

## Engineer Day: Taking Care of People



Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District commander, performs push-ups for the 35-year award recipients Boyd Tyson (left) and Jesus Gonzalez. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Dave Palmer

**LOS ANGELES** — The Los Angeles District marked anniversary 237 of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during their annual event June 29.

Under the commander's motto "Taking Care of People," the District converged on the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale, Calif.

Engineer Day was the perfect venue to recognize teammates for their decades

of service and accomplishments. This year, 78 District employees met the criteria of 10-to 45-years of service. In all, 28 employees were available to receive their award at the event.

Receiving their Length of Service awards were:

### 10-years

- Velsen Dejourney-Toles
- Corice Farrar
- Jeffrey Koontz
- John Markham

- Cecilia Ordonez
- Heather Schlosser
- Arnecia Williams

### 20-years

- Margaret Banting
- Carvel Bass
- Gail Campos
- Van Crisostomo
- Eleanor Encinas
- Hoang Huynh
- Deborah Lamb
- Carmen Lara
- Kenneth Mueller
- Phillip Serpa

### 25-years

- Lynette Ulloa

### 30-years

- Mohammed Chang
- Maria Cisneros
- Robert Conley
- Jody Fischer
- Susan Flores
- Norma Hallisy
- Stephanie Hall
- Peter Kroese

### 35-years

- Jesus Gonzalez
- Boyd Tyson



Dawn Parker performs the National Anthem to set the patriotic tone. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)



## District participates in successful planning charrette



Navajo County Public Works Director Homero Vela (right) addressing a question about the Winslow Levee. The study area includes the City of Winslow, the mainstem of the Little Colorado River from the confluence with Clear Creek downstream to the northern end of the levee. (USACE photo by Richard Legere)

By Daniel J. Calderón

**WINSLOW, Ariz.** — Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District met with representatives from Navajo County, the City of Winslow and representatives of the Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni tribes; along with staff members from State and Federal agencies and a project engineer from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad for a three-day planning charrette. The purpose of the charrette was to develop an initial array of alternatives for reducing the flood risk to the Winslow Community.

“You guys did a great job putting this together,” said Steve Dibble, archaeologist with the Los Angeles District. “This was the most valuable and productive project planning meeting I have ever been to.”

The planning charrette brought together 45 individuals representing 16 organizations. Rich Legere, with the District’s Arizona-Nevada Area Office, as the Lead Planner, organized the event to allow for open discussion on possibilities for improving flood risk management in

the Winslow Community.

“It’s important to have an open discussion,” Legere said. “That way, each organization can participate in the development of alternatives that will be considered as we proceed with the study.”

Legere said the District is considering all options regarding flood risk management in the area. On day one, participants reviewed the project history and discussed problems, opportunities and constraints. They also received instruction on the Corps’ six-step planning process and the role of the charrette in this process. On the second day, participants conducted a field visit to the study area, then returned to the meeting site at the historic Hubbell Trading Post to begin a series of team break-out sessions and brainstorming exercises.

The intent of the sessions and exercises was to formulate flood risk management alternatives, including at least one nonstructural alternative, and to develop screening and evaluation criteria. The team break-out sessions

continued into the third day of the meeting. At the end of the charrette, the participants reconvened to present their efforts and to compare project alternatives.

“The results of the charrette will be integrated into the resetting and rescoping milestone due later this year,” Legere said. The alternatives developed during the charrette will be refined for the later steps of evaluation and comparison, eventually resulting in selection of a recommended plan.

The charrette was part of the continuing Little Colorado River at Winslow Feasibility Study. Navajo County is the non-federal sponsor for the study. The study is designed to investigate alternatives for reducing the flood risk to the Winslow Community. The study area includes the City of Winslow and the mainstem of the Little Colorado River from the confluence with Clear Creek downstream to the northern end of the Winslow Levee. The study area includes approximately 49 square miles of land area and 10 miles of the LCR mainstem.

# COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear District Teammates,

Our Annual Engineer Day Picnic on June 29 at Santa Fe Dam for our Southern California team was a HUGE success! I'm told that similar employee picnics were also held that day at our Edwards and Palmdale resident/area offices. Combined with our April picnic for our Phoenix Area Office and our May picnic for our Las Vegas Resident Office, I'd say that all of us took time this year for Building Strong and Taking Care of People!

There is no question that our Engineer Days are my favorite times of the year. More than anything, I enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship of our picnic days. I loved talking to everyone and seeing family members and friends. As May and I walked around from division to division, I did hear some "shop talk"; however, I also heard people quickly discipline themselves by agreeing NOT to talk about work too much...GOOD JOB!

Our official program was a wonderful tribute to our employees. After a rousing performance of our National Anthem by Dawn Parker and a poignant, thought-provoking invocation from retired Sgt. Maj. Jeff Koontz, we transitioned to recognizing our teammates for the outstanding work that they have accomplished in our District. The District employees named to represent the region at HQ/USACE are too many to name here in this article. Suffice it to say, the talent on our team is truly incredible.

Of particular note, our second recipient of the "Kevin Inada Employee of the Quarter" Award was none other than James Moye. Receiving the award on behalf of James was our Construction Division Chief, John Keever. The next time I'm in Arizona, I look forward to personally congratulating James for a job well-done.

I thoroughly enjoyed handing out our longevity awards for our District employees. Ten, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 year employees received their signed "Years of Service to the L.A.

District" certificates. Moreover, I was extremely proud to "knock-out" 35 push-ups for our two "35-year employees," Boyd Tyson and Jesus Gonzalez. Thank goodness we didn't have a teammate that had more time in the District than 35 years!

After our morning program, all of us enjoyed a GREAT lunch. Whether it was BBQ, pot-luck, store-bought or catered, there was plenty of good food to go around.

Our afternoon program began with some terrific music provided by a local DJ. Hits from the '70s, '80s, and '90s filled the air. What else could we do...but DANCE! My thanks to Liza Rosa, Danny Carrasco, Eileen Takata, Frances Jones and Sandra Oliver-Hall for helping me with the Cupid Shuffle and the Cha-Cha Slide! It got everyone in the mood to dance!

