



District deployments total 26 within 8 months

Mike Machalek, senior enforcement officer in the Regulatory Branch, checks a generator in Caguas, Puerto Rico to ensure that contractors are servicing it regularly and that there won't be any potential problems, March 2018.

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McCook Commitment

For decades, the Chicago District has been working on McCook Reservoir, a massive, multi-stage flood risk management project in southwest Cook County, one of its largest undertakings.

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Special Emphasis Program

Special Emphasis Program managers are a part of the Equal Employment Opportunity office.

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Commander's Column

Happy summer to you all! I am so happy that the Chicago Breeze is back on the street this summer after a long hiatus!

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CHICAGO

BREEZE

Equal Employment Opportunity

By Cheryl Stovall, EEO manager

On March 13, 2018, the district conducted Anti-Harassment and No Fear Act training for the Chicago District Office. Dan Jostes, Human Resource specialist; Kim Sabo, Office of Counsel chief, and I teamed up to facilitate the training and give examples on bystander awareness and intervention strategies. The presentation also focused on ensuring employees were aware of their rights under Title VII, No Fear, and Army Command anti-harassment policies.

District employees, supervisors, and managers were also informed of their reporting responsibilities and repercussions for harassment in the workplace based on the Table of Penalties. During the session, team members were encouraged to provide examples, share experiences, and explain their intervention method. This training met the annual EEO requirements set by the Department of Army.

Safety

By Pete Flanagan, safety officer

The transition from winter to summer includes much more than swapping parkas for windbreakers and boots for flip-flops.

As the seasons change, one's focus on personal safety plan should change as well. With the warm weather, winter safety hazards melt away only to reveal their newly-sprouted summertime counterparts. The question is, "Are you ready?"

Many turn their attention to getting in shape for the summer's outdoor activities. Remember that your body is a year older and that fact, along with relatively sedentary winter activities, combine to make you a candidate for sports injuries. So, start your workout regimen slowly and build up at a pace that considers your performance limitations. You certainly do not want to spend the summer laid up with a nagging orthopedic problem.

Some of the most significant hazards you will face will be posed by your fellow citizens. A lot of people only come out of hibernation after the thermometer cracks the 60° barrier.

Many of those haven't been behind the wheel in months - as evidenced by their rusty driving skills. Keep in mind as well that many citizens employ alcohol to help ease the transition from winter to summer. Therefore, stay situationally aware and remember to keep an eye out for the other guy - drive defensively at all times.

This season also brings the threat of severe weather including tornados and thunderstorms. Be sure to have a severe weather warning app on your phone and/or keep a weather radio activated in your home. It's a good idea to have a severe weather shelter-in-place plan for your home and family as well.

Last, but not least, this would be a good time to stock up on sunscreen and bug spray and get yourself a good pair of UV-blocking sunglasses.

Enough doom and gloom - get out there and enjoy the summer!

Special Emphasis Program

Special Emphasis Program managers are a part of EEO. The goal of the SEP is to eliminate discriminatory practices, and to assure the target groups are appropriately represented throughout the workforce.

Here are the district's SEP managers, along with team members who have played a special part in the program:

- Hispanic Employment Program: Vanessa Villarreal (Aurora Fonseca)
- Federal Women's Program: Yolanda Taylor-Wright (Gabrielle Reed-Pugh)
- African American Program: Tonia Carr (Natalie Mills, Diedra McLaurin)
- Asian Pacific American Program: Vacant
- Native American Program: Melyssa Navis
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Program: Vacant
- Disabilities Employment Program: Mark Nanfria



On Feb. 20, 2018, the district was honored with a visit from Korean War veteran and 24th Infantry Regiment Buffalo Soldier Curtis "Kujo" Morrow. He spoke about his experience in the U.S. Army's last all-black unit during the Korean War, his few close calls, and what it was like being a squad leader. Guests also viewed a video presentation "Forgotten Soldiers of War" - Morrow's 2013 interview at the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, Chicago. Thank you to Tonia Carr (pictured here), Black Employment Program manager, for organizing this event for Black History Month.

Commander: Col. Aaron Reisinger
Deputy Commander: Lt. Col. Daniel Hayden
Chief, Public Affairs (PA) Office: W. Patrick Bray
PA Specialist/Editor - Vanessa Villarreal

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District
231 S. LaSalle (Suite 1500), Chicago, IL 60604
Email: chicagodistrict.pao@usace.army.mil
Phone: (312) 846-5330



Col. Aaron W. Reisinger

Commander's Column

Chicago Team,

Happy summer to you all! I am so happy that the *Chicago Breeze* is back on the street this summer after a long hiatus! I hope that each of you find some time to enjoy the summer after a very long winter. This was my first Chicago winter and will do everything possible to accelerate warm weather before June next year. In USACE, we are all about accelerating the delivery of our products!

