

# Yankee Engineer

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*Building Strong*



## District Commander holds special Holiday Town Hall Meeting

Story on page 4

# Yankee Voices

Jeff Teller, Jason Paulino and Stephen Tibbetts



## Keep your home safe from the virus

Staying safe from the coronavirus calls for more than wearing masks and social distancing. Follow this advice from HuffPost on avoiding infection:

- Clean doorknobs often. People coming in and out of your house may leave traces of the virus on your doorknobs. Wipe them down frequently.
- Wipe down your car. Clean high-touch surfaces in your vehicle—the steering wheel, gear shift, radio, and door handles.
- Wash your hands frequently. Use sanitizer or regular soap and water several times a day, especially after coming home from shopping or other errands.
- Clean your house under quarantine. If you or someone in your household may have COVID-19, be diligent about wiping down kitchen and bathroom counters, toilet handles, doors, and any other high-contact surfaces.

*(First Draft Magazine)*



Photo by Jessica Rudd

The New England District Team donated 163 toys for underprivileged children and turned them over to Toys for Tots for distribution.

## District Team partners with Marines, steps up for needy children

The New England District has a proud history of giving to others, particularly during the holidays. The COVID-19 pandemic made the need for assistance even more dire, and as usual the District Team stepped up.

Jessica Rudd, who served in the U.S. Marines, partnered with the Toys for Tots Program in December to collect toys for underprivileged children. The New England District donated 163 new, unwrapped toys this year. Since the majority of the team has been working remotely for months, many people chose to ship their donations to the District to participate in the toy drive.

"A huge thank you to everyone in the District for donating when it wasn't necessarily easy to do so," said Rudd.

According to their website, the basic mission of the Marines' Toys for Tots Program is to collect new unwrapped toys and distribute those toys to less fortunate children at Christmas. The U.S. Marine Corps has been collecting toys for children in need since 1947.



# District Commander conducts site visit, recognizes team members at Westover Resident Office

Col. John Atilano II, New England District Commander, traveled to the Westover Resident Office for a project tour and to recognize two team members, Dec. 1.

The District Commander presented Capt. Lisa Belisle with an Army Achievement Medal and Hasib Hussain with a Bunker Hill Award.

Belisle received the medal for her superior performance and leadership while serving as a Project Engineer and Contracting Officer Representative for the Westover Resident Office. She was responsible for managing the Durham Meadows and Raymark Superfund Project in Connecticut, two critical projects in support of the EPA mission, according to the citation.

“The Durham Meadows project has had its fair share of challenges along the way, but Lisa and the PDT have worked together to come up with innovative solutions to the engineering problems they encountered,” read Raymond Goff, Resident Engineer, during the presentation. “She was always enthusiastic and professional when addressing new challenges and her ability to build relationships made her successful and well respected among her peers, customers and contractors.”

Hussain received the Bunker Hill plaque for assuming Project Engineer duties on the Hangar 1, Phase 2 renovation and the indoor small arms range projects at Westover when a team member was activated for military duty.

“He seamlessly managed the projects maintaining delivery schedule and quality standards,” said Goff as he read the citation while Col. Atilano presented the award. “Hasib works for the Boston Resident Office but was willing to support the Westover Project Office during their time of need, juggling his workload to support both offices since April 2020.”

Col. Atilano toured the Hangar 1, Phase 2 renovation and the small arms range at Westover Air Reserve Base.

“This is the second phase of a four-phase renovation to provide and upgrade working space within an existing hangar,” said Carl Niemitz, Project Engineer at Westover. “The scope includes demolition and civil, mechanical, electrical, fire suppression, mass notification and telecommunication upgrades.”

Phase 2 project consisted of 20,000 square feet covering two floors that were demolished down to the exterior walls and the roof deck. New men’s and women’s bathrooms and locker rooms were built out with state-of-the-art showers and handicap amenities.

“The work spaces provide a cleaner look with new



Col. Atilano and the Westover Resident office pose next to the holiday postcard constructed for a base contest.

windows and work stations,” said Niemitz. “The interior walls are demountable, allowing for any future changes due to mission requirements. The new spaces are now fully conditioned through a new mechanical system as well as outside air.”

The small arms range is a standalone facility that accents the existing outdoor firing range by providing daytime and nighttime indoor capabilities for up to 28 firing stations. According to Niemitz, each station has an electronic retrievable target system that can be easily placed at multiple distances up to 25 meters.

