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BUILDING STRONG®

New England District, EPA, bring water to
Durham, Connecticut

Story on page 7

Yankee Voices

Gary Morin, Kurt Mintell, Col. John Atlano II and Lisa Belisle



Sympathy...

...to the family of Real Estate retiree, **Ray Cottengaim**, who passed away Sept. 28. Mr. Cottengaim served his country honorably in the U.S. Army from 1966-69.

He went on to work as a Realty Specialist with the Army Corps of Engineers retiring in 2007.

His obituary can be found here: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/bostonglobe/name/raymond-cottengaim-obituary?id=36682557>.

... to **Yixian Zhang**, Engineering Division, on the sudden passing of her husband, **Jian Wang**, the weekend of Aug. 27.

...to **Bonnie Ortiz**, New Bedford Resident Office, Construction Division, on the passing of her daughter, **Jeannette Ortiz**, Sept. 3.

Words Worth Repeating

"Without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods."

- Aristotle



Photos provided by Buffumville Lake

Caught in the act of Water Safety

Over the course of the summer, the Buffumville Dam team "caught" 50 visitors wearing life jackets while recreating at the project. The team presented each offender with a certificate and a water safety dry bag as a thanks for being role models for other and being safe on the water. The "Got Caught" event encouraged visitors to commit random acts of safety while enjoying water recreation activities. Project Manager Nicole Giles, and Park Rangers Jay Lamell, Angela Erksine, James Higgins, Alphonsus Ho, Aidan Buck and Mark Fuller all patrolled Buffumville and issued these very special "citations."

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Commander's Corner: Hispanic Heritage Month

by Col. John A. Atilano II
Commander, New England District

Hola! We will be celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 through October 15. This year's theme is, "Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation."

This observance is unique because so many Independence Days for so many Hispanic countries fall within the Mid-September to Mid-October timeline, so it makes sense to have Hispanic Heritage fall during that time period. The observation began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988.

Elements of Hispanic Heritage are infused in many aspects of American culture to include food, music, entertainment, STEM, language and even service to the nation. Hispanic Servicemembers have been part of our fighting force since the very beginning of American history. In 1779, under the command of Bernardo de Galvez, who was the Spanish General and colonial governor of Spanish Louisiana, volunteers from Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico defeated the British at Natchez and Baton Rouge and putting the lower part of the river under Spanish control. Baton Rouge remained in Spanish hands for the rest of the war, and Britain ceded both West and East Florida to Spain in 1783 under the Treaty of Paris.

Heroic feats by Hispanic Servicemembers are well documented throughout our history. They have been recognized with Medals of Honor dating back as far as the Civil War. Currently there are 46 Medal of Honor recipients,

the last awarded in 2008. Their stories of bravery can be read here: <https://www.cmohs.org/recipients/lists/hispanic-latino-recipients>

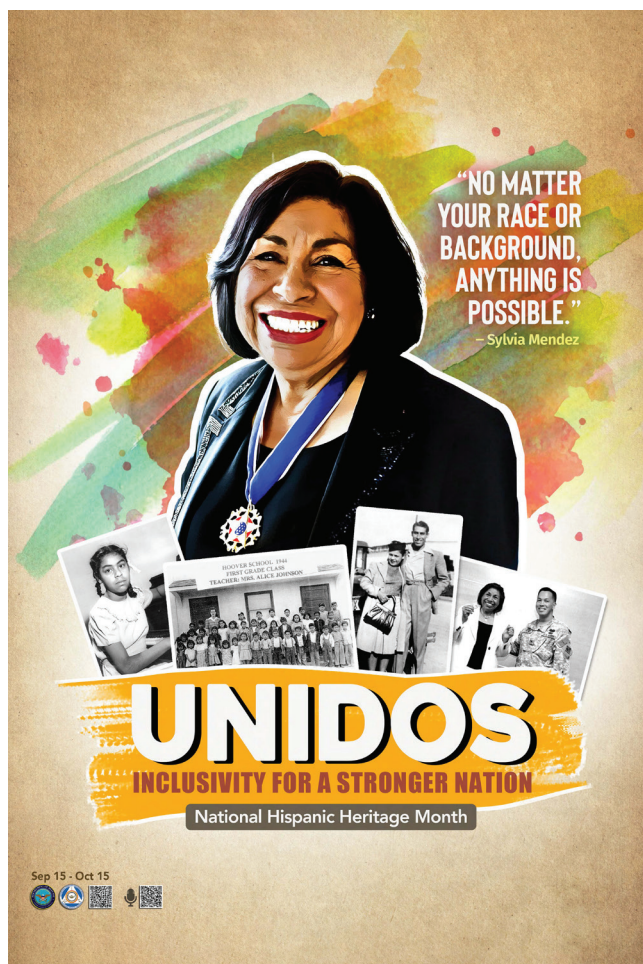
In 2014, the 65th Infantry Regiment also known as known

as the Borinqueneers [Bo-RIN-ken-eers], a unit mostly made up of Puerto Rican Soldiers, received the Congressional Gold Medal for their bravery in battle. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest Civilian award bestowed by Congress. That tradition of valor, personal courage and selfless service continues today. More than 139,000 Hispanic Americans serve in the U.S. Armed Forces today and make up about 17-percent of our fighting force. Eight percent of Army Civilians are of Hispanic or Latino decent.