I reach my one-year mark in the district on July 21 and can't believe how fast the time has gone. It has been an incredible year getting to know the amazing people of this organization and the incredible work that we do for our region. I am constantly reminded about the importance of our mission as I travel throughout the region and talk with our many stakeholders. To a person, they express deep admiration for what we do to protect our nation's vital water resources.

We have had some really significant accomplishments over the past year. Most significantly, we completed the final structural components to the Little Calumet River Flood Risk Mitigation project last fall. The completion of the Hammond tieback project culminated a

decades-long effort to provide adequate flood protection to thousands of people in northern Indiana. In December, we cut the ribbon on the McCook Reservoir project bringing online 3.5 billion gallons of storage capacity to the Chicagoland region. This reservoir completion marks the beginning of the end for the massive Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) project first dreamed back in 1972 and that this district has worked on for over 40 years. See page 4 for an amazing story about this accomplishment. And a special thanks to Project Manager Mike Padilla for helping put that story together. Great job!

These are the front page projects but they represent only a minor portion of the expansive work that the district has completed over the past year. We have restored hundreds of acres of aquatic ecosystems; maintained and enhanced navigation capacity along Lake Michigan; protected our water from invasive species; constructed local infrastructure to help local communities; provided regulatory protection for our water resources; helped our interagency partners execute construction; deployed to support those in need (see story on page 8); contributed across the enterprise; and worked to ensure that the federal investment generates a positive return for our taxpayers.

But projects are only what we deliver. We achieve all of this with our People and our People are our priority. Taking care of our People is my number one concern and we have implemented things to try and better backup these words. I'm really happy with the efforts teammates are making to improve our in-processing; better integrate new members of our team; generate incentives that reward high performers; re-establish lost traditions; and enforce a healthy command climate. Some of these efforts are very simple such as ensuring that we ensure our new employees work space is ready for the to work

– we want people to be here and that starts with a good first impression.

In my conversations with our team, I am really proud that almost all of you express happiness in the work that you are doing. There is no doubt in my mind that the work we are doing is complicated – I tell everyone that all of the easy engineering problems are solved. We are left with the hard ones. Doing challenging work for a good purpose with people we like to be around is my goal for each employee. We always have room to improve, but I am really happy with the challenges and environment that you are setting for this organization.

Now, for the future, and I am really excited for our future. Unlike the past, it is difficult to look out two and three years and say with any certainty what projects or efforts will be our priority. But I know we have a dynamic workforce that is making ourselves indispensable – and when you are indispensable, you will have a lot of work to get done. As we all know, USACE is under a lot of pressure to optimize our execution while maintaining a high-quality product. Our public, our stakeholders, our Congress, and our leaders want it done faster, cheaper, and better. While these are grandiose goals, I'm confident each of you know ways that you can make marginal to significant impacts on achieving these goals. Nobody needs permission to generate innovative ideas and convince others to implement them. I'm excited to watch this team continue to make this happen, and to continue to expand upon the legacy we have been building since 1833.

I am honored to be a part of this team and to be referred to as your "Colonel."

Building Strong and Taking Care of People!!



Before.

District team has decades-long commitment to McCook Reservoir

By: Vanessa Villarreal, editor

For decades, the Chicago District has been working on McCook Reservoir, a massive, multi-stage flood risk management project in southwest Cook County, one of its largest undertakings.

The reservoir, a partnership between the Corps and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) of Greater Chicago, is part of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) that covers Chicago and 51 suburbs – a 375 square-mile area. The Deep Tunnel system includes three reservoirs - Majewski, Thornton, and McCook - as an outlet for TARP water. McCook Reservoir will benefit Chicago and 36 suburbs, providing protection for 570,000 structures and 3 million people. It will also help to

prevent transportation disruptions from flooding for Chicago, a transportation hub for the nation. It will hold 10 billion gallons of combined sewer (sanitary and storm) overflows that cause flooding and watercourse contamination. On Dec. 4, 2017, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to mark the completion of McCook Reservoir Stage 1. Stage 2 of the reservoir will be completed in 2029.

The McCook project delivery team (PDT) faced a hard deadline of December 31, 2017, to get Stage 1 on line. Over the past several years the team worked infused with a sense of urgency to meet the deadline. The PDT focused attention on the end result, project execution, customer satisfaction, and

worked synergistically to achieve the great success of delivering the reservoir before the deadline.