“The range is designed to minimize any ricochets by funneling the bullets into a bullet trap that runs the width of the facility,” he said. “The bullet trap feeds an auger system that transports the bullets into a drum for recycling. There is ample room behind the bullet trap that allows for easy access to the drums and the auger, making it easy for routine cleaning and maintenance.”

The range is fully conditioned and has a digital control system that continually monitors the air flow. It is equipped with a state-of-the-art control center that operates the lights, strobes, safety notifications and public address systems. It is raised and behind bullet-resistant glass, offering a safe view of the range while providing necessary sound protection.

As a fun ending of his site tour, Col. Atilano viewed the “holiday card” created by the Westover Resident Office team and entered into a competition with other units and tenants on base.

“The holiday cards are on 4-foot by 8-foot plywood backing and are posted around the base,” said Goff.

The colonel posed with the team around the card for a picture that was used during his special Holiday Town Meeting.

# District Commander holds special Holiday Town Hall Meeting

Col. John Atilano II, New England District Commander, hosted a special virtual holiday town hall meeting, Dec. 15. The meeting combined elements of the annual Founder's Day ceremony, postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the annual holiday celebration.

Lt. Col. Mark Gillman, Deputy District Commander, welcomed the audience before turning the event over to Col. Atilano.

"It's been five months since we've had the opportunity to gather like this," he said, referring to Col. Atilano's first town meeting since taking command in August. "One of our goals today is to recognize the service of all team members who would have been recognized during this year's Founder's Day," he said.

Col. Atilano wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and new year before beginning his state of the District address. He addressed the challenges of working in a global pandemic and recognized the offices that planned and executed safety protocols during the initial response.

"The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to find new ways of doing things," he said. "But we adapted and adapted quickly. Our success in the face of such adversity wouldn't have been possible without the resilience and dedication of each and every one of you."

Col. Atilano talked about all the leadership changes that happened in 2020, including a new Chief of Engineers, a new North Atlantic Division Commander as well as his becoming the New England District Commander. "Throughout all these personnel changes, the New England District team kept executing the mission," he said. "Your ability to stay focused is amazing!"

The New England District



Susan MacDonald elbow bumps Col. John Atilano II after receiving her 40-year certificate during the holiday town meeting.

Commander then went on to discuss all the achievements of each Division and separate office. He also recognized team members who recently retired and those that will soon retire: Dave Schafer, Steven Chase, Jay Hoverson, Christine Johnson-Battista, Ellen Iorio, Paul Young, Mark Lawrence, Nancy McNally, Kim Kaminski Donaher, Mary Daley, Kathleen Pendergast, Danny Bartolome, Manny Fillman, Ann LeBlanc, Joanne McCarron, Helen Newcomb, Maryanne Nyren, Tim Dugan, Gaelen Daly, William Ragno, Ruth Ladd, Susan Lee, Barbara Newman, Philip Nimeskern and Susan MacDonald.

Col. Atilano recognized everyone who served on the COVID-19 response team by name and presented Team Leaders Adam Steward and Matt Tessier with commander's coins. The team leaders and the following team members were nominated for the Humanitarian Service Awards: Scott Acone, Erin Bradley, Jeanine Cline, Crystal Daley, Eva Marie D'Antuono, Sean Dolan, Angela Frisino, Jeff Gaeta, Amy Hamilton, Ellen Iorio, Michelle Jellison, Randy Lecuyer,

Theresa Logue, Dave Margolis, Sue MacDonald, Theresa Negrón, Richard Patterson, Bryan Paul, Emily Pottier, Mike Russo, Dave Schafer, Jean Swalley, Lee Thibodeau, Tim Voruz, Sarah Wilkinson and Sheila Winston-Vincuilla.

Mark Anderson received the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal for his work as an ESF 3 team leader for FEMA Region 2 during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also received a commander's coin for assisting in Texas as an ESF 3 team lead after Hurricane Laura. Stephen Dunbar also received a commander's coin for serving as a Local Government Liaison in Texas and Louisiana after Hurricanes Laura and Delta.

Col. Atilano recognized the Emergency Power mission in Connecticut in support of the Hurricane Isaias recovery that provided support for the Presumpscot, Maine landslide. The team members were Mike Andryuk, Olivia Beaulieu and Colin Greenough.

