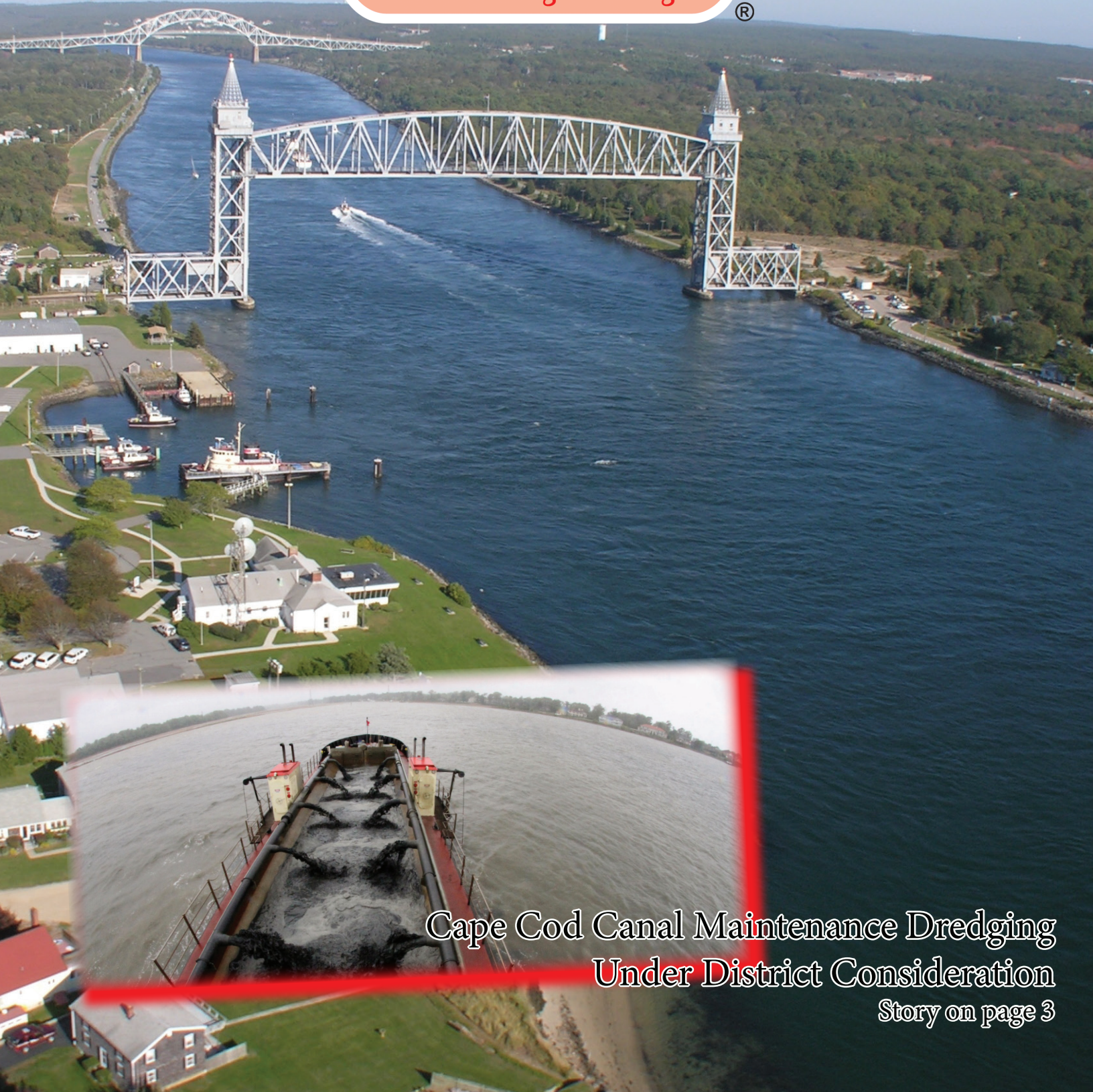


Yankee Engineer

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Building Strong®



Cape Cod Canal Maintenance Dredging
Under District Consideration
Story on page 3

Yankee Voices

Mike Hicks and Francis Fung



Don't let computer screens damage your eyesight

Millions of workers suffer from symptoms related to Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS). It's a temporary but unpleasant condition caused by sitting in front of a computer monitor for too long.

Symptoms include dry, burning eyes, blurred vision, delayed focusing, altered color perception and headaches. The cause? Studies suggest that CVS sufferers do not blink enough when sitting in front of the screen, which results in dry eyes.