As we conducted our raffle, I thoroughly enjoyed announcing our winners and requiring them to "dance" before receiving their prizes. Watching Art Shak dance?...PRICELESS! My thanks to all our winners who were great sports for playing along with the fun!

Overall, our picnic at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area was a day to remember! Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone for sharing this time together and making the day a resounding success. Without a doubt, we certainly lived up to the day's theme, **TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE!**

Warm Regards,

COL Toy



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# Los Angeles District keeps 'Building Strong' in Las Vegas area



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Nellis Resident Office is working on an addition and improvement for the F-35 422 Test Evaluation Squadron Facility at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas. The renovations will add a 16,000 square foot building and improve 4,000 square feet inside the existing facility. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

By Daniel J. Calderón

**LAS VEGAS** — It's been said that what happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas. However, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District is working on military construction projects in and around the Las Vegas area that will have effects across the country and around the world.

One project at Nellis Air Force Base is the addition and renovation at the 422 Test Evaluation Squadron building.

"The project will add a 16,000 square feet facility and there will be renovation of 4,000 square foot of the existing building," said Mark Porterfield, project engineer at the District's Nellis Resident Office. "Construction began in early June and the project is due in March 2013."

The \$5.9 million project is a joint TeeHee-Straub venture that will house key computer systems. Joshua Jack, the project superintendant and site safety officer, said there are some unique challenges with the project.

"The main challenge has been in making sure the existing building remains mission ready," Jack said. "Tying into an existing building has brought unforeseen challenges. With the tie-in points and the elevation, we have to make sure the connections match and

the area is level. Plumbing and utilities have to be tied into the new structure and into the existing remodel without interrupting ongoing operations."

The project is the second one for the TeeHee-Straub team. The first was at Vandenberg AFB in California. Jack said the project is going well at this point and he is proud to be working on the building at Nellis.

"It feels good to be building something this important," Jack said. "I'm a military brat. I understand the mission and what the end goal represents. This building will be used for future generations of military men and women."

Another project at Nellis is the F-35 Maintenance Hangar. Porterfield said construction is just getting underway.

"We have to demolish some existing buildings and are continuing our abatement procedures," he explained. "When the project is complete, there will be a six-bay hangar with entrances on both sides."

Porterfield said the \$20 million project is due for completion in October 2013. Once the hangar is complete, he said another project, the hangar's Engine Shop, will begin. It will go alongside the hangar; but, construction cannot begin until after the hangar is done.

## Creech construction

At Creech AFB in Indian Springs, Nev., the District is putting up a Mission Control Center in which personnel will be controlling unmanned aircraft around the world. According to Roger Miller, a construction representative at the Creech Resident Office, the



Roger Miller (right), a construction representative at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Creech Air Force Base Resident Office, observes as contractors perform a safety test on a hydrant at the Mission Control Center facility at the base. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)



finished facility contains four buildings – Administrative area and Control center in one building; Hangar; Supply; Support. There will also be a ramp and apron area.

“We have a great track record here on base with the buildings we have constructed for them,” Miller said. “We’ve been involved with all the of the major block facilities here.”

The 76,000 square foot facility is scheduled for completion in November, but Miller said there are changes pending that could push the schedule to February 2013. Both Miller and Yvonne Scofield, another construction representative at the Creech office, said Soltek Pacific Construction, the prime contractor, has an excellent track record for its projects in California, but has had to work through a learning curve in Nevada.

“We’ve been schooling them on our requirements. They haven’t done a USACE project before, so they didn’t have a good understanding of the level of management we use with our projects,” Scofield explained. “They’re used to, and they know a lot about, building in California but, they lacked knowledge of the environment out here.”

Among issues Soltek has been working through are familiarity with the soil content on the job site and curing rates of the concrete in the area and how it differs from the jobs they’ve performed in California.

“We’re a little behind; but, we’ve been catching up quickly,” said Tom Licon, Soltek’s general foreman. “The project is moving along so far so good.”

Miller said the safety officer and a superintendant on the Soltek team are outstanding and is pleased with the progress made on the project over the past month. He and Scofield both feel the project is important and are proud to be involved.

“I’m glad I’m on this project,” he said. “It’s been a lot of stress, but it’s an interesting and unique project.”

#### **Reserve Center construction**

In Sloan, Nev., almost 30 miles south of Nellis, the District is working on another project. Ron Musgrave, a project engineer for the District, is overseeing work on the U.S. Army

Reserve Center there. Construction on the \$25M project began in February 2011 and, because of modifications, is due for delivery Sept. 19.

“There are several Reserve bases being built across the country, so I think there is a renewed emphasis on Reserves in the Army,” Musgrave said. “We have a 60,000 square foot training building, a 12,000 square foot storage facility with a vault, a small storage facility for miscellaneous equipment, a five-bay vehicle maintenance facility with administrative offices and about five acres of concrete parking area for military equipment.”

There have been some challenges on the project. Because of its location, there weren’t any utilities on the site. Currently, negotiations are underway regarding the electricity for the building. When the project began, there was no water available to the site. The District and MW Builders, Inc., the prime contractor for the project, have worked to overcome any obstacles.

“We were trucking water out here for months until we could get the well done,” said Greg Herriott, MW Builders’ operations manager. “Since that time, we helped acquire six water rights for the government.”

In Nevada, each water right grants usage for a certain amount of water. The acquisition by MW Builders will ensure the project and the buildings on the facility have enough water to maintain operations. Herriott said

having Musgrave on the site represents more involvement than they are used to having from a government agency. However, he and Jason Gibbard, the project superintendant, said they are highly appreciative of the open dialogue between his team and Musgrave’s District team.

“The best thing about this project is how well Ron and I have gotten along,” Gibbard said. “We’ve been able to work through a lot by sitting and talking with each other.”