"The Army Corps of Engineers mission has no borders," said Col. Atilano as he transitioned into recognizing those who deployed

overseas. "These individuals sacrificed time with their families and the comforts of home to serve our nation abroad in the Expeditionary Civilian Workforce."

Stephen Tibbetts deployed to Iraq. Jason Paolino, Garrison Pollard, and Jeff Teller all served in Afghanistan. All four received commander's coins and certificates of appreciation.

As he talked about the accomplishments of Programs/Project Management, Col. Atilano recognized Sheila Warren who received the Society for American Military Engineer's Regional Vice President Medal. This is an award that was presented by the Society for American Military Engineers and is reserved for a member who has contributed to the success of a Post year after year through their leadership and demonstrated contributions and commitment to SAME as a whole.

Although the Town Hall Meeting was virtual with minimal inperson attendance, that didn't mean that the New England District Team didn't have some fun. Col. Atilano sprinkled trivia questions throughout his speech and gave prizes to team members who were the first to answer correctly in the chat room. In addition, team members used the chat to congratulate their colleagues and converse with each other during the event.

Col. Atilano concluded his State of the District by urging everyone to stay safe and follow CDC guidelines during the holidays.

"Many of us will be celebrating the holidays very differently this year," he said. "Some of us will be seeing loved ones in scaled-down celebrations, some will be using technology to stay virtually in touch with family, and others may choose to wait a little longer to reunite with the ones they love. However you choose to celebrate, enjoy this special time with your family. Have a great holiday season and a Happy New Year!"

Ryan Killman followed Col. Atilano



Jean Swalley, Engineering, is the 2020 Supervisor of the Year.

Photos by Brian Murphy

at the podium and inducted John Astley III into the Distinguished Civilian Gallery. Story on page 6.

Lt. Col. Mark Gillman, Deputy District Commander, awarded the 2020 Federal Women's Program Supervisor of the Year Award to Jean Swalley, General Engineering Section, Design Branch, Engineering Division.

"As many of you know this award is given annually by the Federal Women's Program and recognizes a supervisor who has significantly promoted the employment and advancement of women and/or minorities and supports the EEO mission," he said.



Mark Anderson receives the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal during the holiday town meeting.

After the presentation, the District celebrated a time-honored tradition of the New England District during the holidays -- the Ugly Sweater Contest. Instead of having contestants parade through the cafeteria to display their unusual winter wear, this year the New England District Team had to submit photos for their coworkers to vote on. Adam Durando took 75-percent of the vote in this year's contest.

Jon Belmont rounded out the events by announcing the length of service awards. Team members were recognized for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 years of service.

Col. Atilano said that he felt that the Corps of Engineers, New England District was the best place to work.

"People stay here because they love the work and they love the people. No one stays 45 years if they hate coming to work," he said. "This is a family. I truly believe this is a family. I see it in the way we treat each other."

The District Commander said that he loves coming to work and working with the best people. "Without a doubt, this is the best job I've had in the Army," he said.

Col. Atilano concluded by gifting 59 minutes to the New England District Team to use on Dec. 18.

# Astley inducted into Distinguished Civilian Gallery during special holiday town hall meeting

Ryan Killman, District Counsel, inducted his former supervisor, John Astley III, into the Distinguished Civilian Gallery. The event took place during the special virtual holiday town hall meeting, Dec. 15. Astley's wife, Kathy, accompanied him to the ceremony.

"Each year, the New England District recognizes former employees who have distinguished themselves from their peers," said Killman.

The members of the Distinguished Civilian Employee Gallery have accomplished their duties to a level that is clearly exceptional and preeminent among others in that position, according to Killman. The inductees have to have developed methods and procedures which produced extraordinary benefits for the Corps of Engineers; have contributed substantially to the reputation and honor of the Corps of Engineers, and have done so loyally and faithfully throughout their careers.

John Astley III began his career with the New England District as District Counsel on March 1, 2003. During his 15 years, Astley directly engaged with project managers and leadership to ensure sound legal counsel was provided at every stage of mission execution. He fostered an environment of involvement and transparency which is still present today.