For some of the McCook PDT, the deadline was the culmination of literally decades of work on the McCook Reservoir. Large civil works projects often take decades to implement from planning through design and final construction. The McCook Reservoir was first conceived in the 1960s and was authorized by Congress in 1988. Some of the PDT members have served on the team for many years. Here are some of their stories:

As the McCook project manager, Mike Padilla, Programs and Project Management Branch, began work on the reservoir in 1993



After.

when he was still an engineering intern and worked on the project from 1993 to 2000. He worked on the civil design section of the design documentation report (DDR) for the old McCook Quarry reservoir, the site of the original project before it was moved by Congress to the present lagoons site. The district had just finished the McCook Quarry DDR when it was tasked by Congress to evaluate a different site. He worked on the resulting special re-evaluation report that recommended the current lagoons reservoir site. Ironically, the lagoons site was the proposed site of the reservoir in planning reports from the early 1970s before it was rejected in favor of the McCook Quarry site. During Padilla's work with Civil Design, he designed the overall site layout and the connecting tunnel alignments for the new reservoir. He left Chicago to work for Seattle District as a project manager and returned in 2010 to take over as project manager for the

McCook Project.

When he left for the Seattle District, Dave Schiemann, civil engineer with Civil Design Section, took over the civil design of the reservoir.

Schiemann began working on the project in 1999, completing the civil design features of the new DDR for the lagoons reservoir that began the implementation of the new project. The DDR was completed in November 1999. As lead engineer and technical lead on multiple sub-projects for the McCook Reservoir Project, he has devoted long hours since 1999 to ensure the success of the project. He worked on the design of every feature of the Stage 1 reservoir including large-diameter tunnels and portal structures, grout curtains, cutoff walls, retaining wall systems, and slope stabilization. He also was the team member responsible for the overall coordination and execution of a multiple A-E services contracts for

the reservoir, including the design of the \$140,000,000 main tunnel contract and the \$52,000,000 main gates contract plans and specifications, both by Black and Veatch (B&V) Engineering Consultants. In his PDT leadership role, his contribution to the success of the team cannot be underestimated.

For Jennifer Miller, environmental engineer with the Hydrology & Hydraulics (H&H) Section, the McCook Reservoir was her first assignment when she began working for the Corps in 1999.

"One thing I've learned over the last 19 years at the Corps is how much things change even when they stay the same," she said.

She was tasked to work on the reservoir aeration system. At that time, Tom Fogarty, the Hydraulic and Environmental Branch chief, had a series of models to try and predict mixing and water quality. Miller relates that the term "zero-D model" will bring tears (not of joy) to a few eyes.

“At that time, we were going to have a completely mixed, aerobic reservoir which included a \$120,000,000 mixing system with a coarse bubble diffused air system anchored to the bottom of the reservoir,” she said. “No problem, completely mix 10 billion gallons! Fortunately or unfortunately, everyone HATED the giant, costly system.”

She was assigned the lead engineer to work with MWRD’s Stickney team to come up with a new idea.

“The first meeting included someone from MWRD yelling at the Corps folks about the stupid system,” Miller said. “We eventually worked through all the issues. It took a couple of years but by the end the meetings were super fun and funny. Some of the best meetings I’ve been to, on any project.”

She led the team in designing the current aeration system that includes floating, solar powered aerators for an “aeration cap” at a fraction of the original design cost. The change resulted in a \$100,000,000 cost avoidance. It is the only major component of the reservoir to come in grossly under budget.

“It’s amazing how much you can save by just not building something,” she said. “Same project, same problem, different solution.”

The PDT won a Value Engineering Award in 2003 for this effort.

Dave Kiel, civil engineer with the H&H

Section, began working on the McCook project in 1998. Having worked on the Lake Michigan Diversion Accounting program, it was a good fit for him to join the McCook PDT. Many of the same diversion Hydrology & Hydraulic models were used in the modeling of the McCook TARP. The models simulated the rainfall runoff process and modeled the sewer system taking into account both storm-water and sanitary flows. The models simulated the combined sewer overflow (CSO) from the system including the diversion of those CSOs into the deep tunnel system as well as into the river courses, the conveyance of CSOs to the reservoir, and the pump-down operations to the Stickney water reclamation plant.

Kiel worked on the modeling that was done for the pre-project conditions as well as the Stage 1 and Stage 2 reservoirs to determine the overall impact of the tunnels and reservoir’s ability to divert and “capture” CSOs, keeping them out of the rivers and resident’s basements. In addition to computer modeling, he was the technical lead on two physical model studies at the Corps’ Engineer Research & Development Center in Vicksburg, Miss., at the time known as the Waterway Experiment Station. One physical model was for the main inlet tunnel and gates. The other model was for the distribution chamber gate operation for gravity inflows into the reservoir.

