

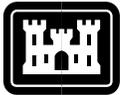
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**US Army Corps
of Engineers
New England District**

Volume 41, No. 3

Yankee Engineer

December 2004



A local resident enjoys fishing in Ninigret Pond, R.I.

Photo by Mark McInerney

Officials break ground on Habitat Restoration project

**by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs**

A groundbreaking ceremony was held Oct. 27 to mark the start of the Ninigret Pond Habitat Restoration Project at Charlestown Breachway in Charlestown, R.I. Dignitaries from local, state, federal and corporate agencies participated in the environmental restoration event, the largest salt pond restoration in New England.

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have been working together on the South Coast Habitat Restoration Project since

1997. One part of the project will restore 40 acres of eelgrass habitat to Ninigret Pond by dredging the flood tidal shoals in the pond to an optimum depth for eelgrass growth. Eelgrass provides a habitat that is essential for the life cycles of several important fish species. It also contributes to the health and productivity of the coastal ecosystem by filtering harmful nutrients and contributing to the food web.

The project area is located along the south coast of Rhode Island in Washington County and in the town of Charlestown. The specific areas of restoration are located in and adjacent to the breachway in Ninigret Pond and

at the juncture of Cross Mills Pond with an unnamed outlet stream that discharges into Ninigret Pond.

Senator Jack Reed, who has worked in Congress to secure funding for restoration and preservation of Ninigret Pond, stated, "The restoration of Ninigret Pond offers us all a rare environmental opportunity -- a chance not just to prevent the destruction of natural habitat, but to roll back the clock and restore what has been lost. Rhode Islanders' quality of life is closely tied to the health of our natural resources. That's why we need to continue our coordinated and ambitious federal, state

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Yankee Voices

Eva Marie D'Antuono
Small Business



Inclement weather program

The New England District Inclement Weather Program is up and running. For up-to-date information on closings or delays, you may dial the hotline number at 978-318-8346. Please dial this number exclusively to obtain inclement weather information. WRKO returns this year and will list announcements from the Corps.

The current list of radio stations that will make the announcements are: WRKO (680 AM) – Boston, Mass.; WEIM (1280 AM) - Fitchburg, Mass.; WCAP (980 AM) – Lowell, Mass.; WOKQ (97.5 FM) - Dover, N.H.; and WGIR (101 FM) - Manchester, N.H.

You may also watch Channel 7's morning news in Boston or by accessing their web site at <http://www2.whdh.com/stormforce/>

In cases of inclement weather, announcements will begin on the District's Inclement Weather Hotline at 5:45 a.m.

Congratulations

...to **Patricia Sumner**, Safety, for being selected as the WE Committee's Employee of the Month for December 2004. Trish was honored for her exceptional efforts in responding to a serious situation that occurred at the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Project.

...to Tim Russell and his wife Jessica who gave birth to twins Isabelle Marie and Zachary Paul Dec. 1.

Sympathy

...to the family of Survey retiree **Christophoros Galinos**, who passed away Nov. 9. Mr. Galinos rose in the Corps from a technician to a project engineer. He retired in 1978 after 27 years of service in the Survey Branch.

...to **Forrest Knowles** on the passing of his daughter, **Joanne Rose**, who passed away Nov. 14.

...to **Dave Schafer** on the passing of his father, **William**, who passed away Dec. 11.

...to the family of Engineering/Planning retiree **Frank Tomasello**, who passed away Dec. 20. Mr. Tomasello had been retired for almost 30 years and was a longtime member of the NED Golf League.

... to the family of Construction/Operations retiree **Joseph Ledgere**, who passed away Dec. 24. Mr. Ledgere retired March 18, 1986 as a Park Manager at the Connecticut River Basin with 25 years of federal service.

Toys for Tots Program

The annual WE Committee-sponsored toy drive to support the Toys for Tots program took place during December. Janet Brayden, who headed this year's efforts for the committee, reports that 190 unwrapped, nonviolent toys were collected from New England District employees. The toys are given to underprivileged children to make their holiday season a little brighter.

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From the Division Engineer:

Holiday greetings from the North Atlantic Division



As we enter one of the most festive times of the year, it is appropriate to look back on 2004 and recognize our achievements.

We transitioned into a sleeker, more efficient and effective organization as we implemented 2012. We've supported the global war on terrorism both here and abroad, and we've done our share to help restore human rights and dignity to oppressed people overseas.

We've helped our own citizens overcome the challenges and hardships caused by terrible storms and other natural disasters, and continue to work hard to develop timely, efficient, and cost-effective solutions to our nation's engineering and environmental problems.

We give our Armed Forces the best training and support facilities here in the United States and in Europe so they are ready to serve anywhere in the world, and we go with them to help them overcome any challenges on a global basis.

All things considered, I'd say you deserve a hearty pat on the back for a job well done. You've proven over and over again that you are talented, dedicated professionals who care about your customers, your partners, your fellow team members, the nation and the world. It's an honor and a privilege to be part of your team, and I thank you for a job well done.

I wish you and your families a very safe, happy and healthy holiday season, and continued success and prosperity in the coming year. ESSAYONS!

Brig. Gen. Merdith "Bo" Temple
North Atlantic Division Engineer

Regional News:

Thinking as a region, acting as a region

by Brig. Gen. Merdith "Bo" Temple
North Atlantic Division Engineer

The North Atlantic Division is transforming itself. Under USACE 2012, the Division and its Districts operate together as one cohesive unit, the North Atlantic Regional Business Center (RBC)—one of nine regional centers working with our Washington, D.C. headquarters to align the Corps for success in its future missions, workload and capabilities. The North Atlantic Regional Business Center, using Project Management Business Processes, integrates the capability of six unique Districts, who collaborate to efficiently and effectively deliver projects, and serves customers by leveraging the resources of the Region and the Corps.

