



US Army Corps
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BUILDING STRONG®



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New England District

New England District Civilian Gallery



Jay Mackay

Jay Mackay began his federal journey in 1992 culminating with his leadership role as a Supervisory Ecologist, the position from which he retired. As Chief of the Environmental Resources Section, Mr. Mackay guided and managed a team of up to 15 environmental professionals and program managers.

Mr. Mackay was a key figure on USACE New England projects including his role as a critical team member on the New Bedford Superfund project. He led the development of the District's Disposal Material Management Team and maintained the Disposal Area Monitoring System program from Regulatory to the Planning Division. Additionally, he worked on many high-profile projects including Providence River, Long Island Sound and New Haven Harbor projects. Mr. Mackay also deployed to support emergency responses for Hurricanes Katrina, Ike and Sandy and the California Wildfires.

During his career Mr. Mackay received many special act and performance awards. He was named the 2019 District Supervisor of the Year for supporting and encouraging the personal and professional development of employees.

Mr. Mackay retired July 27, 2022, with 30 years of service.

2023

Jay Mackay inducted into Distinguished Civilian Gallery

See story on page 7



Yankee Voices

Angela Frisno, Col. John A. Atilano II, Bryan Paul, and Emily Potter



Congratulations...

... to **Barbara Blumeris**, Planning, who has been awarded the Lifetime Planning Achievement Award. The Lifetime Planning Achievement Award honors individuals who have distinguished themselves by making significant and lasting contributions to the USACE Planning Community during their careers.

... to **Tia Mercer**, Operations, who took first place in the 2021-2022 USACE Water Safety Photo Contest in the category of "Employees in Action." Her winning photo is above.

Words Worth Repeating

"The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime."

— *Babe Ruth*

Letter of appreciation from FEMA

Editor's note:

The following letter was sent to Col. John A. Atilano II by Deanne Criswell, FEMA Administrator in appreciation for all the work the New England District team did during the COVID-19 pandemic. A copy of the letter was provided to everyone on the District's Alternative Care Facility Team.

Dear John Atilano,

On May 11, 2023, FEMA marked the close of the COVID-19 Incident Period, which represented the longest response and recovery mission in FEMA's 44-year history.

On behalf of the entire agency, please accept our deepest gratitude for your service during this historic effort.

In partnership with your organization, FEMA was able to coordinate the whole-of-government effort to respond to and recover from the pandemic.

We provided assistance through the deployment of federal assets, delivered over \$100 billion to support the response, and helped people with everything from emergency staffing to lost wages to funeral assistance.

While federal funding helped enable the response, it was you...your staff... your volunteers... and your community that made sure critical systems remained functional.

Ensuring the public remained informed, that essential workers got to work, that no one went hungry, that healthcare systems remained operational, and that vaccines went from vials to arms, we could not have met our mission without you.

What we accomplished during the pandemic is a testament to the power of partnerships in times of crisis. We need your help to keep this network of partnerships healthy and strong.

I thank you again for everything you have done, and for the outstanding work I know you will continue to do.

With sincere thanks,

Deanne Criswell, Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region I



Commander's Corner:

Happy Independence Day New England!

Col. John A. Atilano II
New England District Commander

As many of you know, 4th of July is my favorite holiday. Celebrating our independence and the beginning of the greatest democracy in history is something that I have enjoyed my entire life. It is truly about the celebration and spending that time with people we love. It's even more special to celebrate right here where it started.

I bought my fireworks last night. Mortars, rockets, cherry bombs, firecrackers, artillery



barrages, and some pretty fountains for Daniella. I will be grilling steaks and lobsters and will certainly partake in a cold beverage or two.

When we do dangerous things, we must have a plan for safety. I've got eye pro, and gloves. I've got my large A/B/C rated fire extinguisher. I also have a large metal bucket filled with water to dispose of expended fireworks, and my water hose will be ready to go as well. Have fun but have a plan!

If you are partaking in adult beverages, please do so in moderation. Please don't drink and drive.