At the New England District, we value our Hispanic American team members who serve in various professional roles and make significant contributions to our mission. I appreciate the positive impacts you make to deliver the program and on budget.

Maria DeLaundreau will be our Hispanic American Heritage Month champion. Thank you Maria! Below are some Hispanic Heritage resources. I urge you to take a look and learn at least one new thing about the culture of your Hispanic Heritage teammates.

- <https://www.archives.gov/news/topics/hispanic-heritage-month>
- <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Special-Observances/#national-hispanic-heritage-month>
- <https://www.dodea.edu/dodeaCelebrates/Hispanic-Heritage-Month.cfm>



Boston Harbor project completed four months ahead of schedule

by **Bryan Purtell**
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District announced on Aug. 19 that the recently completed Boston Harbor Deep Draft Navigation Improvement Project was finished four months ahead of schedule.

The project was a \$350 million partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the non-federal sponsors – the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Port Authority of Massachusetts (Massport) -- and a multitude of project stakeholders.

Boston Harbor is the largest seaport in New England and the principal distributing point for regional commerce. The Port of Boston supports \$8.2 billion in economic impact, resulting in 66,000 jobs for the Commonwealth and New England region. This project, combined with Conley Terminal infrastructure improvements made by Massport, has resulted in significant navigational improvements to Boston Harbor, allowing larger container ships and tankers for both dry bulk and petroleum to access the various terminals, ultimately reducing transportation costs and improving efficiency of maritime transportation of goods to the New England Region.

"The ability for larger vessels to call on Boston is critical to New England's economy and supports USACE's core navigation mission," said Jenifer Thalhauser, USACE New England District Chief of Navigation.

As a result of the dredging project and Massport's recent upgrades to Conley Container Terminal, including a brand-new berth and three new ship-to-shore cranes, the Port of Boston now serves 12,000 TEU vessels and has increased its direct global



Contractor dredging performing work in Boston Harbor.

connectivity to reach 18 additional ports in China, Southeast Asia, India, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Northern Europe and Latin America. These new global connections will benefit more than 2,500 businesses that utilize Conley Container Terminal to import and export goods.

"We thank the Army Corps of Engineers for their longtime partnership on this momentous project, which has enabled the Port of Boston to serve larger ships and keep goods flowing in and out of New England," Massport CEO Lisa Wieland said.

The Boston Harbor Deep Draft Improvement Project involved three major phases. The first contract, maintenance dredging of the inner harbor and construction of a Confined Aquatic Disposal cell, was completed in December of 2017. The second contract was awarded to a joint venture of Cashman Dredging and Dutra Dredging Group in 2018 for \$122 million and involved mechanically dredging approximately 11.7 million cubic yards clay, gravel, sand and fractured rock within Boston Harbor's North Channel, Main Ship Channel, Turning Basin, Reserved Channel and Presidents Road Anchorage. The second contract work began July of 2018 and was completed in November 2020, an astounding year ahead of schedule.

Most of the dredged material was placed in the Massachusetts Bay Disposal Site, approximately 20 miles offshore of Boston Harbor, with a small fraction of the material used as a cap to the Main Ship Channel Confined Aquatic Disposal cell just downstream of the inner confluence of the Chelsea and Mystic Rivers, Thalhauser said.

The third and final contract involved dredging, drilling and removal of hard rock to complete the deepening project work. That phase of the project was completed in June 2022 by Great Lakes Dredge and Dock LLC, who were awarded the contract in March 2021 for \$61.8 million. The company began work in June 2021 by mechanically dredging rock in localized areas of the harbor and removing the remaining rock by drilling, removal and dredging the rock material.

According to Thalhauser, key partnerships and extensive coordination with a host of local and federal organizations contributed to the early completion and under-budget cost of this massively complex project.

"First and foremost, we owe many successes to the partnership and accommodations made by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Boston Pilots Association, the Boston Harbor Docking Pilots, Massport Aviation Operations at Boston Logan International Airport, recreational and commercial fishermen, and many local, state and federal environmental resource agencies," she said. "Secondly, this project, decades in the making, was shepherded successfully by the New England District's planning, environmental engineering, and construction team members. And finally, the project would not have been possible or as successful without the technical, financial and partner support of the Port Authority of Massachusetts," she said.



New England District Team inspects Fox Point Hurricane Barrier

**Story and photos by Bryan Paul
Engineering Division**

Project Manager Nicole Giles, Mechanical Engineer Mac Craig, Geostuctural Engineer Sara Graziani and Basin Manager Tim Russell board a boat to perform a routine inspection on parts of the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier in Providence Rhode Island.

The levee safety program works with the local authorities to team up and inspect important features every five years.