“I will never forget going down to Vicksburg during the summer when the temperature and humidity levels were both in the upper 90s,” Kiel said. “The worst part was that the physical models were inside the steel hangers where the temperature was much higher and without the benefit of any breeze. I thought one of the team members was on the verge of passing out on a few occasions. Stepping back outside into the sweltering heat actually gave us some relief!”

He was also the technical lead on several A/E contracts in support of the design and operation of the McCook TARP, including computational fluid dynamics modeling of the gravity inflow from the Des Plaines tunnel system; an alternate tunnel connection from the Des Plaines tunnel system; and modeling of the main inlet tunnel and sump, inflow/outflow structure, the tunnel D connection to the dewatering tunnel, and the distribution chamber gates and tunnel system. He was also responsible for the development of the comprehensive water control manual which provides detailed instructions for the various operations of the inflows into and outflows from the McCook reservoir. This is a living document that will be revised with lessons learned from actual operations of the McCook reservoir over the years.

Bill Rochford, chief, Geotechnical and Survey Section, started working on the McCook project in 1993 as the technical

Col. Aaron Reisinger, commander, speaks at the Dec. 4, 2017, ribbon cutting ceremony for McCook Reservoir Stage 1.





Here is a partial list of all the people who have worked on the reservoir project over the years:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Shamel Abou-El-Scoud | Felecia Kirksey |
| Zohaib Ahmed | Joseph Kissane |
| Dick Albert | Witold Kluza |
| Damien Allen | Tim Kroll |
| John Alston | Bill Loikets |
| Darlene Bankhead | Khallid Maali |
| Utpal Bhattacharya | Jim MacMorran |
| Drew Benziger | Jennifer Miller |
| Regina Blair | Joanne Milo |
| John Breslin | Guy Marella |
| Mary Burnsed | James Mazanec |
| Bobby Cannata | Kallan Mrozek |
| Damon Collins | Mark Nanfria |
| Mark Cooke | Mike Nguyen |
| Danny Corpoz | Velma Nix |
| Satch Damaraju | Mike Padilla |
| Sue Davis | Eric Pagoria |
| Roy Deda | Bob Paluch |
| Dave Handwerk | Umer Patel |
| Dave Druzbecki | Rich Pickett |
| Asgar Elahi | Chris Pickering |
| Alex Fenili | Casey Pitman |
| Tim Flaherty | Nestor Reina |
| Pete Flanagan | Yong Rhee |
| Tom Fogarty | Bill Rochford |
| Dave Force | Keith Ryder |
| John Fornek | Eric Sampson |
| Yuki Galisanao | Dave Schiemann |
| Dennis Giba | Joseph Schmidt |
| Ernesto Go | Barat Shah |
| Larry Green | Anita Simpkins |
| Dave Groutage | Rajiv Singh |
| Ross Hiner | Kent Smith |
| Heather Henneman | Linda Sorn |
| Georgette Hlepas | Eric Stavrides |
| Steve Hungness | Henry Stewart |
| Rick Hurt | Jay Tanaka |
| Joseph Jacobazzi | Elaine Taylor |
| Oliver Jernigan | Steve Treharne |
| Adam Jones | Leon Turner |
| Nick Karnezis | Greg Ulreich |
| Rita Keefe | Scott Vowinkel |
| Gordon Kelly | Brad Waldrom |
| Dave Kiel | Bill White |

point of contact and Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) for design contracts with consultants working on the old McCook Quarry. After the site was changed to the lagoons site in 1996, he was assigned as the lead geotechnical engineer and prepared site investigation task orders, helped write several of the appendices of the DDR, coordinated with Nashville District for assistance on the rock wall stabilization analysis and design, and served as the COR for an independent technical review (ITR) contract with B&V, all of which were completed in 1999. He served as the lead for the first construction for the overburden cutoff walls in Stage 1 that was designed by Patrick Engineering and awarded to Slurry Systems, Inc. in 2000.

This work was to prevent seepage from entering the site from the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. He then led the work on the groundwater DDR which assessed various groundwater protection systems. Ultimately it was determined that a perimeter slurry wall and grout curtain was the preferred plan, and he coordinated and got the plan approved by the Illinois EPA. This work was contracted with STS Consultants who performed a large scale groundwater pump test and groundwater model which was completed in 2006. This resulted in developing P&S for the grout test by B&V and awarded to Advanced Construction Techniques (ACT) in 2002, and then Stage 1 grout curtain awarded to Nicholson Construction in 2006.

