get used to the new system," said Mercedes Fernandez, a personnel specialist in New York District's Human Resources Office.

Among the challenges: Modern uses commercial off-the-shelf software customized by a British firm. The difference between United States English and United Kingdom English can confuse users on this side of the Atlantic. For example, the "open" button allows the user to look at an action, while the "respond" button is for working on and circulating actions.

Checklists are being developed to help new users become familiar with the system, Fernandez said. New users will have to remember to make comments on the notepad and to route personnel actions to the proper groupbox.

"It's another way of doing personnel processing," she explained. "It involves the whole personnel cycle, from bringing personnel on board, to paying them, to releasing records on transfer and moving into retirement."

During the past six years, the Army has led the way for the other services in regionalizing and modernizing civilian personnel operations, and is now 100 percent regionalized. Civilian personnel operations across DoD continue to regionalize and modernize to provide more cost-effective services and support services with fewer personnel specialists. The Army's goal is to have a personnel system that has more integrated processes and is responsive to the customers' needs.

*(Barbara K. Filbert, Civilian Personnel Operations Center Management Agency, contributed to this story.)*

# cyber sources



## Health care

Federal health agencies, hospitals and professional medical groups are excellent sources on the internet. Listed below are some health-related web sites.

[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

### National Institute of Health

NIH conducts research in its own laboratories; supports the research of non-federal scientists in universities, medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions throughout the country and abroad; assists in training research investigators; and fosters communication of medical information.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### Centers for Disease Control

The CDC is recognized as the lead federal health and safety of people. CDC serves as the national focus for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States.

[www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org)

### The National Committee for Quality Assurance

Improves the quality of health care. A widely trusted source of information for health care quality improvement. People are their most valued resource.

[www.merckhomeedition.com](http://www.merckhomeedition.com)

### Merck Manual

Merck & Co. Inc. is a research-driven pharmaceutical products and services company. Merck discovers, develops, manufactures and markets a broad range of innovative products to improve human and animal health, directly and through its joint ventures.

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

### American Heart Association

Publishes information to reduce disability and death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

### Mayo Clinic

Provides the user access to the experience and knowledge of physicians and scientists of the Mayo Clinic. This site is owned by Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research.

[www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov)

### National Library of Medicine

A gold mine of up-to-date, quality health care information from the world's largest medical library, the National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health. MEDLINEplus is for anyone with a medical question, both health professionals and consumers.

[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

### The Food and Drug Administration

The FDA promotes and protects the public's health by helping to ensure timely safe and effective products reach the market. FDA monitors products for continued safety after they are in use, using a blend of law and science aimed at protecting consumers.

## EMERGENCY HOTLINE



New York District must remain prepared for the eventuality that operations may be affected due to severe weather. At the discretion of the District Engineer, operations may continue as normal; be suspended at a certain hour, or a liberal leave policy instituted.

Early dismissal at the Jacob Javits federal building due to inclement weather or other circumstances will be handled through the normal chain of command. Employees should contact their immediate supervisors regarding early dismissal or building closure.

During off-duty hours information will be available on the District's hotline: (212) 264-3136. Employees are responsible for checking the hotline regarding the status of reporting to work. When there is a potential for building closure or late opening, a message will be recorded on the hotline by 6 a.m. based on the release of building information received from the Federal Executive Board at 5:30 a.m.

Source: Randall G. Hintz, Emergency Operations Manager



# World-famous bridge connected to the Corps

By George Hanley, CENWK-PA

The Corps of Engineers connection to the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City traces its origin back to 1867. Today, the Corps is tied to the bridge in an effort to clean up the site owned by the designers who produced the bridge's cables, Roebling Steel.

The name Roebling may not mean much to many people, except for Dan Hearnen of Kansas City District and others working on this HTRW project. John Roebling Sr., was a trained engineer in his native Prussia but a failing German immigrant farmer in western Pennsylvania who saw the need for a new German wire rope. And although he did not invent wire rope, he perfected the production processes and marketing of it. His first patent was for a wrapped wire rope to be used in place of hemp to haul barges loaded on railcars up the inclines at dams on the Pennsylvania canal system.

Knowing that the days of towboats were coming to an end he went to work mapping the route west for the coming trans-continental railroad. Difficulties in staffing the wire mill at Saxonburg in western Pennsylvania led him to relocate to a larger facility in Trenton, N.J. From that location, he established a monopoly in the fabrication of high-quality wire rope.