For those enjoying the water, wear your life jackets! I want you all to have a blast (pun intended) but more importantly I want you all to come back to work happy, recharged, and healthy.

From my family to yours, Happy 4th of July!

Colonel Justin Pabis to take command of New England District in July

Colonel Justin R. Pabis will assume command of the New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on July 28. A native of Wilbraham, Massachusetts, Colonel Pabis graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2000, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Previous assignments include serving as Command Engineer, Joint Special Operations Command, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina; Battalion Commander, 169th Engineer Battalion, 1st Engineer Brigade, Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri; Operational Engineer, U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill AFB, Florida; Analysis and Research Branch Chief, CENTCOM J8, MacDill AFB, Florida; Chief of Staff, Afghan National Army Special Operations Command Special Operations Advisory Group, Camp Morehead, Afghanistan; AFPAK Hand, CENTCOM J8, MacDill AFB, Florida; Group Engineer, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Ft. Campbell, Kentucky; Deputy Area Engineer, USACE New York District, New York City, New York; Brigade Design Engineer, 130th Engineer Brigade, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Company Commander 82nd Engineer Support Company, Ramadi, Iraq; Plans Officer, 29th Engineer Topographic Battalion, Ft. Shafter, Hawaii; Battalion Civil Engineer, 84th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), Balad, Iraq; Executive Officer, A Co. 84th ECB(H), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Platoon Leader, A/84th ECB(H), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Platoon Leader, Headquarter Support Company, 84th ECB(H), Schofield

Barracks, Hawaii.

Colonel Pabis holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point; a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Missouri at Rolla; and a Master of Science in National Strategy from the Air War College. His military education includes Senior Service College at the Air War College, Defense Language Institute Dari, Intermediate Level Education at the Army Command and Staff College, Engineer Command and Staff Course (Engineer Captains Career Course), Engineer Officer Basic Course, Airborne School, Master Fitness Trainer, and Army Combatives. Colonel Pabis is a Professional Engineer, licensed in Missouri since 2007. He is an instructor rated skydiver.

Colonel Pabis' military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Valorous Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Citation, Navy Unit Citation, Army Superior Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terror Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Combat Action Badge, Army Parachutist Badge, and Italian Parachutist Badge. He is a recipient of the Bronze de Fleury Medal.

New England District team celebrates 248 years of service to the nation with awards ceremony

As is the annual tradition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, held its Founder's Day awards ceremony and picnic, June 23 at Concord Park headquarters in Concord, Massachusetts. In addition to audience members, the awards ceremony was also live streamed for those who were not able to attend in person.

Beth Gosselin, Chief of Public Affairs, opened the award ceremony.

"Officially, Founder's Day commemorates a moment in time when we, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, celebrate our contributions to our nation," she said. "Unofficially, it's usually a time for us to get together in the nice weather and socialize."

Gosselin introduced Col. John A. Atilano II and invited him to the podium to address the District. Col. Atilano enthusiastically welcomed everyone to the ceremony and for the benefit of the new employees and families, gave a brief history of how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers came to be 248 years ago.

"We continue to provide exemplary

ongoing services to our nation as we did over 200 years ago and will continue to do so for many centuries to come."

The District Engineer announced that this would be his last Founder's Day, as his time in command at the District ends at the end of July and he will be moving on to another assignment.

"Our Founder's Days together have been unusual to say the least," he said. "It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with you all and I am grateful for the experiences I have had and the relationships I have developed. They will stay with me forever."

Col. Atilano thanked Planning Division for hosting this year's picnic and activities and he thanked the Public Affairs Office and his Executive Staff for the awards ceremony before leaving the podium.

"Today is your day," he said. "Enjoy time with your coworkers, stay out of your cubicles and enjoy the day, the food and the activities."

Lt. Col. Michael Carvelli, Deputy Commander, followed Col. Atilano and presented Length of Service awards to

those honorees in attendance.

"I did some math on the length of service recipients," he said. "And guess how many total years of service they have given to the government? One thousand, six hundred and thirty years ... wow, thank you."