Musgrave is a rehired annuitant for the District. He retired from the Corps of Engineers in 2006, but has come back since then to work on assorted projects. He’s been on the Reserve Center since 2010.

“It’s a whole new perspective, being a rehired annuitant,” he said. “You can really enjoy the job. Overall, it’s just the feeling that I’m working because I enjoy the work, instead of because I have to be here.”

Musgrave is just one of the many rehired annuitants facilitating projects across the District. The projects at Nellis, at Creech and in Sloan are only a fragment of the jobs District personnel perform on a daily basis. With their commitment to ensuring military customers receive the highest quality construction available, the projects represent how the District team continues **Building Strong and Taking Care of People!**



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Nellis Resident Office is working with MW Builders, Inc., to construct Phase I of a new Army Reserve Center in Sloan, Nev. The facility, designed for nearly 1,000 Soldiers, will house several buildings, including a 60,000 square foot training building and a five-bay vehicle maintenance facility with administrative offices. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

# Prado Dam hosts potential future engineers

By Greg Fuderer

**CORONA, Calif.** — The number and types of engineers America's education system is preparing for the nation's future is often an active and energetic discussion among the Department of Defense, educators and the scientific community. It was also an active discussion June 4 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hosted nearly 30 students from Los Angeles Roosevelt High School for a day at Prado Dam, giving them a close-up look at the dam and how it operates, and at part of the process involved in implementing a project.

"This was the best way to help make the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math connection for students," said Jennie Ayala, the STEM program manager for the District. "We have a responsibility to promote and encourage STEM awareness. We are, after all the world's premier public engineering organization, and what better way to bring it home than to bring the classroom experience to life on one of our project sites."

The students learned about the history of Prado Dam, why it's located where it is and the consequences for residents, businesses and infrastructure downstream if the dam did not exist. Michael Siu, the supervisory civil engineer at Prado, welcomed the students with a short historical presentation. While some of what Siu said may have seemed dry to the students, one particular word had an immediate impact, "Disneyland."

Siu told the students that Prado Dam, in conjunction with Seven Oaks Dam and other water control structures within the Santa Ana River Mainstem project, releases flood waters in measured amounts, coordinated with downstream assets and the area's water resource agencies. Without it, much of Orange County, including the world-famous amusement park, would suffer severe damage.

Following the welcome, the students visited Prado's embankment and control tower, where they descended several flights of stairs to the tower's



**Michael Siu, the senior civil engineer at Prado Dam in Corona, Calif., welcomes math, science and technology students from Roosevelt High School, to the dam June 4. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)**

lowest level. There, dam tender Lawrence Watkins described the hydraulic lifts that raise and lower the outlet gates, controlling the rate of water released through the dam.

At the soils lab nearby, civil engineer Paul Beaver demonstrated how engineers test soil for its suitability in the construction of dams, levees, embankments and other flood damage reduction projects.

Throughout the day, Anabel Ronquillo, an engineer in soils and design section, and Ed Mitchell, an engineering intern rotating through District offices, assisted with the program, describing their educational experience and answering questions about their involvement in civil works projects.

The day concluded with a "there-are-no-wrong-answers," real-world interactive discussion led by biologists Hayley Lovan and Chris Jones. They walked the students through portions of the planning process the Corps goes through on every project.

"We used one of our current projects as an example and asked the kids to help us out with one of the issues we are facing on that project, which is basically the siting of staging areas,"

Jones said. "We walked them through potential factors that could influence the decision, including those associated with biological resources, water resources, real estate and recreation, to name a few. The kids weighed these options and offered up some quality responses as to why certain configurations of staging areas sounded reasonable. Some of the students really put on their thinking caps and offered up some additional areas that were not presented, but sounded like they met the criteria we had laid out. It was great to see them thinking outside of the box and engaging in the activity."

Jones was not the only person who saw a benefit from the students' visit.

"This was an amazing opportunity for students to experience science and engineering in a relevant and meaningful way," said Ricardo Chavarria, the school coordinator for Roosevelt High School. "They truly understood the importance of the work the Corps of Engineers is doing. I hope we can grow this partnership in the future."

"The STEM UP program seems like a great opportunity to expose kids to potential career paths that might not otherwise be so apparent," Jones said.



# District brings “green” power to Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

By Daniel J. Calderón

**LAS VEGAS** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Nellis Resident Office recently completed a solar power project for the Bureau of Land Management at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

“The new photovoltaic system is capable of producing an average of 40 KWAC of electricity,” said Viet Q. Tran, project engineer at the Nellis office. “The calculated full load requirement to support the fire station is 38.6 KW; therefore, this solar system is designed to fully support the full load requirement.”

The system absorbs energy from the sun and provides power directly to the load. It also charges backup batteries on site. The batteries power the load in the evening. There are enough batteries to power the facility, if everything were to be turned on, for up to two days. The District also installed solar cells to power the nearby camp host facility. Tran said the project represents one of the largest off-grid solar projects in the country.

“There are 270 solar panels and 240 batteries for the fire station,” he said. “For the campground, the solar system consists of 36 panels capable of producing 8.6 KWDC and 48 batteries for power storage.”

At both sites, the District installed a backup diesel-powered generator. Before the District installed the solar panels, BLM used a diesel generator to provide power for the fire station, since the facility is not connected to local utilities. In the buildings on the facility, there are computers, lights, energy-efficient refrigerators and energy-efficient ice machines and washers and dryers among the many items requiring electrical energy. Geoff Wallin, a fire operations specialist for BLM, said the facility used nearly \$60,000 worth of fuel per year to power the facility.

“The completed project helps us secure our infrastructure out here,” Wallin said. “We’re here to protect the Mojave ecosystem and habitat for endangered species. The Corps bringing

in their experience is really what made the project.”

Nearly 60 firefighters live and work in the station during the busy season. The station grounds also host a building for BLM rangers who patrol the National Conservation Area. The Area hosts between four and five million visitors annually. Wallin said there are about 10 to 20 fires in Red Rock Canyon and about 150 to 170 in Southern Nevada each year that he and his colleagues have to fight. Knowing they have reliable power for their living and working needs allows them to do their job with one less worry.