For the past 10 years the Corps has been involved in cleaning up Roebling Steel in Trenton. The company had flourished for over a century, and produced patented wire rope that was used on the historic Brooklyn Bridge and in every other bridge around New York City, as well as the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. That was until it fell victim to economics and competition from the century-old rivalry between Roebling and J.P. Morgan's U.S. Steel.

The historical report of our cleanup effort brought back for me, a native New Yorker, a lifetime of memories, both new and old, of the Roebings, their work, and my life.

Inside the swanky *River Caf*, where a meal for two costs more than a car payment and the lights of the city are in competition with my companion's jewels and the lower Manhattan nightscape, the lights on the Brooklyn Bridge -- a legacy of the Roebling family -- neatly outlined her platinum

blonde hair like a tiara. Those lights were a proviso in the original charter of the Brooklyn Bridge Co. that specified, "it would be lighted at all times."

That night, looking out at the roiling waters of the East River -- which flows beneath the Brooklyn Bridge and which isn't a river but a tidal strait -- it was hard for me to imagine how my grandfather could swim the mile distance as a 12 year-old boy. But when you're an orphaned Irish immigrant like my grandfather living in a newsboy's home in turn-of-the-century New York City, your entertainment options are limited.

I remember going to the funeral of an uncle, who like many poor people then, found fame and fortune at the end of his fists and lived with the brain



The Brooklyn Bridge crosses the East River and links Brooklyn to Manhattan in New York City.

damage for the rest of his life. He was last seen walking across the bridge before he became a victim of muggers. The "s" word was never mentioned in those days.

I also recall walking under that same bridge to the City of New York Sheriff's Office garage and my dad always telling me, "Those Roebings were something else -- they made the New York skyline what it is today!"

My mind flashed back to reading *American Heritage* magazine and the story of the building of the Brooklyn Bridge. The father dying of tetanus from a barge crushing his foot. The son, Washington, incapacitated for the remainder of his life by caisson disease (the bends) using his wife (a non-engineer) and a telescope to direct completion from his bedside.

*continued on next page*

## Brooklyn Bridge (*cont'd.*)

Meanwhile, the clouds of war were gathering, and in 1861, the son, Washington Roebling, enters the Army and distinguishes himself as a combat engineer, designing bridges for the Battle of the Wilderness and the siege of Petersburg. While serving as an aide to Brig. Gen. Gouverneur Kemble Warren at West Point, Washington meets at an army dance and courts the general's sister, Emily Warren.

The general was named after the superintendent of the West Point Foundry, which became another highly successful national award-winning HTRW project for the District -- *Marathon Battery*.

In one of his billets-doux showing his romantic side, Washington Roebling writes "pray tell me what is love? Is it kissing each other, is it tickling, hugging, etc., one another? Is it writing billy duxes(sic), kicking each other's shins under the table? That must be it I think -- the shins!"

When the project to build the bridge began, Roebling selected the most prominent engineers of the time as members of the blue ribbon panel. They were mostly former Army engineers. When it came time for the approval of the project, General A.A.

Humphreys, namesake of the engineering center at Fort Belvoir, took one week to approve the Section 10 permit, but required it first to pass muster before the Corps' own panel. Throughout the construction General Humphreys did not hesitate to recommend good engineers to the Roeblings.

The Corps has worked to remove chemical piles, fly ash and other health hazards, as well as designing a soil cover for sludge. Construction of the soil cover has been tabled pending resolution between EPA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

What piqued my interest in the project were the plans for the restoration of the gatehouse to the plant. That quaint structure has a Request for Proposal to finalize the design and restoration plan and removal of non-historic materials. The RFP has gone to a PRAC for negotiation.

And despite the many personal memories of the bridge, its world wide impact was hammered home to me when, as an army officer, I stepped off the train in Rome, Italy, and saw a gum machine emblazoned with a drawing of the bridge, "Brooklyn -- la gomma del ponte."



## SPICER VILLAGE, PICATINNY ARSENAL, N.J.

Construction of 29 new town homes is on schedule at Spicer Village, a family housing unit construction project at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J.

A percentage of large, natural rock was removed from the west site with removal of blasted rock on the east site expected to be completed in late September.



Large areas of rock at the Spicer Village family housing units under construction at Picatinny Aresena.

## Reserve Center Revitalization project Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, N.Y.

The first phase of renovations of the \$7.3 million Armed Forces Reserve Center, Fort Wadsworth, is nearing completion following a year-long effort.