Nothing in the USACE 2012 concept changes the fundamental requirement for Districts to execute and deliver products and services to our varied customers. Integrating our capabilities means leveraging resources across District boundaries to get the job done, pooling expertise within the Region to meet technical challenges, and removing communication barriers to streamline customer service.

Since all of you are members of or provide support to

one or more teams, everyone in the Region, by extension, supports and is affected by our RBC.

"In this regard we're finding opportunities to deliver quality work faster and to reduce costs on a regional basis. To make that happen, the Corps is shifting its focus from regional cooperation to regional business operations in order to support and facilitate better District delivery to our customers," says Brig. Gen. Bo Temple, Regional Commander. "As a result, we all need to think and act regionally."

The North Atlantic Regional Business Center (RBC), chartered in 1998, made tremendous progress in regional cooperation, and it has moved to its USACE 2012 "Initial Operating Capability" on Oct. 1, 2004. The RBC—the Region—is one team of some 3,500 Corps of Engineers professionals located in six districts under one regional office.

Every one of the Corps' activities enhances the U.S. economy, supports our natural environment, and enhances our national security. As a Region of the Corps, we will be a better steward of public trust by developing regional efficiencies and capabilities. We will maintain and leverage regional capabilities where it is not cost-effective

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Photos by C.J. Allen

(above) New England District employees crowd the cafeteria during the holiday party.(right) Bob Desista and Mike Keegan select dessert.

New England District employees celebrate holiday season with two events

by Kim Osgerby
Public Affairs

To begin the holiday merriment employees of the New England District held an after work holiday party on the Dec. 21. The party was located at the Minuteman Club in the Concord room at Hanscom Air Force Base. Corps volunteers graciously provided refreshments.

By all accounts, the evening party went well and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Greg Penta commented on the refreshments by stating "the food was a success." Laura Lally added, "I enjoyed the festivities and the company was great."

The following day the merriment continued with a daytime holiday party held at Concord Park on Dec. 22.

Lunch was catered by Café Luigi's,

and scrumptious desserts were brought in by volunteers. About 150 people attended the celebration.

Although the catering from Café Luigi's was excellent there was one small detail that was overlooked. Finding a corkscrew for the refreshments was a slight problem. Fortunately Paulo DaSilva was able to save the day by providing this instrument.

In addition to the exceptional food, there were also many fun activities. Bud Taylor and Frank Delgiudice distributed union-sponsored door prizes. The men handed out free chance tickets to all Corps employees before the party.

After lunch, several union prizes were given out. Angela Wright and Sally Rigione both received leather notebooks. Several other employees received similar prizes.

Another popular event at the party was the annual holiday Yankee Swap. Bob Batt and Ray Cottengaim did a marvelous job organizing this event. About 25 people participated in this fun activity. Chocolates, candles and wine were among the more common gifts ideas.



Andrew Sneeringer shows adults how to open a Christmas present during the District Yankee Swap.



Kim Kaminski-Donaher peeks inside to see what she got during the Yankee Swap.



Zina Cassulo-Henderson gets ready to trade for the much-coveted Boston Red Sox stocking.

However, Zina Cassulo, the number one Yankee Swap participant received a Red Sox stocking filled with candy.

The most unusual gift from the swap was a palm tree lamp. This gift also seemed to be quite popular and was traded several times.

The holiday cheer continued with a small brass ensemble of four musicians who played lovely holiday music in the theater during lunch for everyone to enjoy.

Musicians Sandy Marcinkewicz played the euphonium; Alexine Raineri played the trombone; and John McDowell and Ken McCance both played the cornet.

The festivities concluded in the afternoon with karaoke run by Carol Charette in the theater. Employees who participated by singing their favorite holiday tunes were Carol, Jo-Ann Dawber, Ella Minincleri, Sheila Holt and Susan Rodkey.

Real Estate Division headed up the party arrangements this year. Joan Shok and Donna Russell did a wonderful job organizing the food. According to Joan, "without the cooperation from my fellow coworkers the party would not have run as smoothly as it did. Everyone's hard work was greatly appreciated."



Col. Thomas Koning assists Bud Taylor pick the names of the door prize winners.



Attendees are treated to holiday music by a brass quartet made up of party attendees.

Town Hall:

Colonel holds meeting to recognize District team

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs

The Corps team learned more about the state of the District and had a chance to congratulate some of their fellow co-workers for doing exceptional work this past year at the Town Hall Meeting Nov. 2 at the headquarters office in Concord Park, Mass.

District Engineer Col. Thomas Koning presented awards and then provided an update on the state of the District and contingency support and then made a presentation about Corps work in Iraq and his role there from January to June 2004.

Robert Byrne was presented the Superior Civilian Service award for serving as Acting Deputy District En-

gineer for 14 months. The original four-month assignment turned into 14 months as the Executive Office staff traded assignments to Iraq.

Bob Govero was presented the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service for Logistics Management support for Task Force Restore Iraqi Electricity.

The Eastland Woolen Mills Project Delivery Team and Project Manager Scott Acone were recognized for their successful work and the Association of General Contractors award for the Eastland Woolen Mills project.

Sheila Winston-Vincuilla and Marc Paiva were recognized for Chief of Engineers Hero awards for their work on contracting activities and tribal support, respectively.