“Less maintenance is required on the solar system and it’s more reliable,” he said. “With the diesel generator, we would lose power to the facility when we got to 110 or 115 degrees out here, because the generator would overheat.”

The district installed timers in the buildings that would help regulate the amount of energy being used. If the system doesn’t sense any movement in the area for a certain amount of time, the lights in the room are shut off. They turn on as soon as the sensors detect motion.

“Since the system’s been installed,

I haven’t noticed any interruption in power,” said Ryan Cochrane, a senior firefighter. “The timers have been working perfectly. It only takes stepping into the room a couple of steps, if the lights are off, for them to turn on.”

Cochrane said the completed project gives him an additional sense of satisfaction in his daily work.

“It’s nice to know you’ve got clean energy out here instead of having to burn diesel fuel 24-7,” he said. “The gas won’t last forever and we’ve all got to do our part for the environment.”

Tran said he is satisfied with the work on a project critical to the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

“I’m really proud to have been a part of this important project,” Tran said. “For some people, sustainable energy is just a good idea. We’re helping turn those ideas into a great reality. Helping the Bureau of Land Management ensure its firefighters have the energy necessary to run their facility and doing it in an ecologically responsible manner is just another way our District continues Building Strong and Taking Care of People.”



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Nellis Resident Office added solar panels for the Camp Host and more than two dozen shade structures for campers at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area near Las Vegas. The additions were part of an improvement project for the Bureau of Land Management’s fire station the District recently completed, in which they installed a photovoltaic system capable of generating 40 KWAC to provide power for the facility. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

# Fitness, low and high tech work

By Cecy Ordenez

**LOS ANGELES** — Summer is here and your excuses for not getting in shape are dwindling fast. Perhaps some of your new excuses are, “the kids are home for summer and I don’t have time” or “the weather is too nice to be stuck in a gym.” Whatever the excuse may be, I can tell you that you are probably sleeping for 8 hours, waking up to sit in an hour commute to get to work and sit at least 8.5 hours or longer, commute home for another hour, at which point you are exhausted from the whole day and so you sit and watch television. Don’t be discouraged; here are some fitness devices that will help you stay active and motivated.

**Nike+ iPod Sports Kit** – is a device that can measure your pace of your walk or run. It has a small transmitter that attaches to any shoe or can be inserted in a Nike+ shoe. The transmitter then communicates with either a Nike+ sportsband or sportswatch, your iPod nano (through a separately purchased receiver) or directly to your iPod Touch or iPhone. If your iPhone or iPod touch are accelerometer-and GPS-capable, then you can bypass purchasing the small transmitter and instead purchase the Nike+ GPS App. The Nike+ website has a free membership where you can download your information and track your accomplishments, create a walk/run program or join challenges.

**BodyMedia Fit System** – is a monitor you place on your arm that tracks your activity level (from typing at your desk to running a mile), calories burned and sleep patterns. This monitor measures your skin’s response (sweat), your skin temperature, your body heat fluctuation, and acts as an accelerometer to measure your motion and steps. This information is then downloaded into the BodyMedia’s online Activity Manager where you can input your food intake to see if you are burning more calories than what you are taking in.

**FitBit** – is similar to the BodyMedia device but, is lighter and smaller, it can be attached to a bra, belt or even



Luis Perez, Cecy Ordenez and Lulu Khilfeh at Eaton Canyon in Pasadena. (Courtesy photo)

placed inside your pocket. It has an accelerometer to measure your steps and altimeter to measure the amount of stairs you have taken. Your activity level is measured to give you an accurate number of steps taken, calories burned and distance traveled. It also measures your sleep patterns, which is an important factor in weight loss and general health. It measures how many times and how long you wake up throughout your sleep. Their free on-line tool allows you to download your information, which it then interprets and creates a visual map of your progress, complete with charts, graphs and with a comparison of people your age and fitness level.

**Xbox 360 Kinect** – is similar to the Wii but, instead of the console interacting with a control you have in your hand, it interacts with your whole body movement which ensures that you’re jumping off the floor when you need to. There are many games you can play that are fun for you and the whole family: bowling, hunting, dancing, Star Wars, Kung Fu Panda, sports, self defense and many more.

These are only a few of the fitness devices available. If you are in need of some motivation or would like to

accurately measure how much you are moving, consider using one of these devices to help you stay on track and move closer to a healthier you.

If you’d like to know more contact me at [cecilia.ordenez@usace.army.mil](mailto:cecilia.ordenez@usace.army.mil) or (hint, hint) you could visit the Wellness Center.

## Update:

Luis Perez has met his wellness goal! With 147 lbs lost and a total of 67.25 inches gone, he is excited to move on to the next phase of his journey – maintenance. In order to stay motivated to exercise, Luis continues to do something that he loves – hiking.

He is also inviting you to participate in his newly created hiking group that will explore many beautiful trails in the Los Angeles area. Feel free to contact him or, as you can see, I enjoy the hikes too and can let you in on the latest plan.





**LAKE VIEW TERRACE, Calif.** — The American Heroes Air Show is a free, helicopter only, aviation event designed to profile rotary-wing aircraft's critical role in law enforcement and public safety. This year's event was held at the Hansen Dam Sports Complex in the Lake View Terrace area of the San Fernando Valley on June 30.

Los Angeles District's Bobber the Water Safety Dog took this valuable opportunity to spread his message about water safety and the life jacket campaign "Are You Next".



Bobber the Water Safety Dog shares his message with air show patrons. You are never too old or too young to learn. (USACE photos by Dave Palmer)

## Bobber asks: Are You Next?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosts 370 million visits annually at its more than 400 lake and river projects where visitors of all ages enjoy activities such as hiking, boating, swimming, fishing, camping, hunting and more. This year USACE launched "Are You Next" identifying the most at-risk visitor groups to be males between the ages of 18-35 not wearing a life jacket and who swim in non-designated areas.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 89.3 percent of water-related fatalities involve those not wearing a life jacket.
- 39 percent of public recreation fatalities involved individuals of the ages 18-35.
- Over 80 percent of swimming fatalities occurred in non-designated swimming areas.