"A final walk-through of the facility will soon be scheduled," said Matt Walsh, construction administrator. When completed, the building will be occupied by the 8th Medical Unit and the 353rd Army Brigade. The project has earned high marks from the 77th Regional Support Command. "With an early September 2001 turnover of the facility on track, the Reserve units are pleased with the likelihood of moving into their new office spaces on schedule," said Bill Tully, Project Manager.



# STARS SHINE AT DISTRICT DAY 2001

New York District celebrated its annual Employee Recognition Day at Fort Hamilton Friday, July 13. An early morning awards ceremony in the post theater was followed by a picnic on Doubleday Field. Congratulations to 2001 award recipients:

## Super Stars

### ENGINEER OF THE YEAR

Michael Rovi, EN-MC

### EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Thanh Nguyen, IM-P

### PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Christine Delorier, OP-RW Albany

### STAFF SUPPORT PERSON OF THE YEAR

Pauline Pugliese, OP-RW

### SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

Daniel Lee, CO-NF Northern N.J. Area

### TEAM OF THE YEAR

Ambulatory Health Care Clinic  
McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.

### Outstanding District-Wide Contributions

#### BLOOD DRIVE

Liliana Correa, HR

#### COMMAND PICNIC

Paul Franco, PP-M  
Cliff Jones, PP-C

#### U.S. SAVINGS BOND DRIVE

Rita Fisher, OC

#### COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

Gustavo Sierra-Gonzalez, IM-P

## Time in service

### 55 YEARS

Willien Cunningham, EN

### 35 YEARS

Norman Blumenstein, PL  
Raymond Boc, EN

### 30 YEARS

Margaret Bristol, IM  
James Demetriou, PPMD  
Ellen Higgins, OP  
William Matias, OP  
Michael Millard, PPMD  
Stuart Piken, PPMD  
Robert Pivrotto, OP  
George Stanley, EN

### 25 YEARS

Maria Anglada, RM  
Donald Braun, CO  
Jay Hecht, OC  
Joseph Hirsch, RM  
Kathleen Hirsch, SB  
Robert Kurtz, PL  
Timothy LaFontaine, OP  
Yadira Rivera-Villegas, RM  
William Slezak, PPMD

### 20 YEARS

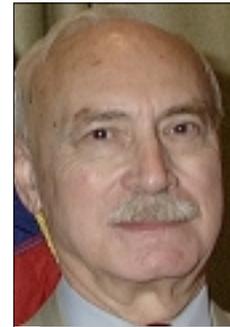
Juliette Baker, PPMD  
William Bendick, EN  
Prakash Bhatia, CO  
Mark Dormann, CO  
Thomas Dwyer, OP  
Pedro Febles, CO  
Jeffrey T. Fry, PL  
Karen Hicks, EN  
Joseph Ingiane, LM  
Jannetta Isberner, CO  
John Kirk, CO  
Lorraine Lee, OC  
Richard McInerney, CO  
Marilyn McMichael, RM  
Yuri Prizel, EN  
Frank Santangelo, EN  
Joe Vietri, PL  
Claude Vincent, OP  
Richard Wright, EN



## Partners in Education certificates

Awarded by the New York City Board of Education to District mentoring volunteers:  
Cynthia Jester, PL-F, Coordinator  
Rodney Abrams, EN-DS  
Odile Accilien, EN-H  
Gezahagne Assegid, EN-DE  
Andre Chauncey, EN-H  
Kerry Ann Donohue, EN-HH  
Richard Gajdek, PP-E  
Clifford Jones, PP-C  
John O'Connor, PP-C  
Abraham Portalatin, SA  
Herman Wine, PP-C  
Roussant Michel, PL-F

## Schroer Inducted into Hall of Fame



*Charles Schroer* was officially inducted into New York District's Hall of Fame at the awards ceremony, July 13. Schroer's photo will be prominently displayed with other prominent District inductees along the walk of fame on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor.



## Loyal to the Corps



President Harry Truman was commander in chief when Willien Cunningham of Engineering entered the Federal work force. Cunningham was among 39 employees who received time in service awards this past District Day where she was honored for 55 years of loyal service. She began her career as a GS-2 with the Army at Fort Jay on Governors Island before transferring to the HQ Army also on Governors Island. She subsequently took a position at Fort Hamilton where she worked in purchasing and contracting. She left the Army for 14 years, when she worked at NASA in Manhattan before joining New York District under the command leadership of then-District Engineer Col. Griffith. Cunningham prides herself on being a diligent worker. "I have never collected a day or dime of unemployment," she said. "I have met some very nice people while working with the Corps. I enjoy my job in A/E selections. I am always learning something new."