The Hurricane Isabel Team was presented certificates and included Duban Montoya, Mike Tuttle, Sheila Winston-Vincuilla and Dave Goodrich. Other members of the team were not present.

Kim Kaminski-Donaher was presented a Letter of Appreciation from the Corps Baltimore District for her work in Supervisory Training in Baltimore, Md. Richalie Griffin was recognized for her suggestions to improve the District Coin.

The District Engineer presented her framed coins. Both Richalie and Mary Christopher's suggestions were incorporated for the New District Commanders Coin design. Mary was not available to attend.

Col. Koning said that 45 District team members have deployed to support hurricane recovery efforts. He said it was important that District members supported the Corps contingency operations and that those who do not deploy continue the District mission at home. Nine people have deployed overseas and another nine are scheduled to deploy, he said. "They are doing a great service."

The District Engineer mentioned the year-end close out. "We had a great year-end close out," he said. "People did great, great work. Everyone made a concerted effort to get things done early."

Competitive Sourcing is moving along at a slower pace than projected and there is no new information to report, Col. Koning said.

In the 2012 plan the regionalization proposals for Contracting Division, Resource Management Office, Public Affairs Office and the Logistics Management Office have been approved. Various initiatives of those regionalization efforts were posted in the room for attendees to review.

Col. Koning said anyone who had questions about those efforts should contact the chief of each of those particular offices impacted.

The Corps and the Army are going to offer VSIP/VERA earlier this year. Those are available now rather than in January or February. Col. Koning said those interested should inform their su-



Chiway Hsuing poses a question during the town meeting.

Photos by Mark McInerney



Col. Thomas Koning gives a presentation of his experiences in Iraq.

pervisors and the Human Resources Office so planning can start.

Col. Koning provided an overview of the Corps role in Iraq from his perspective as Commander of the Gulf Region Southern District in Basrah, Iraq from January through July 2004. He presented a slide show with photos from his experiences in Iraq.

"The news you hear every night on CNN is not the whole story," he said. "That is just the sensational side that the media covers. The real story is the hard work that Corps teams and others are performing in the reconstruction efforts in Iraq."

"A number of people from your ranks have deployed overseas to Iraq and Afghanistan," he said.

He discussed the early Corps role in rebuilding Iraq and how it evolved to become a Division supported by Northern, Central and Southern Districts.

"The true story coming out of Iraq is that we are doing great things for the country to promote democracy," he said. The Corps is assisting with the restoration of the country's infrastructure.

After the fall of Saddam, the citizens

looted buildings and took everything they could carry away, including tiles and pipe fittings.

One of the Corps' missions was to repair looting damage in Southern Iraq. "We did about \$1.3 billion of work in six

"The news you hear every night on CNN is not the whole story."

**- Col. Thomas Koning,
District Engineer**

months in Iraq," he said.

Coordination with the various multinational entities involved in the recovery effort was essential.

The Iraqi engineers are good at what they do, but their technology is about 30 years old, Col. Koning said. The country has suffered from the infrastructure not being maintained properly for many years. It's been common practice to jerry rig equipment and systems just to

get them to work temporarily. Much operation and maintenance on equipment was needed throughout the country.

"It's a cultural change to get the Iraqis to think about operation and maintenance and repairing things," he said. "Some people were receptive to that. For others, it will take some time."

One of their missions was to rebuild power lines to help provide electricity to the power grid in Iraq.

"We built a 40 megawatt power plant," he said. "Oil is the life blood of Iraq, but electricity keeps the peace," he said. As long as people have a decent amount of electricity to support their daily lives they are relatively content, he said. The Corps also repaired more than 20 water plants.

They were able to provide the Iraqis 15 to 18 hours of power a day. Hospitals, police stations and other critical facilities receive power 24 hours a day. It was a significant improvement over past unreliable power production.

"There were places in Iraq we could not go. So how did we get the work done? We'd send in Iraqis and they would get the work done."

Even though his task was to lead the Southern District in the rebuilding of the country, Col. Koning enjoyed the historical aspects of his assignment – the historic sites of Ur, Babylon and others.

"Ur was the birthplace of Abraham. Babylon – that's the empire that came after the Sumerians. These historic places are there. The history comes alive if you are there. It's interesting if you know the history. It was very unique being there in Iraq."

"The key thing is this is what we are doing in Iraq," Koning said.

What is shown on the nightly news is only a part of the story, he said. "This is the story behind the story. The good news story of the rebuilding of Iraq is not being told. We are making a difference. The Corps is making a difference," he said.

Officials break ground on Habitat Restoration project

Continued from page 1

and private partnership to protect this priceless treasure of nature."

The total project will cost approximately \$2.7 million and be cost shared between the state of Rhode Island and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 35 percent and 65 percent respectively. The project is authorized under Section 206 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996, as amended, for the purpose of aquatic ecosystem restoration.

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (RICRMC) is the non-federal sponsor and fully supports the recommended plan. It will share in the costs of project construction as well as future maintenance costs.

Michael Tikoian, Chairman, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, welcomed attendees to the ceremony and made introductions. From the state of Rhode Island guest speakers included Governor Donald L. Carcieri, State Senator V. Susan Sosnowski, Chair of Senate Committee on Environment, and Fred Vincent, Director, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

"As we start this largest salt pond restoration effort in



Photos by Mark McInerney

Sen. Jack Reed praises those involved in the restoration effort during at the event.

New England I would like to thank all of the partners who have made this effort possible," said John Kennelly, Chief of Planning Branch, who represented the District at the event. "Our partnership is a noteworthy example of how federal, state and local governments and private agencies should work

together for those they represent."