During mining of the site, concerns with rock wall stability came up due to unexpected movement noted in portions of the quarry high walls beginning in 2012. Rochford coordinated the efforts to investigate the issues, implemented a state-of-the-art instrumentation program, and had a 3D rock stress model developed to better understand and respond to the movement that was observed. He also provided oversight and staffing support during construction throughout the entire project, from the first construction contract in 2000 through to the final reservoir prep contract finishing in 2018. Also, he is continuing to manage the project Instrumentation until the system is ready to be transferred to the project sponsor, MWRD currently expected in 2019.

Throughout, the McCook project has resulted in numerous state-of-the-art advancements for many different geotechnical/geology design and construction approaches such as: soil-bentonite slurry walls into rock; foundation grouting for seepage control over 300-ft

deep; rock wall stabilization of 250-ft high walls; soil slope stabilization; large diameter rock tunneling and very large underground excavations; automated instrumentation; and rock stress modeling, which has provided a wealth of experience to the Corps and overall construction industry. Rochford says it has been his pleasure to contribute his skills to the project.

Joe Kissane, geologist with the Geotechnical and Survey Section, worked for the private sector on the TARP system in 2001 when his work was winding down. He got a call from HQUSACE asking for geologists interested in working for the Corps. He took up the offer coming to the district in May, 2001. Both were hired as geological engineers. Most of Kissane's efforts were focused on McCook with the start of the distribution chamber contract and the overburden cutoff wall, followed by the three contracts of the grout curtain (aka test grouting, Stage 1 & 2).

In 2003, when the search for a resident engineer for the reservoir project was underway, it was Kissane that recruited Larry Green, a resident engineer and a geologist in the St. Louis District that he knew for 20 years. Kissane knew that many of the contracts would be heavily involved in geology and that a resident engineer with a geologist background would pay dividends. Green served with distinction and after he passed away in 2007, a conference room was named in his honor at the district. For many years, Kissane has been engaged in geology centric work at the reservoir including aquifer protection, stabilizing the walls of the quarry, the main tunnel access shaft and the main tunnel contract, followed by the final reservoir preparation.

Padilla, Schiemann, Miller, Rochford, Kissane, and all the team had their decades of work affirmed when the reservoir was put to the test during the storm event of Feb. 21, 2018. The event filled the reservoir to capacity. The reservoir performed as designed and prevented an estimated \$30,000,000 in flood damages in its debut performance. The reservoir performance during this event was truly the culmination of decades of the PDT's planning, engineering, design and construction efforts. The team had truly delivered for the sponsor, who has consistently rated the quality of the Corps' work high in annual customer surveys.

(Editor's note: Past and present McCook PDT members contributed to this story.)



26 Deployments within 8 months

By: Vanessa Villarreal, editor

Over the past eight months, the district had 26 employees deployed to areas across the United States to support emergency operations.



*Left:
Patty Gutierrez with Col. Jason Kirk, commander of the Jacksonville District and Task Force Power Restoration, at the Ceiba Resident Office.*

*Right:
Brielle Cummings conducting field work: "The iguanas were everywhere."*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the lead agency for FEMA's Emergency Support Function #3 – Public Works and Engineering (ESF #3). The ESFs provide the structure for coordinating federal interagency support for a federal response to an incident. USACE also provides assistance through the Stafford Act, which authorizes FEMA to direct other federal agencies to use their available personnel, supplies, facilities, and other resources to provide assistance in the event of an emergency declaration or major disaster declaration by the president.

"USACE is fortunate to be able to draw upon the vast talents of our employees throughout the nation to respond quickly when disaster strikes," Bob Paluch, chief of Emergency Management, said. "We are lucky to have so many employees willing to volunteer at a moment's notice, and for the support provided by their families while they are gone."

From September 2017 to April 2018, employees have deployed from 30 to 75 days. Here are some of their stories:

In March 2018, Patty Gutierrez, administrative support assistant in the Technical Services Division, deployed to Puerto Rico for 30 days as an administrative assistant.

"Initially, I assisted in the closeout of the Ceiba Resident Office located in a beautiful town called Fajardo," she said. "My daily duties consisted of updating and submitting reports, assisting with travel vouchers and staffing plans, scanning labor interviews, receiving and submitting timesheets to each home district, and conducting inventory transfers."

After the Ceiba Resident Office closed on March 19, she moved to the San Juan District Office in an industrial area of a town called Guaynabo.

There, she reviewed contractor payrolls and pay estimates, received submittals via the Corps' Resident Management System, and submitted timesheets to home districts.