## BCC honored by FEB

Congratulations! Kosovo Base Camp Coordinating Team on receiving the New York Federal Executive Board 2001 Team Award.



Kosovo Base Camp Coordinating Team: (l-r) Doug Leite, Anthony Felder, Dave Rackmales, Jeff Crowley, Sterret Daniels, William Matias, Rich Bulvid, James Lodge, Dave Campbell, Bob Gerrits, Ed Sim. (Not pictured: Lt. Col. Byron Jorns, Maj. Gwen Baker, Maj. Steve Baker, Maj. Dave Chestnut, and Andrew Smith).



## Driftmaster Crew lauded



Well done! to the crew of the drift collection vessel *Driftmaster* who received the Safety Efficiency Award. The crew (l-r) Johann Aquilera, deckhand; John McNamara, lead deckhand; William Carl, Chief Engineer; Richard Gaudreau, asst. master; Richard Bulvid, master; and Col. William Pearce, former DE.



## Fair winds and following seas

Former commander and supervisor of the harbor retires

Col. William H. Pearce retired from the Army on July 16 following a 26-year stellar military career. He was the 46th New York District Engineer and commanded New York District from July 1998 to July 2001. Col. Pearce was assigned to numerous engineer troop units in Germany and in CONUS. He also served in Panama with an engineer battalion, where he was involved in nation assistance construction missions throughout Central America.

Col. Pearce graduated from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College. He and his wife Sarah have a daughter, Mary, and two sons, Billy and Tom.



### Welcome

Col. John B. O'Dowd, DE  
Ming Chien Chu, EN  
Pamela Failing, EN  
Douglas Sommer, PPMD  
Stuart Sumner, CT

### Farewell

Jeff Crowley, EN  
Edith Lee, IM  
Bruce Hintz, CO  
Yon Kim, RE

## Stork Club



Belated congratulations to Victoria Gross of EEO on the latest addition to the Gross family: Son Devyn Chase Gross,

born Jan. 29, 2001. Initial vital stats: 8 lbs., 1.6 ozs. Current stats: 20 lbs., 2 ozs.

## Hard Work pays off for Roos



Allen Roos, PP-C is all smiles after receiving the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service. Roos received the decoration for his superior performance in the FUSRAP program.

## Artist sparks annual EEO program



In celebration of New York District's annual Asian Pacific American Heritage program, Lia Chang, actress, author, and photographer, exhibited her photographs and discussed Asian Pacific immigrant experiences in America. Chang is a California native and the daughter of labor activist Bev Umehara and Russell Chang, a Sun Microsystems engineer.

Chang began her career as a model at the age of 15 in San Jose, and in 1981 hit the Big Apple for a modeling convention and never looked back. Chang has appeared in numerous movies and TV shows.

Some of her films include roles in "The Taxman," "Wolf", "New Jack City", "A Kiss Before Dying", and "Big Trouble in Little China."

Her grandmother, Lee Bak Huen, was one of over 175,000 Chinese people detained on Angel Island, the largest island in the San Francisco Bay. Angel Island served as the port of entry for immigrants from the Pacific Rim countries between 1910 and 1940. Over one million immigrants passed through Angel Island, often referred to as the Ellis Island of the West.

Chang's appearance was coordinated with EEO and Isabelita Huerto, special emphasis program manager. Chang's talk and photos were well received by the large number of District employees who attended. Following the program, Chang was kept busy signing autographs.

# CAP: A window to the Corps at Oakwood Beach

By Ivan V. Damaso

Following heavy rainfall, the Oakwood Beach area on Staten Island, N.Y., would be inundated by a significant flooding. During normal high tides, depending upon prevailing winds, the Oakwood Beach community also experienced flooding. After decades of shoreline erosion and deterioration of protective works, such as a wooden floodwall and a stone riprap revetment, Oakwood Beach had become highly vulnerable to storm damage.