The sand from the dredged areas will be used to replenish the nearby beaches. These beaches are eroding and sand that was transported into Ninigret Pond will be returned to the shoreline. This will provide more protection to the houses along the shoreline in the event of a severe storm.

'Our partnership is a noteworthy example of how federal, state and local governments and private agencies should work together for those they represent.'

- John Kennelly, Chief, Planning Branch

The project will be maintained by excavating a sediment basin in the Charlestown Breachway. Sand will be captured in the basin instead of entering the pond. This will ensure that the restored eelgrass beds are not reburied. The state will maintain the sediment basin by periodic dredging and pumping the sand back to the beaches.

"This is a striking example of an opportunity that resulted in the melding of mission accomplishment, environmental stewardship and community involvement—a win-win across the board and an example for others to emulate," said Timothy R.E. Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, NOAA. "The Coastal America Partnership supports and encourages these activities."

The Coastal America Partnership is a collaborative effort of federal, state and local agencies working to protect, preserve and restore coastal resources. Through the Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, Rhode Island businesses have the unique opportunity to work closely with state and federal agencies as well as with environmental organizations on important projects, such as the Ninigret Pond Habitat Restoration Project, that help restore critical water bodies and fish passages.

"The Rhode Island corporate community supports the efforts of the CRMC and Corps of Engineers to undo past environmental damages and advance the revitalization of Rhode Island's natural coastline," said Richard Kleiman, chairman of the Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership Advisory Board and vice president of ESS Group, Inc. of East Providence, a key restoration partner.

Benefits of the project will be that 40 acres of eelgrass will be restored in Ninigret Pond, creating essential fish

habitat for winter flounder, striped bass, bay scallop, mussel and lobster; new eelgrass beds will help improve water quality in Ninigret Pond by removing harmful nutrients; sand that is filling the channel and burying the eelgrass beds in Ninigret Pond will be returned to the shoreline to create wider beaches; extra sand on the beach will increase storm protection and slow the erosion rate on the developed barrier; and more sand will be available for dune formation, further increasing shoreline protection for beachfront homeowners.

The problems for this area date back many years. Ninigret Pond was given a permanent breachway during the last century. The most prevalent problem that has arisen with the permanent breachway is an increased rate of sedimentation in the pond, mainly in the form of a flood tidal shoal that continually expands and changes shape.

This flood tidal shoal has resulted in the loss of valuable eelgrass beds and shellfish habitat. Also, upland development over the last century has resulted in the loss of valuable spawning habitat in Cross Mills Pond, a freshwater pond connected to Ninigret Pond.

The Corps of Engineers' Feasibility Report examined a host of alternative plans in order to develop a comprehensive restoration plan that minimized environmental impacts and project costs. The alternatives examined for the salt pond included: the no action plan; constructing a sedimentation basin; planting eelgrass on the shoal and constructing a sedimentation basin; dredging the shoal, planting eelgrass, and constructing the basin. Alternatives for the fish passage project include: the no action plan; trapping and transporting; and constructing a fishway.

The recommended plan involves dredging about 40 acres of tidal shoal area in Ninigret Pond and planting eelgrass to

restore aquatic habitat. Eelgrass will be transplanted to dredged areas by removing plugs from nearby healthy donor beds or through direct seeding techniques. A 3.5-acre sediment basin will be dredged to prevent future shoaling.

Restoration efforts in the pond will have direct benefit to the fisheries of Block Island Sound. The project also involves construction of a concrete lined bypass channel with two fish ladders from Ninigret Pond to Cross Mills Pond. Restoring the migratory pathway of herring and other anadromous species to Cross Mills Pond will further improve the ecosystem through the restoration of about 20 acres of spawning habitat. Increased use of the pond by anadromous fish will also provide fisheries and wildlife benefits to both Ninigret Pond and Block Island Sound.

Coordination has been maintained with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) throughout the feasibility study process. Any concerns about the project were identified early on in the study and resolved. Working with these agencies, the Corps and non-federal sponsor developed a recommended plan that is acceptable to all and is seen as beneficial to the environment.

Plans and specifications were initiated in September 2002. A Project Cooperative Agreement was signed May 28, 2003. A contract for the dredging portion of the project was awarded Sept. 30, 2004 to Inner Space Services, Inc., of Casco, Maine.

Dredging work is projected to be completed in March 2005. The fishway portion is projected to be completed later in 2005. The eelgrass improvements are projected to be completed over several growing seasons from 2005-2007.



Agency officials "break ground" on the Ninigret Pond Restoration Project in Rhode Island.

New England District officials propose Navigation improvement project for Oak Bluffs Harbor

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs

In response to a request by the town of Oak Bluffs, the New England District is proposing the improvement of navigation in the Oak Bluffs Harbor in Oak Bluffs on the island of Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

"The purpose of the proposed navigation improvement project is to deepen the Oak Bluffs Harbor entrance channel," said Project Manager Steve Dunbar. "Dredging of approximately 5,800 cubic yards of sandy material from the Oak Bluffs entrance channel will provide adequate depth for the safe passage of the harbor's fleet."

The proposed plan is to hydraulically dredge the channel to -10 feet mean low water (MLW) and to dispose of the sandy material on a beach to the south of the inlet.

"Natural shoaling processes have reduced available depths within the entrance channel to as little as -6.5 feet mean low water in a portion of the channel," Dunbar said. "Shoaling in the channel is making navigation in this harbor hazardous and difficult."

The proposed work would remove the areas that have shoaled and deepen the existing channel to provide safe access to the harbor at all tide stages.