For more information about USACE's water safety program, visit the USACE Water Safety Homepage or learn more about "Are You Next" at [www.CorpsLakes.us/AreYouNext](http://www.CorpsLakes.us/AreYouNext)



## Let's talk about drowning prevention

By Steve McCombs

**LOS ANGELES** — It's summertime and the beaches, lakes and swimming pools are full of swimmers, surfers, boaters and others enjoying a fun day on the water. When I was a kid, we had a pool and our house was up on a hill above the local park where the fireworks were launched on Independence Day. The only bummer was when I was old enough to do the pool cleaning.....oh well. But, almost every weekend we had company over for swimming, barbecues and summertime fun. Later on, when I was a sailor, water sports were a favorite pastime. A point of fact, it was at the Navy Base in Little Creek, Va., where I encountered my first drowning victim.

Seems this fellow had fallen off a pleasure boat while intoxicated and his intoxicated friends didn't notice him missing until it was way too late. The Coast Guard recovered his body and brought it ashore to our Navy Base so the family could identify the victim. It was not a pretty sight and I will not gross you out with the details. I will say how graphically I remember his family when they saw him. Their misery and pain of loss was only increased by the condition of his remains.

Here's some information to make you think about water safety:

- Nearly 80% of people who drown are male.
- Children ages 1 – 4 have the highest drowning rates, most of them in home swimming pools.
- Alcohol use dramatically increases the risk of drowning.
- Use of life jackets would reduce the number of boating-related drowning by 50%.

Here's something else to be aware of. South Pacific Division Commander Brig. Gen. Michael Wehr has tasked all his District Commanders with reducing the number of drowning cases at USACE facilities. While this does not affect us much here because our recreation facilities are run by local municipalities, we can still be proactive about drowning prevention.

Here's a link to the Centers for Disease Control Drowning Prevention page <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html>. Take a few minutes and give it a read. Then take that information and put it to good use when you and your family and friends are in and around the water this summer. You could save a life – a pretty worthwhile endeavor – and it just might be someone you know and love.

And, as always, this summer drive safe, drive sober and buckle up.

Happy Birthday USA!!! ~ Steve

## CDC Answers: What factors influence drowning risk?

- **Lack of Swimming Ability:** Many adults and children report that they can't swim. Research has shown that participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning among children aged 1 to 4 years.
- **Lack of Barriers:** Barriers, such as pool fencing, prevent young children from gaining access to the pool area without caregivers' awareness. A four-sided isolation fence (separating the pool area from the house and yard) reduces a child's risk of drowning 83% compared to three-sided property-line fencing.
- **Lack of Close Supervision:** Drowning can happen quickly and quietly anywhere there is water (such as bathtubs, swimming pools, buckets), and even in the presence of lifeguards.
- **Location:** People of different ages drown in different locations. For example, most children ages 1-4 drown in home swimming pools. The percentage of drownings in natural water settings, including lakes, rivers and oceans, increases with age. More than half of fatal and nonfatal drownings among those 15 years and older (57% and 57% respectively) occurred in natural water settings.
- **Failure to Wear Life Jackets:** In 2010, the U.S. Coast Guard received reports for 4,604 boating incidents; 3,153 boaters were reported injured, and 672 died. Most (72%) boating deaths that occurred during 2010 were caused by drowning, with 88% of victims not wearing life jackets.
- **Alcohol Use:** Among adolescents and adults, alcohol use is involved in up to 70% of deaths associated with water recreation, almost a quarter of ED visits for drowning, and about one in five reported boating deaths. Alcohol influences balance, coordination, and judgment, and its effects are heightened by sun exposure and heat.



**Always wear your life jacket!**



**SafeBoatingCampaign.com**



# 4 STEPS TO FOOD SAFETY

FROM OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

GEORGE WASHINGTON



## - STEP 1 - CLEAN

When preparing party food, wash hands and surfaces often.



JOHN ADAMS



## - STEP 2 - SEPARATE

Use separate plates for raw and cooked food when grilling.



THOMAS JEFFERSON



## - STEP 3 - COOK

Cook foods to the right temperature using a food thermometer.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



## - STEP 4 - CHILL

Don't leave food at room temperature for longer than two hours.



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

## DID YOU KNOW?

A person can become sick anytime between one hour and six weeks after eating food contaminated with harmful bacteria, viruses or parasites.



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facebook.com/foodsafetygov



# Not just another closing ceremony



**Dr. Paul Chow speaking about his grand uncle, Chow Tsu-Chi, who was raised by his grandmother and taught to help his own people first, ultimately helping everyone. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)**

**By Kim Matthews**

**LOS ANGELES** — Dr. Paul Chow opened the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Asian Pacific American Heritage Program closing ceremony by running a silent film featuring a funeral procession for a Chinese dignitary. While interesting, it seemed like just another historic film to fill in time at the start of the program.

Just another historic film, that is, until Chow started telling the story of his grand uncle.

His grand uncle had been raised by his grandmother, in circumstances that seemed like just another small Chinese village story.

Just another small village story, that is, except that Chow Tsu-Chi's grandmother pushed him to become something more, to see and move

beyond his small village. By teaching him to always help his own people first, she taught him to help everyone.

In her wisdom, she understood that helping one person spreads the ability to help others far beyond anyone's expectations.

During his life, Tsu-Chi started the first school in China to teach science and English in order to allow students to qualify for American university scholarships. By helping his own people first, he gave them the ability to help others by becoming doctors, engineers and more.

While in America acting as an ambassador and carrying the title of Premier, he fought to counteract unfair labor laws put into place to prevent Chinese laborers who had worked on the continental railroads from finding work after the rails were completed. As Chow stated, Tsu-Chi knew the "only way to fight the enemy is to use their own weapons – knowledge." His work for these railroad workers changed labor laws for people in all trades.