Lt. Col. Carvelli called up team members in the audience to receive their certificates. Recipients were in the five, 10, 15, 30, 35 and 40-year categories. A complete listing of recipients from five to 45 years was published in the annual Founder's Day brochure. Lt. Col. Carvelli concluded by saying the length of service award recipients who were not in attendance could stop by the Executive Office when they are next in Concord Park to pick up their certificates.

Jon Belmont, Chief of Staff, was next on the agenda and announced this year's honorary awards.

New York District Commander, Col. Matthew Luzzatto sent certificates of appreciation for team members who served on the New York and New Jersey Harbor Navigation Study Team. The recipients of the certificates were Steve



Five Years

Photos by Linnea Shirley



10 Years



Sally Rignore - 40 Years



Ronald Woodall - 10 Years



Jeff Mangum - 30 Years



Adam Burnett - 40 Years



Sarita Martinez - 15 Years



Kristina Ekholm - Supervisor of the Year

Potts, Prasanna Rachakatla, Gina Romano and Rose Schmidt. The team received the certificates for providing exceptional service during the Harbor Deepening Channel Improvement Feasibility study.

Five members of the New England District team were honored with nominations from the North Atlantic Division (NAD) for consideration for USACE Engineering and Construction awards. Although they ultimately did not get selected, Col. Atilano wanted to show his appreciation for their hard work by presenting them with one of his coins:

- Scott Flanagan for the CAD-BIM Professional of the Year.
- Stephen Potts for the Timothy Skeen Geotechnics Professional of the Year.
- Christopher Scabia for his nomination for the Instrumentation and Performance Monitoring Award.

Unable to attend but will receive coins in the future are:

- Jeffrey Gaeta for his nomination

for Cost Engineer of the Year.

- Anastasia Papadopoulos for her nomination for the Tommy Schmidt Dam Safety Profession of the Year.

- Will Burgess, who is still in contention, for the USACE Outstanding Knowledge Management Professional of the Year.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Deanne Criswell and Regional Administrator Lori Ehrlich sent a letter of appreciation to Col. Atilano and the team for the vital role the District played in the COVID-19 pandemic response. Col. Atilano in turn presented the letter to Angela Frisino, Rich Patterson, Bryan Paul, Emily Pottier, Matt Tessier and Sheila Warren as Belmont read the letter out loud. The full letter can be found on page 2. Other members of the Alternative Care Facility Team were encouraged to get a copy of the letter at the Executive Office the next time they were in the office.

Belmont moved on to recognize team members who deployed supporting

emergency operations domestically. Members of the Housing Planning and Response team – Timothy Maynard, Matt Mrocza and Kevin Torgersen were all recognized for their work supporting the Hurricane Ian recovery with certificates of appreciation.

The Housing PRT who provided reach back support also received recognition for their work during Hurricane Ian: Scott Flanagan, Romina Gugo, Kevin Hebard and Matthew Tessier. Belmont also recognized Capt. Ryan Hall who is currently deployed in Poland.

Jenna Gustafson, Office of Counsel, won the Joseph W. Kimbel Award for Professional Potential. The award recognizes an attorney who has demonstrated, over a period of one year or more, the highest potential for future legal achievement and who truly is a "Rising Star" in the USACE Legal Services Community.

The final honorary award went to Kristina Ekholm, Engineering Division, who was named Supervisor of the



15 Years



Housing PRT - Hurricane Ian



Shawn Mahaney - 35 Years



Christopher Hatfield - 35 Years

Photos by Linnea Shirley

Year. The criteria for the award were revamped this year to open it up to more candidates deserving consideration. According to her nomination, Ekholm looks for opportunities to further development individuals in her group and supports them while they do it.

"She truly excels in workload balancing and deconfliction... assigning the right expertise, developing the soundest solutions and tirelessly adjusting schedules to meet milestones, often taking on assignments or senior oversight herself to ensure success," read Belmont.

The nomination also credits her reputation across the District and her support for Women in the Workplace initiatives.