About one acre of the channel bottom would be dredged. A hydraulic pipeline dredge will be used to remove the sandy sediments from the channel bottom and place them along Pay Beach, located approximately one-half mile south of the channel. The work will be performed during an approximate one-month period. Dredging may occur between June 1 through Jan. 15.

The project extends from deep water in Nantucket Sound, through a jettied inlet, approximately 850 feet, and into the deep water in Oak Bluffs Harbor. An initial 30-day public notice for this project

was issued on May 3. No comments were received. This current notification provides an update in the project description, notably the dredging and disposal dates.

The channel was last dredged by the town in 1971-1972. This proposed project is being carried out under the authority of Section 107 of the River and Harbor Act of 1960.

According to recent condition surveys, the entrance channel has shoaled to

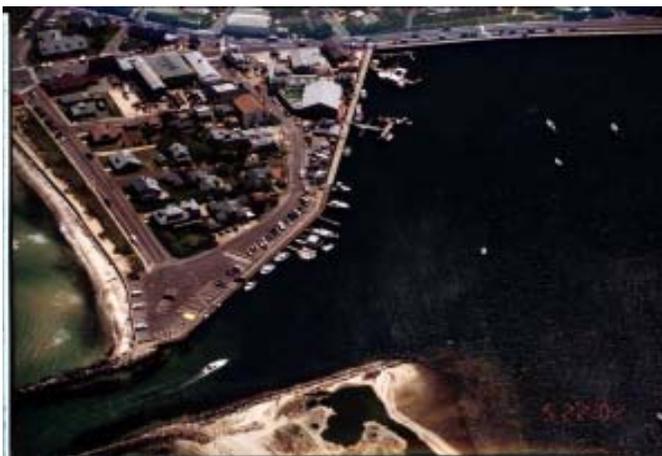


Photo provided by Project Management.

Aerial view of entrance of Oak Bluffs Harbor.

a depth of about -6.5 feet below MLW in places. These conditions are considered navigational hazards as they have the potential to cause boat groundings or damage to boat hulls, thus increasing the possibility of oil and hazardous material release into the harbor.

The dredging of an estimated 5,800 cubic yards of material is required to deepen the channel to approximately -10 feet MLW to provide safe access to the project for the area's commercial and recreational boaters.

The harbor supports a large recreational fleet of approximately 80 boats and a moderately-sized commercial fishing fleet of about 20 boats. The harbor also receives more than 10,000 transient boats annually.

Additionally, four ferryboats service Oak Bluffs Harbor and carry more than 500,000 people into the harbor annually.

"The existing fleet at Oak Bluffs Harbor would experience safer and more

efficient navigational access to the harbor if the dredging of the entrance channel were accomplished," Dunbar said.

A shallow sloped beach site, Pay Beach, located approximately one-half mile to the south of the Oak Bluffs entrance channel was chosen for the placement of the dredged material to keep the sand in the littoral system, yet place it a distance from the channel. Material will be placed from MLW elevation

to supratidal elevations (above the MHW elevation).

"The disposal area will be approximately 800 feet in length, while width will vary from approximately 50 feet to 130 feet," Dunbar said. Depth will vary from 2 to 4 feet, approximately. The slope will be 8:1. This alternative represents the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, Dunbar said.

Several project alternatives were considered for this project. The first alternative was a no action alternative. The action alternatives involved dredging the Oak Bluffs entrance channel to depths of -9, -10, -11 and -12 feet.

Alternative dredging methods such as hydraulic, hopper and mechanical dredges were considered. Alternative disposal sites such as ocean, upland, near shore and beach disposal sites were also considered.

An Environmental Assessment for this work has been prepared and is available for review upon request. Coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that the proposed activity is not likely to affect any endangered species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

To assist in properly evaluating this proposal, the Corps of Engineers sought public comments until Dec. 31.

Shpack Landfill Site final cleanup plan approved

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with concurrence from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has made a final remedy decision for the Shpack Landfill Site in Norton and Attleboro, Mass. EPA announced the plan in a Record of Decision (ROD).

The final ROD for the Superfund site calls for the excavation and disposal of about 35,000 cubic yards of waste that exceeds cleanup standards. The remedy, referred to as SC-3B, was selected after an extensive comment period during which the public and community leaders weighed in heavily in favor of excavating all waste exceeding the cleanup standards. Prior to issuing its final cleanup decision, EPA solicited public comment between June and August 2004 on a proposal to excavate 10,500 cubic yards of waste exceeding cleanup standards and to cap some of the material and leave it at the site.

EPA estimates the total cost of the selected cleanup plan to be about \$43 million. The Record of Decision comprises two response actions: one managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and one led by EPA. In accordance with special legislation passed in 2002, the Army Corps of Engineers will be conducting the cleanup of the radiological contamination at the Shpack site.

The Shpack Landfill Site is an eight-acre abandoned domestic and industrial landfill that operated from 1946 to 1965. The site consists of land formerly owned

by Lea and Isadore Shpack, now owned by the town of Norton, and land formerly owned by Albert Dumont, now owned by Attleboro Landfill, Inc. Approximately six acres is on the Norton side of the town line and 3.4 acres is on the Attleboro side. During operation, domestic and industrial waste were accepted from local

cal portion of the cleanup by spring 2005 and completing it by summer 2006."

The ROD includes the following major components: excavation and off-site disposal of approximately 34,000 cubic yards of soil and 1,000 cubic yards of sediment from Chartley Swamp which exceeded the radiological and chemical

cleanup levels for the site; following excavation, impacted wetlands will be restored or replicated and clean fill will be used to backfill and bring open areas up to grade, as necessary; extension of the public water supply line to two residences adjacent to the site that currently have private wells; implementation of institutional controls to restrict future use of the property and groundwater; a traffic control plan will be designed to manage the increased



Contract personnel work at the Shpack Landfill site.