Park Ranger Viola Bramel with visitors at West Hill Dam. Bramel was named the recipient of the 2022 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.

Viola Bramel receives top USACE honors for interpretive work

Viola Bramel, Park Ranger for West Hill Dam, is the recipient of the 2022 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.

She received the award for her outstanding efforts and achievements in the area of Interpretive Programs and Outreach Services (ISOP).

Bramel said she was grateful to receive the award. "I did look to heaven and thank my parents, Scout leaders and all my family in heaven!" she said.

According to the nomination put together by USACE New England District's ISOP Committee, her enthusiasm for creating interpretive programs and interpretive opportunities is unmatched.

"She is unflagging in her resolve to offer as much of her time and knowledge to those wishing to learn

about the environment and experience the outdoors firsthand," the Committee wrote. "She is regarded as the preeminent interpreter in the Thames River Basin if not the entire New England District. Her energy and enthusiasm are a testament to the Corps' tradition of excellence, and she is an asset to her basin, the New England District and the Corps."

North Atlantic Division Commander, Col. John P. Lloyd, sent Bramel a letter of congratulations on her outstanding achievement.

"Vi, as many in the District know her, has dedicated more than three decades to West Hill Dam and is recognized by her peers and leadership for outstanding contributions in interpretation and environmental education," he said. "Her programs

capture the spirit of West Hill Dam—nature hikes, dam tours, environmental stewardship, bird watching—always something for everyone."

Col. Lloyd said Bramel is a beloved presence at the site whose interpretation skills allow visitors of all ages to make personal connections to the site and its stories, like her hikes for seniors and direct mentorship with local scouts.

"Vi is also a bridge builder, sought-after by many community members and organizations for her participative and engaging style," he said.

Bramel received a congratulatory Commander's Coin from Col. Atilano at his Commander's Coffee, Sept. 30 when she served as his guest speaker.

This is not her first Chittenden Award. Bramel received her first Chittenden Award back in 1996



Photo by Brian Murphy

Col. John Atilano (second from left) joins EPA and other officials in toasting to the new waterline in Durham, Connecticut.

New England District, EPA, bring water to Durham, Connecticut

Col. John Atilano, New England District Commander, joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash, Congressional and local officials on Aug. 24, to celebrate the completion of nearly six miles of waterline that will provide clean drinking water to the people of Durham, Connecticut. The work is part of the Durham Meadows Superfund cleanup that the New England District is executing on behalf of the EPA.

The District installed the nearly 6-mile waterline, that runs from the city of Middletown to the town of Durham, and a 790,000-gallon water storage tank in response to widespread contamination from industrial activities in Durham Center, according to the EPA. The system includes new connections for 119 properties, including Coginchaug High School and Strong Middle School, and provides clean water for the 84 existing customers of the Durham Center Water Service, including the historic Durham Agricultural Fairground.

"USACE and our technical experts are honored to collaborate with the EPA, Connecticut DEEP, and all the other state and local stakeholders, through countless hours of partnership and hard work, to deliver clean drinking water to the people of Durham, Connecticut," said Col. Atilano. "The EPA and USACE have a very long and successful history together when it comes to environmental cleanup. We appreciate that the EPA entrusts us with projects like Durham Meadows because they know we have experienced professionals with the expertise to manage large projects. I want to thank our Durham Meadows Superfund Team for all of their outstanding work on this important project from start to finish, and we look forward to our continued

partnership with EPA on our other ongoing projects."

The Durham Meadows Superfund Site is centered around the currently operating Durham Manufacturing Company (DMC) and the former locations of Merriam Manufacturing Company (MMC), which was destroyed by fire in 1998. Both companies manufactured metal cabinets, boxes and other items.

When they were in operation, both companies used various solvents, including trichloroethene; 1,1,1-trichloroethane; and methylene chloride. The companies' past disposal of wastewater in lagoons or sludge drying beds, spills at both facilities, and inadequate drum storage practices at MMC contributed to the contamination at each facility and in the overall area of groundwater surrounding both facilities.

Although soil cleanup has been completed, contaminants that continue to be detected in residential drinking water. In 2005, EPA signed a Record of Decision declaring the drinking water contamination in Durham an unacceptable threat to human health that requires a cleanup response.

A key component of the cleanup plan was to provide a new water supply for the contaminated area of Durham, which was accomplished by extending the municipal water from the neighboring city of Middletown.

Construction on the waterline started in September 2019, and it began to deliver clean drinking water to Durham on July 18, 2022. The New England District will finish some remaining construction punchlist work that will complete the project in 2023.

The District is in the procurement process for a separate construction contract to address remaining groundwater and soil contamination adjacent to the currently operating Durham Manufacturing Company (DMC).

Dredging up the past



Photo by Richard Fortuna

After 40 years of dedicated service to the Corps of Engineers and the nation, Marty Abair, Senior Project Manager and team leader of the Vermont Project Office, Regulatory Division, has retired. A celebration of her career took place Sept. 30, 2015 at the Minuteman Commons, Hanscom Air Force Base.