Tsu-Chi was called back to China during a period of unrest in 1922 to serve 11 days as president while Premier Liang Shih-yi went into hiding.

During his talk, Chow stressed the importance of having a vision and striving for excellence. Even though his grand uncle died a poor man, the Chinese president commanded that Tsu-Chi was to be given the funeral of princely quality he deserved.

"He was never a fighter, but was always the negotiator... a doer, not a politician," Chow concluded.

Just another person putting his own people first, until you understand that it's impossible to do that without raising up everyone else at the same time.

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# Defense Department hosts first LGBT Pride Month Event

By Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

**WASHINGTON** — The Defense Department held a panel discussion today in honor of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month, with the Pentagon's general counsel recalling how difficult it would have been just several years ago to believe that in 2012, gays could serve openly in the military.

Jeh C. Johnson, DOD's General Counsel, addressed a standing room only audience and led a panel discussion at the LGBT pride event, which included a look into the process leading to the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law in December 2010.

"As recently as three years ago, it would have been hard for many of us, including me, to believe that in the year 2012 a gay man or woman in the armed forces could be honest about their sexual orientation," Johnson said.

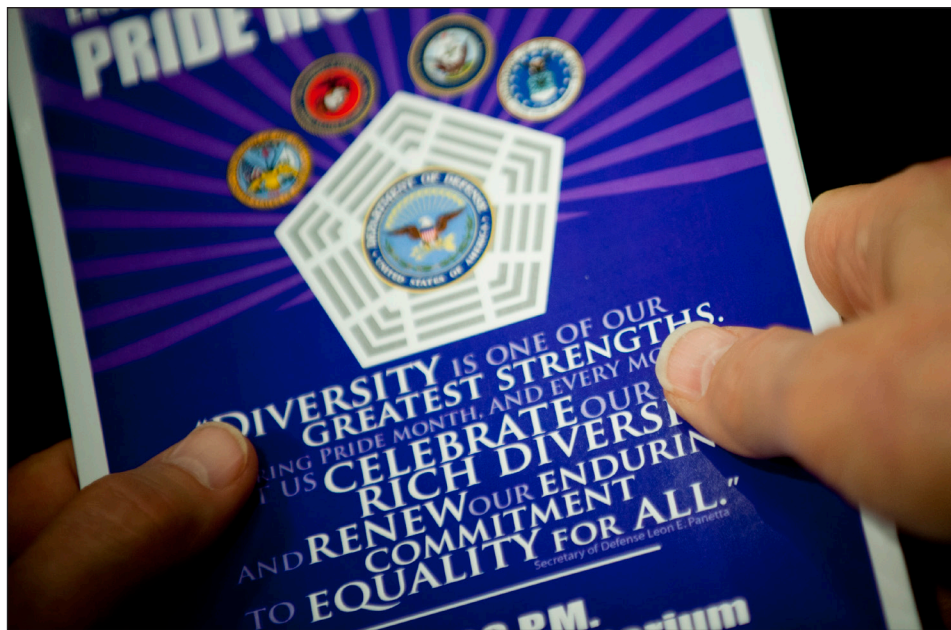
Johnson, along with Army Gen. Carter F. Ham, currently the commander of U.S. Africa Command, played a large role in researching the effects of repealing the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law, and its impact on military effectiveness.

Johnson said it was difficult to envision "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ever being repealed, or that the repeal process would proceed so smoothly.

"It's a remarkable story, and it's remarkable because of the strength of the U.S. military and its leadership ... We have the mightiest military in the world. Not just because of our planes, guns, tanks and ships. But because of our people, their ability to adapt to change, and their respect for the rule of law, their commanders and their civilian leaders."

Johnson recalled how he and Ham had received a mandate to conduct an assessment of the impact on military effectiveness if the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law was repealed, following Senate testimony on the matter by then-Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen.

Johnson said he and Ham "were to take 10 months and we were told to systematically engage the force on this



An attendee holds the program for the Defense Department's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month event at the Pentagon, June 26, 2012. (DOD photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley)

issue. In effect, 'Go have a conversation with the entire U.S. military about this issue and report back to me, the president, and the Congress what they've told you.'

"The study we undertook was the most comprehensive engagement ever of the military on any personnel-related matter," Johnson said. "Over the course of 10 months we surveyed 400,000 service members and received 115,000 responses.

"[We also] surveyed 150,000 military spouses and received 44,266 responses," he continued. "[And] solicited and received 72,384 e-mails, conducted 95 information exchange forums at 51 bases around the world, and talked face-to-face to over 24,000 service members, many of them [personally]."

Johnson said the working group also held 140 smaller focus groups with service members and their families, visited the military academies, and solicited the views of Congress, veterans groups, other countries as well as those for and against repeal.

The research concluded with an anonymous, confidential online conversation with 2,691 self-identified gay active duty service members.

"The results of the report are now

well known," Johnson said. "The bottom line conclusion was this -- based on all we saw and heard, our assessment is that when coupled with the prompt implementation of our recommendations, the risk of repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" to overall military effectiveness was low."

Johnson noted that while this was DOD's first LGBT pride event, civilian society and other agencies in the federal government have held such events in June for years.

"The CIA, for example, hosted a gay pride event 12 years ago," he pointed out. "This is the first time in history such an event has occurred at the Pentagon."

"So what should we honor today?" Johnson asked his audience noting "for those service members who are gay and lesbian, we lifted a real and personal burden from their shoulders. They no longer have to live a lie in the military."

"For all of us, we should honor the professional and near-flawless manner in which our entire U.S. military implemented and adapted to this change and welcomed their brothers and sisters to an unconditional place at the table," he said.

# Recruiters open new station

by Jay Field

**SIMI VALLEY, Calif.** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined the U.S. Army's Los Angeles Recruiting Battalion to celebrate the grand opening of its newest recruiting station here June 20.