Photo provided by Project Management

establishments.

"EPA carefully evaluated the concerns raised during the public comment period and believes that this final cleanup decision takes those concerns into consideration," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator of EPA's New England Office. "We look forward to working in close cooperation with the Potentially Responsible Party group, the Army Corps of Engineers, DEP, and the community to implement this cleanup decision as soon as possible."

"We look forward to continuing to work with our partners, EPA, DEP and the local communities throughout the radiological contaminant cleanup at the site," added Corps New England District Engineer Col. Thomas Koning. "We anticipate starting work on the radiologi-

cal volume of truck traffic associated with transporting contaminated material off-site. EPA will closely coordinate these activities with local, state and federal partners prior to begin the cleanup.

Responses to comments received during the public comment period can be found in the Responsiveness Summary which is part of the Record of Decision. A Responsiveness Summary includes written responses to significant comments, criticisms, and/or new data submitted during the public comment period. A copy of the Record of Decision and other documents regarding the site are available for public review at the EPA Records Center in Boston, as well as on the EPA website at www.epa.gov/ne/superfund/sites/shpack.

(EPA news release)

Adventures in Iraq:

My time living in the desert thus far

by Farrell McMillan, Engineering/Planning

After one long and frustrating week at Fort Bliss, Texas, and two days at Camp Doha and Kuwait City, we arrived at Tallil Air Base, Iraq on Dec. 7. We arrived safe and sound with a lot of help and encouragement from the Gulf Region South (GRS) staff.

After they helped us into our rooms with our three duffle bags, we went for lunch. The dining facility (which can feed over 6,000 soldiers during a lunch time period) was what none had expected. They had anything you can think of to eat and all kinds of drinks and desserts.

We were allowed to visit the Base Exchange to buy some sheets and cleaning supplies as the linen services were not ready and the cleaning had not been contracted. We found out the days are 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. each day seven days a week; however, we could sleep in the first day because the GRS in-brief was not until 9 a.m.

At the in-brief Lt. Col. (P) Cliff Crofford, (Deputy District Engineer), and Sgt. 1st Class Tim Miller, (GRS Security), gave us information on workload, organizational structure, and what security measures were in place and what to expect.

For the next two days we were allowed to break in slowly, but were also given work to digest. As quick as you were comfortable with the duties, more work was assigned. And in a short time all of us were working. I was assigned as Area Engineer, Dave Kratz was assigned as Resident Engineer/Project Engineer, Rich Riley was assigned as Construction representative, and Don Wood was assigned to Construction Management to work on getting water contracts out to the streets.

Jerry Nunziato was assigned to give the IM folks a hand on setting up computers and running fiber optic lines for the new offices and work trailer. He has also offered his services to the Logistics folks and has helped get desks, chairs, etc., for setting up workstations.

At present time Dave Kratz is outside of Tallil AB at the new Iraqi army base where he and two other Corps employees are overseeing Quality Assurance with the contractor Weston Solutions. The new base is approaching 75 percent complete and Dave and crew are developing procedures to start looking at punch list items for the con-

tractor to take care of so that the first buildings can be turned over to the Iraqi Army.

Rich Riley has been shoved into doing assessments on completed rehabilitated schools. This is important because the schools have to be signed off by the contractor, the Corps, the locals, and the Ministry of Education.

Don Wood has over 100 water projects that he is wrestling with in order to get them in the correct contract form so we can get them on the streets with possible awards. The name of the game is to have as many construction starts before Dec. 31 in hopes that we have as many people of Iraq working as we can in the month of January.

The work days blend into one day after another. Christmas Eve was broken up by a visit from Dave Letterman and his staff. Also a GRS holiday get together was held from 7 p.m., on with chips, crackers, and desserts. Also there was eggnog, soda, and beer (alcohol free that is). "It's a Wonderful Life," was on the screen at 10:30 p.m. On Christmas Day we were allowed to stop work at 5 p.m., instead of the full day. Christmas dinner was huge! A traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings, plus prime rib, shrimp, and Cornish hens were served from noon until 3 p.m. (however, because of long lines they kept serving).

We all have been very busy. I was told it would be this way, but a lot more than I could imagine. I attend meeting after meeting, and then have numerous Video Teleconferences (VTCs) to cover projects, progress, and issues. The other New England guys don't get too tied up with the VTCs because they are out there getting the assessments and progress reports for the video conferences.

In GRS, the southern region of Iraq, the Corps works closely with the U.S. Army Engineers, the British, the Dutch, and the Italians in rehabilitating/refurbishing and/or constructing new schools, public health centers, police stations, fire



Farrell McMillan (fourth from left) suits up with his team in Iraq.

stations, and hospitals. Some upcoming large construction projects that will be going on the street for contractors to bid are waste and water treatment, and drainage projects, Iraqi prisons, Iraqi Army and National Guard Brigade and Battalion Garrison camps, and a lot of road work. To date, we have hired 18 Iraqi engineers to work with in the Area office here at Tallil to help cover the quality assurance of these projects. They will report to me as the Area Engineer, through my resident engineers and work with of the contractor's Iraqi site engineer in charge of quality control. In addition, construction management services have hired their own Iraqi engineers to grind through some of the work that is being done prior to bidding, since the data for most of these smaller projects are minimal at best.