"Although my days were long, my experience in Puerto Rico was both gratifying and moving," Gutierrez said. "At times, I had the opportunity to visit sites where other Corps employees were working and saw the damage. I was also welcomed by locals who shared stories of survival through both hurricanes. Nevertheless, I remained hopeful and grateful. Despite their continuing daily struggle, their welcome and resilience humbled and motivated me to do my best."

Brielle Cummings, regulatory specialist in the Regulatory Branch, deployed to Puerto Rico last year from mid-October to mid-November. She worked as a quality assessor for Operation Blue Roof, a program managed by USACE on behalf of FEMA to provide temporary roofing to help protect homes and allow residents to stay in their houses after a natural disaster.

Cummings worked out of the Dorado field office in the municipalities of Dorado and Toa Baja, where she conducted structure assessments before tarps could be installed. In those 30 days, she assessed 443 homes. This was her first deployment.

"I wanted to help any way I was able," she said. "And the Corps provided an opportunity to put boots on the ground."

She said finding homes was difficult not only because of debris on roadways, but because identifying numbers were often gone from the storm or not even posted. Also,

each sector and district had its own address system so the lack of a standardized format was also challenging.

Robert Cannata, geologist in the Geotechnical Section, was deployed to Texas in September 2017 in response to Hurricane Harvey.

He said he volunteered to participate in the Corps' emergency response mission to not only help hurricane-displaced victims, but to travel, study, and learn first-hand about Galveston District's landscape, infrastructure, and culture.

"And to become a more well-rounded individual," he said.

He said he most enjoyed interacting professionally and personally with colleagues and the public.

"The experience was a learning one, but not a steep curve," he said. "To learn the appropriate legal language for public interaction in this capacity, I committed to lots of on-the-job training, where I engaged with other field team members and supervisors. I also did my own reading to acquire more comfort with my roles and responsibilities and to answer questions that senior team members may not have answered thoroughly."

Charsian Schaffer, project engineer in Construction Management, deployed to Puerto Rico from December 2017 to January 2018.

"My intention for deployment was to gain a greater experience and to further make myself valuable within the Army Corps of Engineers," he said. "What I enjoyed most was the culture and spirit of the people in Puerto Rico."

Bart Nuckols, engineering technician in the Geotechnical and Survey Section,



Above:
Jeremiah Gadbois leaves the tarmac after arriving on the island of Vieques with the Unified Command. Leaders of the Unified Command and South Atlantic Division Forward. The group conducted site visits to the island to better understand challenges facing the local community in restoring power, and checked the status of current contractor operations.



Above:
Andrew Boston captured this photo of a collapsed road “due to the storm that we still had to pass.”



Right:
Andrew Farver (third from right) takes a photo with his office near downtown Ft. Myers, Fla. The following districts are also represented here: Rock Island, Nashville, Detroit, Honolulu, Sacramento, Kansas City, and Louisville.

deployed three times since last summer. He went to Miami in 2017 in support of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Then he deployed twice to Puerto Rico for a total of 75 days as a quality assurance (QA) assessor to assist with the Task Force Power mission.

When asked what he enjoyed most out of deploying, he said, “The joy of the people I help, and the challenges of the mission or overcoming difficult issues.”

Jeremiah Gadbois, cost engineer in the Cost and Civil Engineering Section, deployed to Puerto Rico from January 2018, to March 2018, as a cost engineer in support of Task Force Power. He said he saw this as an opportunity to serve neighboring Americans and restore a sense of normalcy for hundreds of thousands.

He said challenges included aged infrastructure, remote and difficult terrain, limited resources, logistical constraints with island geography, and political and bureaucratic hurdles.

Weeks into his deployment, he attended a neighborhood “lighting” that he said he’ll never forget. Gadbois said seeing families

without power for five months getting back on line and their spirits re-energized as was witnessed by the loud cheers and many grateful gestures at the event was a “reminder of this incredible mission and the fruits of our labor.”

“Entrenched with this large, talented, and diverse team of experts with a singular focus to ‘turn the lights on for the people of Puerto Rico’ has been a deeply enriching and rewarding experience on so many levels,” he said.

Andrew Boston, safety engineer in the Construction Operations Branch, worked in Puerto Rico’s Ceiba Area Office for 60 days in support of Task Force Power - from December 2017 to February 2018. This was his first deployment.

“I’ve always wanted to volunteer in a disaster relief scenario,” he said. “I have always felt helpless sitting at home and watching people in need on the news. I wanted to see what kind of an impact I could make.”

He said he and his team faced many challenges like traffic delays due to accidents,

collapsed roads, and getting the right materials to the right places.