When officials and residents of Oakwood Beach presented their situation to the Corps, New York District immediately conducted a study in the problem area. Under the Continuing Authorities Program, New York District evaluated plans for reducing the effects of shoreline erosion and flooding in the community. Joe Forcina initially paved the way for the project. Forcina completed the plans and specifications, executed the PCA, and is credited for his highly successful coordination with various agencies. Project team members attended numerous meetings with local residents and congressional representatives, which was crucial towards the project's success.

Each district in the Corps is authorized by Congress to undertake a number of projects under the program which is referred to by the acronym CAP. The activities involved in CAP range from emergency streambank and shoreline protection (Section 14 project), hurricane and storm damage reduction (Section 103), and flood control (Section 205) to aquatic ecosystem restoration (Section 206) and project modifications for improvement of the environment (Section 1135). The section numbers point to provisions embodied in different laws, such as the various Water Resources Development Acts, the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1962, the Flood Control Act of 1946, and others.

"CAP is essentially a window to the Corps of Engineers," said Cynthia Jester, New York District's CAP coordinator. "A lot of our varied expertise, from traditional authorities -- flood control to newer authorities -- environmental restoration, can be found in one program: CAP."



Coordinating the project with numerous city and state agencies, all of which had to approve and permit the project's construction was key.

For each type of CAP project, Congress has delegated its authority to the Corps of Engineers to approve certain activities up to a certain dollar amount, subject to availability of funds.

The Oakwood Beach project was initiated by the New York District under Section 103 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1962, as amended. According to Frank Verga, project planner, the challenge was coordinating the project with numerous city and state agencies, all of which had to approve and permit the project's construction.

Once the paperwork was completed, the project delivery team went to work. The team comprised of Anthony Ciorra, Ken Johnson, Stu Chase, and Haig Buchakjian designed and constructed a levee, a tide gate, and raised portions of streets in the area. The completed project was officially turned over to the State of New York for operation and maintenance.

"I am very pleased with the project," said Jackie Nielson, an Oakwood Beach community leader. "The people of the community had waited for a solution for a long time, and now appreciate not having to experience all the nuisance flooding problems in the area."

"The goal of every Corps' project is to solve problems," said Verga. "The Corps of Engineers did an excellent job of coordinating and completing the Oakwood Beach project."

# A good time was had by all

**Command Picnic**  
Doubleday Field  
Fort Hamilton  
July 13



picnic-goers relaxing in the shade



Face painting was popular with the children

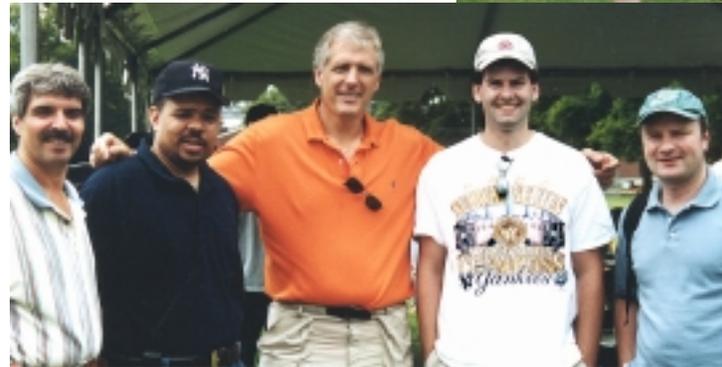


Say synergy

A great catch is made playing extreme frisbee



extreme frisbee players



Military Programs Chief and members of his hard working staff



clowning around with the kids



Wheee!

A fantasy cruise in a humvee



Gridiron greets

Photos: G. Lamboy and R. Boc



## 30-second commercial

### JoAnne Castagna, Project Management, Civil Works

My name is JoAnne Castagna and I am a technical writer/editor in the Project Management Division of the New York District.



I convey the District's story to the public through a variety of communications methods and through a proactive approach. My job is both challenging and rewarding. I'm responsible for translating engineering esoteric writing to the public so they can easily comprehend.

Through this, the public is well informed and educated about our mission and how the Corps affects their lives.

I create, write and update information for

the command web sites. I collaborate with the information management and public affairs staffs for web site content.

I also prepare news releases, develop news articles for the command newspaper, compile project booklets, and provide project information to the media

I'm also a writer, producer and host for a Long Island, N.Y. cable TV program produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I've been doing this as a volunteer for the past 10 years where I produce segments primarily on health-related topics. Recently, I produced a three-part series on diabetes awareness and education. Public feedback has been very positive.

My involvement in the Corps and as a volunteer is very rewarding. I am doing what I enjoy most, which is writing and at the same time educating people on important matters that affect their lives.