A big problem is getting around in Iraq because of security. Most all the projects that we oversee are off the Tallil Air Base, so we have to go out quite often as described above. Any time I, or a member of our work force leave the Tallil Air Base, we have to have a security team (made up of at least three armored vehicles with at least

6 security employees, fully armed, and we have to wear armor vests and Kevlar helmets) that takes us out to the site and then follows us around while we visit the project site.

Coordination meetings that are held outside the Tallil offices are time consuming to say the least. Travel associated with these meetings that are beyond approximately 100 miles one way generally require the attendees to stay overnight since security teams are required each way and travel is limited to daylight hours only because of security reasons.

It is quite cold here. I never expected the temperature to be in the 20's at night and early morning. Three mornings in a row we scraped ice off the windows of the vehicles. It is not a sand desert; it is more a silt with clay.

Fine clay particles are picked up when the wind blows and get in and on everything. Then it rains (we are in the rainy season – November through late January), and the clay does not let the water drain, so it turns to mud. It cakes on your boots and won't come off unless you scrape it off. You have to let it dry and then it drops off; usually on the office floor, the hallways, and your room. But you can't just sweep it up because you are back into that fine dust that gets into the air.

Someone asked what staples are missing and what are there plenty of? Actually, there are not too many staples missing that you may need; maybe something that you enjoyed back in the states, but can't find here. Like Slim Jims, pistachio nuts, Clorox cloth wipes, etc. But, all in all, the basics are here. Soldiers and civilians get a lot of care packages from home that everyone shares.

Food is pretty good here at Tallil Air Base. There are at least three entrees every day and a short order line that has hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken wings, and Sloppy Joes. There are plenty of desserts, ice cream, and a large selection of milk, juices, water, and sodas to partake.

Breakfast is the same way with most of the items you get back home. As I said, here at Tallil the food is good, but other parts of the country where the soldiers and civilians work the food is not as plentiful. At some of the local construction sites where Corps employees are stationed, food is not as elaborate but it is plentiful.

Any food you miss? Yes, Chinese, Mexican, and a good T-bone steak!

How do you get your news? The Internet is the fastest. The

Armed Forces Network and the Stars and Stripes cover the news but loaded with U.S. Army items (as run by the U.S. military). On TV, we get CNN and BBC.

Have you encountered any problems? No real problems, a lot of frustrations and time problems.

Everything moves fast then you have to wait on funding, or you have to wait until an agreement between two Iraqi tribes in regards to a project coming into their locale.

Communication is the biggest problem to getting projects started. Solicitations are sent out by e-mail; thanks to Yahoo and Hotmail, otherwise contractors would not be able to bid. Iraqi landline phone service is nearly nonexistent in most areas and those contractors who do have phones use cellular.

What positive things do you want to share about life in Iraq? There are very brave and smart people in Iraq who want their country rebuilt and welcome the U.S. and the multinational teams here to help them. They are very thankful when either we or our Iraqi engineers visit the sites for gathering information or for inspecting construction.

We have the highest respect for the Iraqi engineers that have been working with us as most are very well educated. Saddam, in his last 20 years in power, spent nearly all the government's money on his own pet projects and on the military, foregoing any infrastructure improvements.

The most fulfilling part of being here is to see that almost anything you do makes a difference for the better to these poor people. The children in particular are the ones who will benefit the most. You particularly see the ones who are in the hospitals and schools and you want to help every one of them. A lot of children have flip-flops for shoes and have to walk in the rain, etc. to get to schools. A lot of organizations from the states have donated items that have found their way to the children.



Camels are a frequent site in Iraq.

Photos provided by Farrell McMillan

My experiences working in the Republic of Georgia

by **Dave Schafer**
Emergency Operations

I recently had the opportunity to participate in the Corps mission to support NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative, in the Republic of Georgia. Our activities were coordinated through the Europe District's International Engineering Center, which manages the Civil Military Emergency Planning (CMEP) program. Since the early 1990's CMEP has conducted numerous meetings and workshops with many former Soviet countries in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of their joint disaster response efforts. The Corps helps facilitate planning among NATO partner nations by strengthening relationships and enhancing international cooperation.

As this was my first time getting involved with any type of international work with the Corps I was both excited and apprehensive about the opportunity. After doing a bit of research it became apparent that Georgia's political climate is quite unstable and there are occasional conflicts between the government and some provinces attempting to declare independence. At first this news was a little unnerving, but as I enquired more closely, I learned that the capital city Tbilisi, where I would be staying was not too close to the area of conflict, and was pretty safe for most travelers.

Upon my arrival in Tbilisi one of the first things I noticed was the general state of disrepair. Most of the buildings and roads were in a rough state and needed some work. However, it was obvious that the city must have been very opulent at one time. In fact it is still a beautiful place when you look past the rough surface. The magnificent architecture of the old buildings and quaint cobble stone streets give the city a wonderful historic quality that I have never experienced in the U.S.

As I saw more of the capital I began to notice that in many places repairs



Photo provided by Dave Schafer

Dave Schafer (left) with Teri Alberico, MVP, and Capt. Derek Ulehla, NAU stand in front of a statue of Joseph Stalin.

were under way and beginning to breathe new life into the city.

Georgia has had a difficult time since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

There has been a great deal of internal conflict, which has impeded their economic development. All of the Georgians I spoke with seemed very anxious to put these conflicts behind them and move as quickly as possible towards joining the European Union and full NATO membership. Although the current situation seems a bit precarious, my impression is that Georgia is a country poised and ready for rapid development and certainly destined for prosperity.