To alleviate CVS, use eye drops to lubricate your eyes. Other recommendations include stepping away from the computer for brief periods, using anti-reflective screen filters, readjusting monitors to soften display colors and wearing tinted glasses.

(First Draft Magazine)

Employee Spotlight: Diane Ray, Regulatory Division



Diane Ray is a Senior Project Manager and ORM SME in Regulatory Division. She has been with the New England District since she was a high school summer aid in 1973. In her current position, she maintains computer data systems with regard to the Operations and Maintenance Business Information Link (OMBIL) Regulatory Module (ORM) and is responsible for the planning, coordination and technical results of ORM requirements. She also is responsible

for all activities associated with processing dredging and open water disposal and marina permit applications in the state of Connecticut. Ray graduated from UMASS Lowell in 1999.

Ray also coaches the New England District's softball team. Her favorite part of working for the New England District are the people, who she said are hard working and great to work with.

In her spare time, she likes to cook, spend time with family and friends and head to the Cape during the summer.

The employee spotlight column

Have you ever seen someone in the hallway and thought to yourself, He/She looks familiar, but I don't know his/her name or where they work? The YANKEE ENGINEER will be using this page to introduce you to some new and not so new faces around the District.

We will be randomly selecting team members, both from the Concord Park headquarters and the field and resident offices to highlight each month. We will introduce the team member, identify where he/she works, what they do for the District, and provide a fun fact that readers may or may not know about the employee. Any questions or suggestions may be sent to the editor at annmarie.r.harvie@usace.army.mil.





The Thalassa Desgagnes cruises through the Cape Cod Canal. A hopper dredge would perform the proposed work.

Photo by Kevin Burke

Cape Cod Canal to be dredged under District proposal

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District is proposing maintenance dredging and advance maintenance dredging of the Cape Cod Canal Federal Navigation Project in Bourne and Sandwich, Mass.

Public comments on the proposed dredging of the Cape Cod Canal were taken by the Corps of Engineers through March 3. The Cape Cod Canal is a toll-free, open-to-all waterway that connects Buzzards Bay and Cape Cod Bay. The project is used by both commercial and recreational vessels and eliminates the need to transit around Cape Cod, a distance of 135 miles and a more hazardous route.

The proposed work involves dredging to remove about 150,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from various locations in the authorized, 32-foot-deep by 500-foot-wide, main ship channel and the 25-foot-deep East Mooring Basin portions of the project.

"Shoaling in the main ship channel consists of large wave formations. These formations cause draft restrictions, tidal delays and hazardous conditions for deep-draft commercial vessels transiting the Canal," said Project Manager Michael Riccio, Engineering/Planning Division. "Shoaling in the East Mooring Basin limits the available space to moor these vessels in emergencies. Further shoaling in the Canal proper may result in some of the deep draft vessels having to completely avoid using the Canal and transit around Cape Cod, thereby significantly increasing the risk profile of these

vessels, especially during the winter months."

Dredging is expected to take 3 – 4 months during the fall of 2015 and early spring of 2016. A Corps study is ongoing to evaluate the federal interest in beneficially re-using the dredged material from the Canal project as beach-fill on a 2,500-foot-long eroded section of Town Neck Beach in Sandwich.

The town of Sandwich has been identified as the local sponsor to cost-share in the study and in the placement of dredged material on Town Neck Beach. If the study is completed in time to coincide with this maintenance dredging, and the study results in a positive benefit/cost ratio, then the dredged material may be placed as beneficial use on Town Neck Beach, the cost of which would be shared 65 percent and 35 percent by the federal government and the town of Sandwich, respectively.

The town of Sandwich also has expressed interest in receiving the material dredged from the Canal regardless of the results of the study and has expressed a willingness to pay for 100 percent of the additional cost over placing the material at the Cape Cod Canal Disposal Site (CCCDS) to have material placed onto Town Neck Beach.

Alternatively, if for any reason the material cannot be placed onto Town Neck Beach, then the dredged material will be placed at the previously used open water CCCDS in Cape Cod Bay.

The public notice with more detail is online at: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/PublicNotices.aspx>.

Liberia mission has unique challenges, high rewards for engineer team

USACE team discusses life in West Africa during Ebola fight

By Vince Little
Europe District

After turning over the last of 10 Ebola treatment centers in January, U.S. military task force members have begun withdrawing from West Africa as new cases of the disease trail off to virtually zero in Liberia.

Nearly all troops and civilians supporting Operation United Assistance will be back at their home stations by the end of April, the Department of Defense announced. That includes U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe District's Forward Engineer Support Team-Advanced, which, for the time being, remains an integral part of theater-closure planning and consolidation with the mission drawing to an end. By all accounts, however, it's been a deployment unlike any other for the FEST.