## District challengers put on their running shoes

A group of jubilant Corps runners gathered in Central Park July 25 to participate in the second Corporate Challenge run of the summer at Central Park. Each year, Joe Seebode coordinates the 3.5-mile run for New York District that is usually followed by a gathering of Corps runners at a local restaurant where they can replace fluids and carbohydrates.

The Corporate Challenge has been successful in bringing workers out of the office and into a sporting event where fitness, health and fun are rolled into one.

According to Seebode, participants may walk if they elect not to run. It's an excellent opportunity to get people at work to start exercising. The Corporate Challenge isn't only about running, it's about camaraderie.



Corps runners take a breather after crossing the finish line during the Corporate Challenge run at Central Park. The Corporate Challenge is very popular with Corps runners who participated in the 3.5 mile run July 25.

# District implements President's Quality Award Program

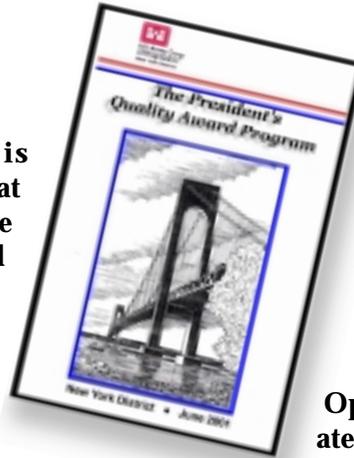
By JoAnne Castagna

**T**he President's Quality Award is awarded to federal organizations that have improved their overall performance and who have demonstrated a sustained trend in providing high quality products and services to customers. In 2000, a PQA assessment was initiated in New York District to provide strategic planning suggestions for future leadership. The PQA application includes assessment questions in the Presidential Quality Award Criteria, which contains the agency's methods and procedures for leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, information and analysis, human resources, process management, and business results.

The PQAC are modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria that awards excellence in private industry and the Army Performance Improvement Criteria that awards excellence in Army organizations. PQAC is a modified version of these two that addresses federal government operations. The criteria are non-prescriptive and only make suggestions for organizational improvements.

Last autumn, the District Engineer initiated the PQA effort, and in April 2001 began the full time assessment by detailing a team of New York District employees, representing a cross-section of the work force, to create an application for the 2001 PQA. The intent was to use it as an internal assessment tool to examine the District.

This is the first time New York District has done the PQA and at a critical time. To guarantee a balance, New York District is focusing on customers' requirements and on continual improvements. To accomplish this, the best tool available will be used,



which is PQAC. It is a proven winner with other districts, federal agencies and in private industry in a different form.

## PQA AND THE OPLAN

The PQAC is an extension of the Operations Plan (OPLAN) initiatives created three years ago, and provides the District with the framework to determine where we are now, where we want to be, and what we need to do to get there. The OPLAN initiatives are a prioritized list of actions the District will take to follow the direction determined by the PQAC.

The OPLAN is a living document that includes both the issues we need to focus on for our future and road map of how to get there. The OPLAN initiatives included 11 focus areas that were grouped under three categories: Human Resources, Customer Service and Business Improvement.

As with the OPLAN initiatives, PQA champions were named to assist the PQA team in gathering information for each of the criteria areas.

The PQA team members were assigned to work on several of the criteria areas. The process proved to be an educational experience for the PQA team.

Team member Mike Rogalski, like the other team members, interviewed management and employees for input, researched quantitative and qualitative data about New York District to prepare business results, and based on the interviews and employee feedback was able to assess strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

*Continued on next page*



PQA Team – (l-r) Thomas Frazier, JoAnne Castagna, David Schlesinger, Mike Rogalski, Beth Nash, and Wardwell Leo. (Not pictured: Norman Blumenstein and Jay Hecht). Photo: V. Elias

## PQAC (cont'd.)

Team members gained a unique perspective of the organization.

“It was a different experience working with the champions outside the realm of projects, and to get upper-level management’s perspective on how they think the District is working as compared to working grade people,” said Rogalski.

Norman Blumenstein said it showed him other facets of the District and why procedures can be useful and valuable.

The experience enhanced champion Amy Cardone’s knowledge and understanding of the technical aspects of the work we do and the District’s mission. “The PQA encourages employees to look outside of their stovepipe and draws others into their area of expertise and gets them interested in crafting improvements,” she said.