Killman said that Astley's contributions to the District and the federal government as a whole are too numerous to name in whole so Killman mentioned his more significant accomplishments:

He created an electronic case management database and reference library for major areas of Corps of Engineers practice which dramatically reduced research costs and increased efficiency in his office. He also revitalized the District's Leadership



Photo by Brian Murphy

John Astley and Col. John Atilano II unveil the 2020 Distinguished Civilian Gallery display at the holiday town meeting. Ryan Killman, District Counsel, inducted his former supervisor into the gallery during the Holiday Town meeting.

Development Program and developed an in-house training program that leveraged training resources to further staff growth and development.

In addition to the accolades Astley received on a daily basis, he received numerous formal recognitions during his entire 27-year federal career. Those include the coveted Lester Edelman Spirit of Arrowhead Award, the highest award conferred by the Chief of Counsel in 2012. Just two years later, he was named the Federal Women's Program's Supervisor of the Year. Finally, Astley received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award in 2018.

"During his career with the District, John embodied the spirit of leadership and demonstrated the highest level of honesty and integrity," said Killman. "His commitment to Army values reflected favorably on the Corps of Engineers."

Astley retired on July 31, 2018.

After reading Astley's citation, Killman invited Col. Atilano and Astley

to unveil the display featuring Astley's picture and a summarized version of the citation.

"The write-up you see displayed will transition to the hallway for the next year," said Killman. "Thanks again John for all your support to the Corps of Engineers."

Astley stepped up to the podium and joked about what a curious year 2020 was.

"First the pandemic and then you select an attorney for the Distinguished Civilian Gallery," he said.

The retired District Counsel credited all his successes to his team. "We all know that not one person can do it all," he said. "It takes a team effort."

He thanked the New England District legal team, those in the District that supported the Office of Counsel and his family for their love and support over the years.

"Thank you all for supporting me," he said. "You made this award possible."



A member of Jake Mandile's team cuts down a white pine to make a brush pile for small animals.



Photos by Jake Mandile  
A member of Jake Mandile's team works to improve the grasslands at West Hill Dam.

## Scout earns Eagle Award at West Hill Dam

Jake Mandile, Boy Scout Troop 2 of Uxbridge, Massachusetts combined his love for the outdoors and environmental stewardship when he completed his Eagle Scout project at West Hill Dam in Uxbridge in November.

Mandile's project was to improve the grasslands and edge areas around the project office at West Hill Dam by removing an invasive plant species and creating brush habitats. Mandile brought 12 team members to help him complete his project, Nov. 15-19. They removed an invasive species called Oriental Bittersweet from around the project office.

"Oriental Bittersweet is a species originally brought from Asia as an ornamental, but chokes out native species here and is prolific," said Park Ranger Viola Bramel. "It must be bagged and disposed of in household trash that is known to be incinerated."

According to Bramel, Mandile also removed any of the Oriental Bittersweet he could locate in about four acres of the West Hill Dam grasslands.

In addition to the Oriental Bittersweet, Mandile and his team also cut down small invasive trees, white pine and cottonwood, and stacked them to create brush habitat piles for small animals.

"The clearing of the grassland of invasive small trees, a normal reforest natural response, Jake and his patrol removed

small growth white pines and cottonwoods encroaching back into the established grassland," said Bramel. "The trees were placed up on the ridge as brush piles providing habitat for native cottontails, mice and small mammals as well as birds, to take cover from predators native to the grassland such as the red-tail hawk, Coopers Hawk, coyotes, fishers, great horned owl and our resident red fox."

Extensive planning goes into Eagle projects. Mandile and his father met with Bramel at the end of October, for initial contact about the project.

Bramel said he returned for four meetings to review, make updates to his proposal and returned after the Boy Scout Eagle Council, Narraganset Chapter, had approved his final plan. Mandile returned one last time before work to review the two main areas he would direct his patrol to work in and to stake those areas.

The Eagle Award is the highest award a Boy Scout can earn. According to the Boy Scouts of America, an Eagle Scout must demonstrate Scout Spirit, an ideal attitude based upon the Scout Oath and Law, service and leadership.

Only about two percent of Boy Scouts achieve the rank of Eagle Scout.

The West Hill Dam team has 53 Eagle Scout projects at their site with five more in various stages of completion.

# Dredging up the past



Photo by C.J. Allen

Donna Russell opens her Yankee Swap gift as Mike Sheehan, Donna Madigan and Crystal Gardner look on. The Swap was one of many events held during the District Holiday Party at Concord Park on December 17, 1999.

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