Liberia isn't the war zone some members saw in Iraq and Afghanistan, but it's still a rugged environment.

"It really does feel like early Iraq to me," said Maj. Michelle Dittloff, the FEST commander. "The living conditions are quite similar to the earliest FOBs [forward operating bases]. Nobody is shooting at us, but it's very remote and austere."

"In Iraq and Afghanistan, I think everybody knew we were going to be there for a while. Our job here was to get in, do the mission and get back out."

Since its formation in 2008, Europe District's FEST-A has deployed to Afghanistan and Jordan. The team also participated in exercises in Uganda, Niger, Germany, Italy, Alaska and California.

Dittloff called Barclay Training Center "one of the more austere environments" a FEST detachment has encountered. The task force base camp in the Liberian capital of Monrovia has been the team's home since it departed Wiesbaden, Germany, last



Members of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe District's Forward Engineer Support Team-Advanced sit down for a turkey dinner last November as they celebrate Thanksgiving in Monrovia, Liberia.

October.

"In past deployments, our personnel stayed on fully functional bases with permanent buildings," she said. "We're living in the same tents as the Soldiers, sometimes eating MREs [meals-ready-to-eat], using containerized latrines and showers. That presents some morale challenges. ... It probably isn't what they've typically seen, even in Afghanistan or Iraq."

Jennifer McCarthy, a New England District environmental scientist, noted a land of contrasts shortly after arriving in Liberia.

"It has spectacular natural resources — the Atlantic Ocean, the forests and swamps and hills, the cool ocean breeze in the midst of sweltering heat and choking humidity," she wrote in an e-mail. "Once you get away from Monrovia, it is miles and miles of lush, green tropical foliage, interspersed with reddish mud brick and thatched or tin-roof villages. The city, though, is choked with people, houses, motorcycles and trash. We see street markets on every corner, marked by bright beach umbrel-

las shading the sun. They sell fresh produce, clothes and shoes, and liter jars of gasoline."

Buses carrying up to 20 extra passengers and motorcycles with three or more people on board are common sites around the capital, along with tuk-tuks, or auto rickshaws, Dittloff said.

"Donkey carts haul construction material down the same roads as cars and buses," she added. "Traffic lights mostly don't exist, and rarely work when they do."

McCarthy said the FEST found schools closed and many foreign businesses shuttered early in the mission, their proprietors fleeing from Ebola. Almost without exception, Liberians were happy to see the U.S. military and civilian responders.

Safety protocols are still paramount and personnel take every precaution to avoid exposure and risks, Dittloff said. "We're very safe here. They keep us isolated from the general population. The only time we encounter people is when we go out to the work sites,"

she added.

Liberia's heat and humidity are another matter—the FEST commander says she's dropped 10 pounds on the deployment.

The USACE engineer team is part of a DOD contingent that delivered critical lifesaving resources, built Ebola treatment units, trained hundreds of local and international health care workers, and provided logistical support to humanitarian and public health officials who provided care throughout West Africa, Pentagon officials said.

Back at Barclay Training Center, the FEST made life a little more comfortable for the U.S. and international partners in charge of Operation United Assistance, as well as the Joint Force Command. At the epidemic's height, 2,800 DOD personnel were deployed to West Africa.

"The FEST-A has been a great asset to our efforts," said Lt. Col. Lee Hicks, JFC-United Assistance engineer for the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). "The Corps of Engineers did great work setting up generators and getting infrastructure up and running at the base and the site where the JFC headquarters was located. They figured out some shortcomings and made sure we had power 24/7."

Since the outbreak began, Ebola has killed nearly 9,000 people and infected about 22,000 in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, according to recent World Health Organization statistics.

But in the first week of February, Liberia tracked just five new cases, a sharp decline from the more than 300 new infections estimated weekly in August, various media outlets reported.

"Locals have started to come out of their homes and the streets are far busier than when we first arrived," said Stephen Lahti, a FEST-A mechanical engineer. "Everyone in this country is incredibly happy, and anyone you



Forward Engineer Support Team-Advanced members (from left) Anton Klein, Stephen Lahti and Jason Riharb are greeted by local children shortly after their arrival in Liberia. They're part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team serving in Operation United Assistance.



Roadside vendors around Liberia often sell gasoline in glass jars stacked on tables made of old pallets and tree branches. It's a common site for U.S. military task force members serving in Operation United Assistance.

interact with always gives you a smile and a welcome greeting."

McCarthy said she also notices a radically changed environment since the operation's early days.