### WORKSHOP HELD

In June the PQA team presented the results of the PQA evaluation at an OPLAN workshop, where the Corps’ strategic vision and updated OPLAN initiatives were discussed. Improvements were identified, particularly in HR, where in the past three years there has been improved recruitment and retention through a variety of programs and initiatives such as upward mobility, flexiplace, mentoring, and incentive awards programs.

The evaluation revealed that the District should enhance its strategic planning, information and analysis, and customer focus, and maintain its strengths in leadership, human resources, and processes.

The original OPLAN initiatives will be rolled into the PQA evaluation since the assessment validated many of the original initiatives. According to Cardone, “The OPLAN initiatives were designed to seek solutions to challenges. The topics that became the focus of the OPLAN were the same or very similar to those required to be reviewed under the PQA criteria. Therefore, the PQA assessment enhanced the efforts taken under the OPLAN.” The OPLAN workshop meeting minutes are located on the public drive at p:\\_pqa\OPLAN Workshop MFR.

### THE FUTURE

The PQA evaluation will help shape future initiatives. The champions and team members are optimistic that PQA criteria will be beneficial to New York District and employees.

“The PQAC ensures that each of us focuses on where we are, what we are achieving and how we can improve. This constant self-assessment makes us stay ‘awake at the wheel’ as we embark on our course to success,” said Cardone.

“If recommendations are implemented, there could be some welcome changes for employees,” added Rogalski.

## Foreign maritime director gets up-close look at District’s harbor projects

Susana Wong, director of Maritime Administration for the government of Macau, recently visited New York District and went aboard the *Hocking* on a harbor inspection. Wong deals with multiple jurisdictions with silt and excess plant growth with merchant shipping policy in her native Macau.

Wong’s visit was highlighted by a close-up view of New York Harbor projects that included a comprehensive briefing by Joe Seebode, harbor programs manager.

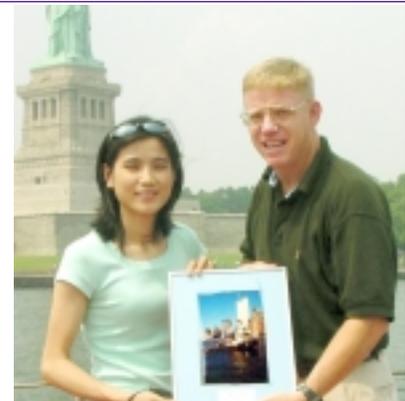


Photo: Peter Shugert

Joe Seebode, harbor programs manager, presents a framed photograph of a Corps vessel to Susana Wong following an inspection of the New York Harbor.



## SAFETY ZONE



**Builder Bill**

### Builder Bill's 10 safety slogans

1. TO SEE OR NOT TO SEE, USE EYE PROTECTION.
2. USE THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB.
3. DON'T LET SAFETY TAKE A HOLIDAY.
4. WHEN IT'S HOT, DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS.
5. AVOID ACCIDENTS, KEEP GUARDS IN PLACE.
6. GOOD HOUSEKEEPING PREVENTS ACCIDENTS.
7. ELECTRICITY CAN TURN YOU OFF.
8. LIFT WITH YOUR LEGS, NOT YOUR BACK.
9. AN ACCIDENT CAN RUIN YOUR CAREER.
10. THE PRICE OF AN ACCIDENT IS ALWAYS HIGH.



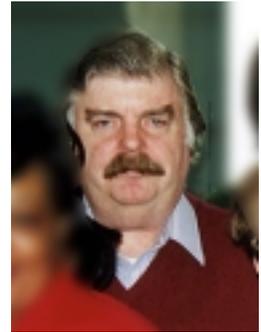
GREEN BROOK FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT SITE VISIT. Col. John O'Dowd, District Engineer and Yvonne Spraggins, Green Brook flood control project manager inside a high density polyethylene pipe that will be installed at the Green Brook flood control project for a sewer line.



## Security reminder

All personnel who are scheduled to travel overseas on TDY/TCS are reminded of the requirements that you must obtain a country clearance, health briefing, and updated anti-terrorist briefing. Contact the Security Office immediately upon being notified that you may be going OCONUS. Country clearances need to be submitted 30 days in advance.

## *In Memoriam*



**Lawrence Locke**

Contracting Division  
passed away May 2001



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

New York District

CENAN-PA, Rm 2113

26 Federal Plaza

New York, NY 10278-0090

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

Address Correction Requested