Nearly two dozen future Soldiers stood in formation as their families, friends, local dignitaries and veterans looked on.

It was as much about these future Soldiers as it was about the grand opening of the station where many like them would be recruited.

"These young men and women have joined during time of war," said Lt. Col. Robert Blankenship, commander of the L.A. Recruiting Battalion, reflecting on his own enlistment in 1983 when the country was not at war. "We've been in persistent conflict now for over 10 years; that's beyond impressive."

In his remarks, Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Los Angeles District, said it has gotten a lot tougher to complete projects like these, because military organizations have less money to work with.

"Even in times of dwindling resources, it doesn't mean you stop bringing in great people," Toy said. "And that's why it's even more important to have facilities like this, so that you can bring in the top people."

Toy then addressed the recruits, sharing four thoughts on leadership as they prepared to embark on their military service. First, he told them to have passion for what they do.

"It's been this love of Soldiers of mine and the passion for my job that has kept me in," Toy said. "And we want you to discover that same passion."

He then urged them to find a mentor.

"These great recruiters who are here, your family, your friends, who know what right looks like, who have had the same personal and professional aspirations that you might have; seek out that mentor and seek out that person to help you find yourself along the way."

Toy next told them to have continued learning, noting that the Army, different from the private sector, prepares its Soldiers for jobs with increasing responsibility.

Lastly, he told the recruits that they would be leaders some day and that their number one responsibility would be taking care of Soldiers.

"Take care of Soldiers and cultivate the relationships that you're going to develop while you're in the Army."

The Army's Simi Valley station is the 17th of 19 "Pinnacle" concept centers planned for the West Coast, according to Blankenship. The battalion has nearly completed the transition that started two years ago.

"Army Recruiting Command decided that we would be much better served if we consolidated our resources a little bit," said Blankenship. "We went from



Nearly two dozen future Soldiers stood in formation during the grand opening of the Recruiting Battalion's newest recruiting station in Simi Valley, Calif., June 20.

36 structures and facilities across the same footprint, now down to the 19 that we're about to settle into."

The concept modernizes recruiting processes and features interactive zones in the center to enhance a prospective recruit's experience. It also introduces a new structure to Army recruiting processes designed for greater efficiency, better work hours and a better quality of life for recruiters.

The 6,000 square foot career center includes facilities for all four services, with the Army getting the most space to accommodate its Pinnacle design, according to Corps realty specialists.

Each service has its own storefront, whereas in many locations they're co-located with a single entrance. For cost savings, they share a common area behind.

The Los Angeles District manages more than 250 recruiting station leases throughout Southern California, Arizona and Nevada, as part of the Department of Defense Recruiting Facilities Program. The leases are valued at more than \$30 million and cover nearly 650,000 square feet of space, roughly three-fourths the size of the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Col. Mark Toy, Lt. Col. Robert Blankenship, Simi Valley mayor Bob Huber, J.D. Kennedy, office of Rep. Buck McKeon and Capt. Jeffrey Warstler, company commander, cut the ribbon opening the newest recruiting station in Simi Valley, Calif., June 20. (USACE photos by Jay Field)





# Deputy to become Memphis Tiger

By Jay Field

LOS ANGELES—The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District bade farewell to its deputy commander in a luncheon at the District headquarters here June 6.

More than 50 teammates gathered to honor Lt. Col. Steven Sigloch for his two years of service as the District's deputy and number two Soldier.

"I'm losing Steve—that's going to be tough!" said Col. Mark Toy, Los Angeles District commander, reflecting on the fact that Sigloch was about to depart and Brian Moore, the District's former deputy engineer, just retired. "I'm finding myself in some uncharted territory here. And that's when, in that moment, a little bit of panic set in!"



Lt. Col. Steven Sigloch, departing deputy commander, models one of the many gifts he received during a farewell luncheon in his honor at the Los Angeles District headquarters June 6. Administrative professionals within the District presented Sigloch with University of Memphis apparel, since he will become the professor of military science there.

During his time in the District, Sigloch led a number of working groups, in particular those that developed lasting people, training and facilities initiatives. His work helped upgrade facilities at the District headquarters, as well as in the field offices, and revamped the District's incentive awards program. Each was achieved while reducing the District's overhead rates.

Sigloch also served as the lead for the Defense Information Systems Agency Command Cyber Readiness Inspection, the first among Corps Districts. He oversaw an upgrade to the Reservoir Operations Center servers and an update to the Continuity of Operations Plan, which contributed to DISA's excellent rating of the District's program.

Here presented the District at numerous outreach events, communicating the District's strategic message to its partners, stakeholders, sponsors and the general public, fostering continued support for projects.

Toy told the attendees that the comments by teammates about Sigloch are what the District's motto, "Taking Care of People," is all about.

"To hear the stories about how you appreciate somebody like Steve makes me feel so good right now to be a part of this organization," Toy said. "This is the kind of feeling that you wish you could have all the time with all the people; this is what I love about the District, and that's why the people are the foundation for everything we do."

Sigloch will become the professor of military science at the University of Memphis, where he will oversee the Army ROTC program consisting of hundreds of cadets in the Tiger Battalion.

"In his group will probably be a future battalion commander and, who knows, a future chief of staff of the Army," said Toy. "If I'm one of the senior leaders now, I would want somebody like Steve Sigloch mentoring, coaching and teaching these young people to be the great Americans that they're going to be, once they don the Army green."

"I have mixed emotions," said Sigloch. "I'm very excited about the move to Memphis and being the professor of military science but, at the same time,



Lt. Col. Steven Sigloch addresses the more than 50 teammates gathered for a farewell luncheon in his honor at the Los Angeles District headquarters June 6. Sigloch departs the District to become the professor of military science at the University of Memphis.

I'm extremely sad to be leaving the District."

"By far, this has been my best assignment yet and most rewarding assignment. It's all because of people like you. I've really enjoyed working with all of you."