"Ebola is clearly in retreat in Monrovia and business appears to be revitalizing," she added. "The streets are crowded, and children are [returning] to school. And they're still happy to see us.

"Our car was bumping slowly along a heavily rutted road the other day, and two small children came running after us, waving and saluting. We stopped the car, rolled down the windows and saluted them back. Their grins were

heartwarming."

Lahti said he expected to depart Liberia and return to New England District by month's end. A few other individual FEST members could also leave sooner than the entire team as mission demands decrease.

"Even though the days are long, being part of this operation has been an incredible experience," Lahti said. "It's been extremely rewarding on both a personal and global level—I wouldn't have traded it for anything. Having the opportunity to use my education and experience to benefit the greater good and the people of this country is something very rare."



Col. Christopher Barron updates team members on the state of the District during the town meeting.

Photos by Brian Murphy

Commander updates team members on the state of the District during town meeting

Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, held a town meeting to present some awards and give the audience updates on some current issues Feb. 25 in the Concord Park cafeteria. Field offices teleconferenced in to hear the Colonel's briefing.

The first award went to retired Real Estate Chief Joe Redlinger, who returned to the District to receive a Certificate of Meritorious Civilian Service for his outstanding work as Chief of Real Estate that included efforts during the Hurricane Sandy recovery and in support of the Overseas

Contingency Operations.

Col. Barron presented the iDams Team with the 2014 Innovation of the Year Award and Commander's Coins. The team created a program that simplifies the dam inspection reporting process. Team members are Siamac Vaghar, Francis Fung, Michael Gu, Kristen Paul, Christopher Scabia and Michael Andryuk. Gillian Gregory, contractor, GEI and Matt Von Whalde, GEI subcontractor, Geonites, were also part of the team.

The Commander also recognized Office of Counsel team



Retired Chief of Real Estate Joe Redlinger receives a Certificate of Meritorious Service from Col. Christopher Barron.



Members of the iDams team accept the 2014 Innovation of the Year Award.



Col. Christopher Barron presented Commander's Coins to Greg Penta, Scott Flanagan and Robert Garrahan during the town meeting.

members John Almeida, Will Pumyea and Sarah Bennett. Almeida was commended for the work he did for the Department of Justice and for a wind energy project in Maine. Bennett and Pumyea were praised for the day-to-day work they perform for the Office of Counsel.

Continuing on with awards, Col. Barron mentioned that Greg Penta, Regulatory, Scott Flanagan, Engineering/Planning and Bob Garrahan, Contracting, were all doing exceptional work for the District and gave examples as he presented each one with a Commander's Coin. Col. Barron said that the people recognized during the town meeting were only a small fraction of the District team members that do great work every day and he encouraged the audience to continue doing the work they do.

After the recognition portion of the meeting, Col. Barron went over the 16 focus items currently on his desk. The list covered a myriad of topics to include projects, budget, studies, hiring actions, repair work, Congressional visits and the Leadership Development Program.

Col. Barron updated the audience on the District Headquarters move. He emphasized that no decision has been made. The existing Concord Park lease expires in March 2018. The District Senior Leaders are looking at three options:

- Renovating a building at Hanscom Air Force Base.
- Staying at Concord Park, but only occupying one building.
- Third party financing of new construction.

Col. Barron went over all the advantages and disadvantages of each option and said he would provide another update when he has something to tell.

The New England District Commander introduced Richard Fortuna who talked about the Resiliency Program that he has been tasked to head for the District. The training is a

three day, eight-hour commitment and is open to all District team members with supervisory approval. The training analyses the team member's strengths and weaknesses and then assists the resiliency development of the team member based on this knowledge. Fortuna urged anyone interested in taking the training to contact him after securing supervisory approval.

The last topic was the Command Climate Survey.

According to Col. Barron, 283 team members responded to the survey that consisted of direct questions and open remarks that generated 1,500 comments. He said that the District did well in areas of preventing discrimination and other Equal Employment Opportunity issues, but there were some concerns in a number of areas to include communication, trust, bureaucracy and accountability. The Colonel addressed each issue and said that although some concerns cannot be resolved – such as all the mandatory training that has to be taken each year – he will be investigating and looking for solutions to the problems that can be fixed.

After a brief question and answer period, Col. Barron closed the meeting.



Col. Christopher Barron recognized John Almeida, Sarah Bennett and Will Pumyea for their hard work in the Office of Counsel.

Dredging up the past



Col. Curtis Thalken, Judy Antonellis and Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson enjoy a pizza lunch in this March 27, 2008 photo.

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