Lt. Col. Carvelli returned to the podium to induct the latest Distinguished Civilian Gallery member—Joseph "Jay" Mackay. See story on page 7.

Founder's Day activities coordinator Sheila Warren concluded the awards ceremony with a summary of what attendees could expect to enjoy later in the day.



New York and New Jersey Harbor Navigation Study Team.



Christopher Scabia, nominee, Instrumentation and Performance Monitoring Award



Matt Mrocza, Housing Planning and Response team, certificate of appreciation.

Jay Mackay named 2023 Distinguished Civilian Gallery Inductee

Joseph "Jay" Mackay, Supervisory Ecologist, Planning Division, became the latest inductee in the New England District's Distinguished Civilian Gallery.

Mackay received the honor during the annual Founder's Day ceremony, June 23 at Concord Park, Concord, Massachusetts. His wife, Helene, accompanied him to the ceremony.

Col. John A. Atilano II, New England District Commander, presented Mackay with the award as Lt. Col. Michael Carvelli, Deputy District Commander, presided over the brief ceremony.

Lt. Col. Carvelli told the audience that the District recognizes a retired employee each year who made a lasting impact on the District by inducting them into the Gallery.

"Each inductee embodies the spirit of the New England District," he said. "Inductees accomplished their duties to a level that is clearly exceptional and preeminent among others in that position," he said.

For 12 years, Mackay was a Marine Ecologist in Planning Division's Environmental Resources Section. He was a critical team member in the environmental monitoring and salt marsh restoration for the New Bedford Harbor Superfund Project.

During the early 2000s, Mackay prepared major sections of the Providence River Dredging Environmental Impact Statement and oversaw all environmental monitoring.

"Jay supported several response missions, deploying for Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Hurricane Ike in 2008, Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and the California Wildfires in 2018," said Lt. Col. Carvelli.

Mackay became the Chief of the Environmental Resources Section. For the next 18 years he oversaw NEPA environmental compliance across all the District's Civil Works and Military missions.

"He built a collaborative relationship with Regulatory Division and the region's natural resource agencies," said Lt. Col. Carvelli.

Mackay was credited with developing the District's Dredged Material Management Team and with moving the DAMOS Program over from Regulatory to Planning. Once the transition was complete, Mackay and his team prepared all Dredged Material Determinations for the District.

"Furthermore, he provided senior oversight and supervision to the development of a sophisticated Marine Field Program that resulted in a significant cost savings for the District," said Lt. Col. Carvelli.

Mackay received various awards over the years, to include the 2019 Supervisor of the Year Award. He retired on July 27, 2022 with 30 years of service.

After Lt. Col. Carvelli's remarks, Col. Atilano presented Mackay with the Distinguished Civilian Gallery certificate.



Photos by Linnea Shirley

Helene and Jay Mackay stand by the display naming him the latest Distinguished Civilian Gallery inductee.

Col. Atilano, Mackay and his wife Helene unveiled the plaque that will go on the temporary wall for one year before transitioning to the permanent gallery.

Mackay stepped to the podium and thanked everyone. "It's an honor not only to be nominated but to be selected for this award because I know that there are other people who are equally if not more deserving," he said. "I really appreciate it."

He said that awards are more about team accomplishments rather than a single person.

"When you are looking at accomplishments of a group like the environmental resources section you have to look at the people," he said.

Mackay went on to point out several of his team and highlighted their work in the section.

"These folks and the supporting technical personnel are what this award is really all about," he said. "It's not so much about the award for me but the work that these people do to support the District and its missions every year. I'm proud of the group, I'm proud of the Environmental and Evaluations branches and the work that gets done. Thank you for the award, I really appreciate it."



Col. John A. Atilano II presents Jay Mackay with his Distinguished Civilian Gallery certificate.

Dredging up the past



Photo by C.J. Allen

Bill Scully (left) Judy Carlson, Dick Carlson and Col. Philip T. Feir, District Commander, unveil Carlson's Distinguished Civilian Gallery portrait, June 23, 2010.