Toy presented Sigloch with the Meritorious Service Medal for his achievements during his service with the Los Angeles District.

Los Angeles District teammates signed and presented this hard hat to departing Deputy District Commander Lt. Col.

Steven Sigloch during a farewell luncheon in his honor at the District headquarters June 6. Sigloch departs the District to become the professor of military science at the University of Memphis. (USACE photos by Richard Rivera)





## Welcome Home: Four teammates return



Los Angeles District Commander Col. Mark Toy (left) welcomes Tom Luzano, JR Pastrana, Rosie Rocha and Kelli Johnson home from deployed service. Since 2002, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District has deployed more than 100 employees to Afghanistan and Iraq, and 11 employees are currently deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (USACE photo by Richard Rivera)

### Why did you want to deploy?



**Kelli Johnson:** *My primary reason for the deployment was to experience an adventure of being exposed to and learning about a different culture.*



**Tom Luzano:** *The Chief of Engineering (Kandahar) needed a cost engineer so I said yes. I worked with him in Kabul the two previous tours.*



**JR Pastrana:** *Deploying was a way for me to get some real experience. I ended up learning how to do drafting for structural, civil, and electrical disciplines and also worked with GIS to include topography and imagery in some the conceptual site plans.*



**Rosie Rocha:** *I wanted the experience - I never had the opportunity to be deployed while in military.*



# Talk to someone – It's the best way to make conversation

By Daniel J. Calderón

You know, I'm sometimes amazed by how reticent people can be when there are people around them to talk with. It's almost as if they're afraid a simple conversation represents a lifelong commitment. It's as if they believe there is no reason to simply turn their heads and begin with a simple, "Hello." It's baffling.

On airplanes, I see it all the time. A potential conversation starter, "Excuse me, is anyone sitting here" is almost always followed by either a simple negative or with a little quip. That opens the door to a good little conversation that can last as little or as long as the parties involved would like. However, what usually happens is the two people sit and just read the magazine the airline puts into the seat back pocket, or they get on some sort of approved electronic device and tune out the rest of the world.

I don't think this would be a big deal if it wasn't the case in so many different places – in lines (really long lines most of the time where it would make the time go much faster if "neighbors" just chatted as they waited) at the car rental place, at airports, at almost any public venue. I understand the desire for privacy and for a sense of personal space; but, I think the trend has gone too far and people are getting too comfortable being unplugged from each other. They seem to go out of their way to avoid eye contact so they don't have to worry about the possibility of any conversation.

I think people need to take time to get to know each other. I'm not talking about going out and making everyone your best friend or accosting every stranger you see in the street. There's nothing wrong with saying "Hi" to people when you pass them as you're walking; but, I'm talking about taking opportunities when they present themselves. I'm talking about people actually starting conversations when they have the chance and making the most of those prospects.

On a recent trip of mine, I was sitting next to a lady on a plane. I was actually pretty tired from a long day of working since I had done a lot of driving over the previous couple of days and I had been out in the sun when I wasn't in the car. So, I did nod off for a few minutes after she and I had exchanged pleasantries. I opened my eyes after an unknown length of time and I asked her if the flight attendant had already passed. She laughed a little and said I had, indeed, missed my chance to ask for something to drink (since it was a fairly short flight), but that I was welcome to share her chardonnay when it came. That was a funny little opening so we spent the rest of the flight talking. She told me about her kids, her grandkids and her great-grandchildren and I told her a little bit about myself and the time passed enjoyably. When we landed, we wished each other well and went our separate ways.

At a hotel I recently stayed in, I went to the pool to relax for a bit and get a little sun. I was prepared to just read my book for whatever length of time I happened to be out; but, there was an extremely gregarious group of people there and so we

began chatting. They had made it their mission to get everyone who came out talking with each other, and I have to say their mission was quite the success. I didn't even realize the passage of time until I noticed my growling stomach indicating I had been remiss in attending to my hunger. Reluctantly, I excused myself and went to get some dinner.

Those are just two examples; but, I can come up with many more. I've met people all around the world as I've traveled. I have heard their stories and told them mine. I've learned about how different we can be and just how alike we really are at the heart of things. I've seen new ways of doing things in their tales and I've laughed at their humorous experiences. Sometimes, I've come away wishing I hadn't engaged in conversation; but, for the most part, I've enjoyed the talks I've had. I really never know who I am going to meet and just what I am going to hear.

That's what I wish for all of you. I wish for you to have those pleasant little surprises in the conversation of others. I wish for you to hear and learn from people all around the world – from around your city, your state and your country. No one, no matter how long lived, can see and do it all on their own. There is value in hearing about the life experiences of our fellow human beings and value in opening up (both in listening and in speaking) to people you don't know. There is something to be said about seeing the world through someone else's eyes, even if that is only for a short time.

We are not meant to be isolated, insulated creatures who just go to work, go home and exist in a vacuum of our own creation. We are supposed to enjoy the company of our fellow people. We are supposed to communicate, to learn, to be a part of a larger community. Yes, there are times when we want to be alone. I understand that. However, when we are gathered in places where we have to be "stuck" with each other for an appreciable length of time (I leave it up to you to determine that particular measure), then we should use that as a chance to do a little meeting and greeting. For the most part, people will talk with you if you talk with them.

Summer is a big travel season. We'll all likely spend some time either in lines, on the beach, at the lake or at one or more airports. I can pretty much guarantee there will be other people there you don't know. Take the chance. Talk to some of them. Tell some funny stories and listen to what they have to say. When we break down imagined barriers, I think you'll find we have a lot more in common than you ever thought possible. With understanding will likely come a little more acceptance.

Or, you can just keep your nose glued to your electronics and ignore the people around you. After all, a digital movie or a video game can easily be turned on or off at your whim. There's no sense getting involved with real people who may actually give you a reason to think when you can sit in your own personal void. The choice is yours. Stay safely ensconced in your own little bubble or get involved with the people in the world around you and – just maybe – learn a little something that could make your world even more interesting. Just a thought...



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