The most pleasant aspect of Georgia by far is its people. They are extremely welcoming, friendly, and overflowing with pride for their rich culture

and abundant resources. They pride themselves on being some of the world's best hosts, which is something I witnessed in many ways during my two trips. I was overwhelmed by the number of people who took a personal interest in making sure that my visits were as enjoyable as possible. Because of this seemingly boundless hospitality, I was able to taste many types of Georgian cuisine, tour the beautiful mountainous countryside, and learn a great deal about their extensive history. I also formed some friendships that I am sure will continue far into the future.

In addition to the many exciting experiences Georgia itself had to offer, the CMEP meetings were quite interesting as well. There were participants from many other countries such as Bulgaria, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Ukraine. It was encouraging to see that the delegates seemed to have a genuine desire to work together and support each other in emergency situations. My role was to facilitate a work group tasked with developing the disaster scenario that was used during the exercise we conducted during our second workshop. The common language among the various representatives was primarily Russian, although several of them were proficient in English.

The Georgian people and others expressed a great deal of gratitude towards us (Americans) for investing our time and resources in an effort to help them. Although there is still much work that needs to be done to overcome the many cultural and political obstacles that stand in the way of cooperation, I think we all felt a sense of accomplishment and optimism for the continued improvement of relations between these newly developing democracies.

I truly felt honored to have taken part in the process and was very fortunate to have had this unique and enriching experience. (*Editor's Note: Kim Osgerby, Public Affairs, contributed to this report*)

Thinking as a region, acting as a region

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to maintain expertise at every one of our districts so that we can deliver more cost effective, high quality, safe products and services to our customers.

- ❖ P2, the automated system being used for project management, will continue to be a major focus area to better support all activities.

- ❖ The RBC will continue to define the Region's core competencies and to make effective use of the Tech-13 program and other technical capabilities, region-wide.

- ❖ Regionalization of support functions under USACE 2012 will continue as Communities of Practice (CoP) take shape within each function.

- ❖ The Regional Program Budget Advisory Committee will study and prepare for implementation of cost control measures and regional rates in fiscal year 2006.

- ❖ Better integration of teams (District PDTs, DSTs, RITs, CoPs etc.) and greater delegation of authorities will likely

occur by FY 06 as well. So if you are a member of, or provide support to, one or more of these teams, you will be directly affected by our regionalization efforts.

- ❖ Regionalization also will drive the TAPES performance objectives for all members of the Regional Management Board, GS-15s throughout the Region, and others rated by regional leadership.

"We will think as a Region and act as a Region, delivering quality projects through our Districts, on time at the lowest cost, safely," says Brig. Gen. Temple. "We have done and are doing great work in the service of the Army and the Nation. But working together we can always improve, and as a Region, I know that we will. I am extremely proud and grateful for all that you do daily to support our Region, our Regiment, and our Nation. ESSAYONS! *(Editor's note: The preceding was an excerpt of Brig. Gen. Temple's article. To read the document in its entirety, please visit the District's intranet site at <http://naeiis/exec/regionalnews.pdf>)*

District Engineer addresses New England park rangers at training conference

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs

The New England District park ranger and park manager staff met for the New England Ranger Training Oct. 25-29 in Southbridge, Mass. to discuss issues facing the natural resource management team. District Engineer Col. Thomas Koning addressed the park ranger team on Oct. 28.

After he recognized several park rangers for their contributions in support of the District, Col. Koning discussed the state of the New England District.

He addressed the budget for the new fiscal year. "We don't know all the impacts yet. We don't see doom and gloom. We do see some tightening of the belt," he said.

"There are a bunch of initiatives that may affect the basins," he said.

Several people in the District are concerned about competitive sourcing. The timeline of when Operations and Maintenance, the reservoirs and dams, will be reviewed under competitive sourcing is not certain.

"There are teams that are looking at the best value for our customers," he said. "Almost everyone in the District will be looked at over the next 4 or 5 years."

The District senior leaders were to travel to Maine in November for a staff leadership conference to discuss key issues facing the District in the new fiscal year.

The purpose of the park ranger training is to share information on natural resource management issues and for professional development.

Presentations and workshops covered a wide array of issues. Bruce Williams discussed operational management plans. Robert Cobbett talked about GSA facilities maintenance contracts. Ralph Gendron discussed uniform issues. Tim Russell gave an update on the national Water Safety Program.

North Atlantic Division's Will Rogers discussed the budget, information sharing processes and NAD in 2012. Paul Marinelli provided a reservoir control update. Heather Sullivan and Steve Dunbar gave an update on P2. Safety Office Chief Tricia Sumner provided safety updates and information on the drug testing program. Frank Turner gave an overview of new radio equipment. Ron Kosakowski offered a Visitor Assistance Self Defense refresher course. Bob Govero discussed supply and property log issues. Other issues discussed included interpretive signage, recreational issues, summer ranger training, administrative issues, visitor assistance, interpretive program, web issues, natural resource management, wildlife management, professionalism and much more. Also, Dave Kratz shared his experiences of serving in Iraq.

The group also visited the Westville Dam on Oct. 27 to learn about its operation.

Col. Koning's presentation provided an overview of the Corps role in Iraq from his perspective as Commander of the Gulf Region Southern District in Basrah, Iraq from January through July 2004. He presented a slide show with photos from his experiences in Iraq. *(See the Town Hall Meeting article on page 6 for a summary of his presentation.)*

Dredging up the past . . .



Ann Dogherty (seated) talks with Bobby Byrne and Rhonda Caira during her retirement luncheon in this 1997 photo. Ann retired from the Corps as the chief of Logistics and later was inducted into the Distinguished Civilian Gallery.

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