Boston also felt that a lot of people only saw the major news stories about Puerto Rico and missed a lot of the feeling of what was happening. Also, politicians were upset that the power wasn’t restored fast enough and some people were unhappy about the whole process. But he said the vast majority of the public was unbelievably humble and kind.

“Many civilians would offer home cooked food to our crews and personnel,” he said. “They would encourage us and thank us. Some even helped by managing traffic or working with mayors to get the police to assist.”

He said the team gave back to the communities as well. One field crew chipped in and bought a local boy who visited their site daily a new bike after they noticed his was broken. Also, Boston’s office team put together a collection and donated to a local animal sanctuary that was helping them with their projects.

“There are thousands of stories like this from across the island,” he said. “And I feel

that so many people failed to hear that this is what day-to-day life was really like.”

John A. Wethington, civil engineer in the Economics Plan Formulation Section, deployed to the Pittsburgh Emergency Operations Center in September 2017 to provide GIS support for Task Force Power’s response to Hurricane Irma. Five days after he arrived, Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. At the end of February, he then deployed to Paducah, Ky., to support Louisville District’s flood fighting efforts on the Ohio River.

For the Pittsburgh deployment, he saw it as a unique opportunity to learn how ESF-3 and emergency management functioned from the office side. For the Paducah deployment, he said he was interested because he worked in levee safety for five years and had never really seen a flood firsthand.

“It was a good opportunity to see loaded levees and floodwalls, pumps and sandbag closures,” he said. “And to reflect on and reprise my role as inspector during routine and periodic levee inspections in the past.”

Ryan Moore, construction representative in the Northern Area Office, deployed to Tampa from September 2017 to October 2017. This was his third deployment.

His first was in 2005 - about five months after being hired by the Corps. He volunteered for 60 days to help out with debris removal after Hurricane Katrina hit. There, he worked along the gulf in and around towns like Waveland, Bay St. Louis, and Diamondhead, Miss. In the fall of 2011, he deployed to Afghanistan for six months as an engineering technician conducting QA duties on various projects.

He said he always enjoys the work he’s doing and the people he meets – from Corps personnel to the locals. And he said, as with all deployments, there are always challenges.

“Some (challenges) can be with your family you are leaving behind because life doesn’t stop just because you aren’t there,” he said. “They still have work, school, activities, etc. going on. There are also the occasional challenge you can face with the work you are doing on deployment, too. For example, upset locals due to the life-altering changes they are experiencing as a result of the damage they have sustained from the disaster they just lived through.”

Mike Machalek, senior enforcement officer in the Regulatory Branch, deployed to Miami, Fla., for 30 days last September for the Blue Roof Mission, then to Puerto Rico in March 2018 for 45 days in support of Task Force Power.

He said, for the past 25 years, he’s volunteered with the Corps for nearly every disaster.

In Puerto Rico, he said he especially enjoyed working side by side with the local interpreters, and learning about life on the island from their perspective.

He said some of the challenges that he faced was that, even with modern technology, cell phone service was bad in the remote mountain areas where he was working. Plus, he didn’t have much time to handle necessary matters back home.

“So there was a lot to do upon my return,” he said.

He said that during his last week in Puerto Rico, while watching the news, a reporter stated that she was in Puerto Rico where it was “still without power for six months.” And that bothered him.

“The truth was that the majority of the island was completely restored, and functioning normally,” Machalek said. “It was only in the remote mountain areas

‘Corps employees are truly in a fortunate situation to be able to help as part of our job.’

with no power, where they couldn’t get the big ComEd power trucks up there. That report was totally disrespectful of the Corps’ mission, and a complete lie. It also reflected badly on all the employees that left their homes and family, and sacrificed so much to help the people on the island.”

Kelly Granberg, environmental engineer in the Hydraulics and Environmental Engineering Section, deployed to Puerto Rico from November 2017 to December 2017, as a temporary roofing QA inspector for the Blue Roof Mission.

She said she’s always wanted a deployment experience to provide support to the Corps’ emergency response mission and help serve the nation. And she’s grateful she had the opportunity to help in Puerto Rico where the need was so great. This was her first deployment.

“I enjoyed working with a motivated team of red shirts from across the country and Puerto Rican translators and contractors to immediately improve the lives of families devastated by Hurricane Maria,” she said.

She added that her work was physically and mentally challenging.

“I spent every working moment in the field performing roof assessments in high heat, driving in difficult road and traffic conditions, and seeing home after home in need,” Granberg said. “I pushed as fast as possible, knowing that every house assessed meant a family would recover more quickly.”

Andrew Farver, civil engineer in the Construction Section, deployed once in 2016 and twice in 2017-2018. The first was for 30 days at the end of 2016 in Baton Rouge, La. Next, a five-week deployment to central Florida in September to October 2017 in response to Hurricane Irma where he worked QA for the Blue Roof Mission. The second deployment, in January 2018, was in Puerto Rico for four weeks working as a debris QA.

He said he volunteers because there are people in need of help and he’s capable of providing that.

“Corps employees are truly in a fortunate situation to be able to help as part of our job,” he said. “In addition to that, the deployments really are rewarding all the way around. You get to meet and work with other great Corps employees from all over the United States. You get to see parts of the country that you may have never seen before. And the work you do truly is interesting and challenging.”

He said that among all three of his deployments, the most enjoyable part has been the people. He said not all deployments require interactions with the public. But during his Florida deployment, he had the opportunity to talk to a lot of Floridians while he was out doing roof inspections.

“I met a lot of really great people with interesting backgrounds,” he said. “Even if there isn’t much interaction with the public during a deployment, the camaraderie among the USACE team really makes the deployments enjoyable. When you’re out there working 84-hour weeks, it could get a little mind-numbing if you don’t have a good group of people around you. Each of my deployments have had amazing teams of people from all districts and all walks of life. I’ve made numerous professional and personal contacts, many of whom I still stay in touch with today.”



Corps Tribal Liaison team attends National Congress of American Indians Conference

By Melyssa Navis, Native American Special Emphasis Program manager

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers participated in the 74th Annual National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Conference in Milwaukee, Wis., Oct. 15-20, 2017. NCAI explains that its mission is to “protect and enhance treaty and sovereign rights, secure our traditional laws, cultures, and ways of life for our descendants, promote a common understanding of the rightful place of tribes in the family of American governments, and improve the quality of life for Native communities and peoples.” This year’s elections took place and tribes from all over Indian Country were in full attendance. This annual event is planned to insure, “Indian Country comes together to advance the most important discussions regarding policy and programs.”

USACE’s presence at this event demonstrates our commitment to honoring our Tribal Trust responsibilities by establishing relationships and addressing concerns right up front. Maj. Gen. Donald Jackson Jr., USACE deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, made opening remarks on Oct. 17, introducing each Corps Tribal Liaison in attendance and asking each of the following team members to stand up and present themselves to the General Assembly: Lisa Morales, National Tribal liaison; Ron Kneebone, program manager of the Tribal Nations Technical Center for Expertise; Michael Federoff, deputy director for the Tribal Nations Technical Center; Ron Kneebone, program director with the Tribal Nations Technical Center; me, Melyssa Navis, Chicago District; Nathan Campbell, project manager with the St. Paul District; and Vanessa Alberto, Tribal liaison with the St. Paul District.



Ron Kneebone, program manager of the Tribal Nations Technical Center for Expertise; Michael Federoff, deputy director for the USACE Tribal Nations Technical Center; Lisa Morales, National Tribal Liaison; Vanessa Alberto, Tribal Liaison with the St. Paul District; Melyssa Navis, Chicago District Native American Special Emphasis Program manager; Nathan Campbell, project manager with the St. Paul District; and Major General Donald E. (Ed) Jackson Jr., deputy commanding general for Civil and Emergency Operations, USACE.

During his speech, Jackson highlighted a success example of a commander working in collaboration and supporting Tribes during Hurricane Irma: “Jacksonville Commander Jason Kirk reached out early after Irma hit Florida to the Seminole and Mississippi Tribal leadership to make sure they were getting the support that they needed from the federal government. And again that’s just another example of one of our commanders in the field that understands his responsibilities to the Tribes and wants to reach out proactively using the relationships he has to make sure there are no unmet needs.”

He added: “We are looking at different ways within the Army Corps of Engineers to try to help equip these young leaders to understand the responsibilities they have for government to government coordination at the tribal level. So we’re working very hard to plug them in and get them educated to provide them the resources. One of the

things we have done over the years is to develop our Tribal Liaison program. The folks that stood up right now represent just a small fraction of the tribal liaison teams that we now have across the Corps to reach out and maintain constant communication so we can build our relationships based on trust and confidence facilitated by communication and collaboration.”

Breakout sessions during the conference relevant to the Army Corps mission included: “Section 106 Review of Wireless Infrastructure; 10 Years After UDRIP; International Advocacy to Protect Tribal Sovereignty; Listening Session with Federal Agencies on Protection of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, Cultural Expressions, and Genetic Resources; and Tribal Proposals To Improve Federal Permitting Consultation.

