



Steve McCombs, an occupational safety and health specialist with the Corps of Engineers' Los Angeles District, looks on as a crew films a scene for the National Guard's new recruiting commercial. The scene was shot at Whittier Narrows Park, a flood control area managed by the district, March 8. The district handles numerous permit requests to film at other locations the district manages, including the Los Angeles River. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

National Guard works with district to film new recruiting commercial

David Salazar

LOS ANGELES—The skies darkened as an Army National Guard Black Hawk helicopter hovered over a home submerged in murky, churning waters.

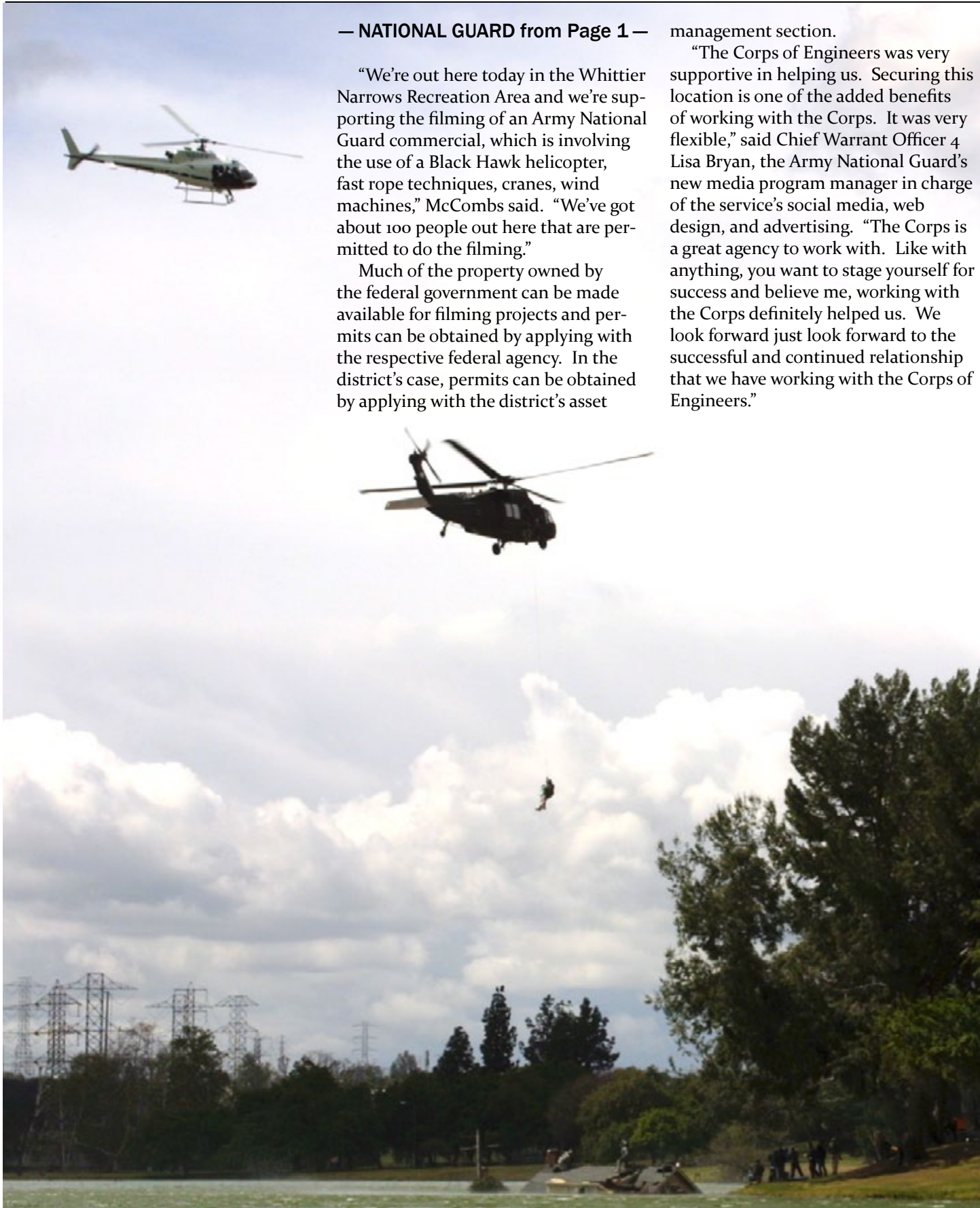
A little girl clad in a light blue hoodie and pink pajama pants cowered atop the shingled roof as a soldier rappelled heroically from the helicopter. Upon landing, the girl ran to meet the soldier's embrace, and the two ascended to safety from the flooded vestiges.

The harrowing rescue was a scene in the Army National Guard's newest recruitment commercial filmed at the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, part of the Whittier Narrows Flood Control Basin, which is managed by the district.

The shoot took place in early March, but the Army National Guard launched the new commercial May 10, as part of a campaign called "Soldiers of Steel." The commercial calls attention to similarities between National Guard soldiers and Superman, the subject of the film "Man of Steel," which is scheduled to be released in theaters June 14, which also coincides with the Army's birthday. "Man of Steel" director Zack Snyder also directed the new commercials.

Due to the complexity of the filming conducted at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, Steve McCombs, a district occupational and safety specialist, was on hand to observe the production.

— see NATIONAL GUARD, Page 2 —



A civilian helicopter transporting a film crew circles above an Army Blackhawk helicopter as it executes a simulated rooftop evacuation on the set of the Army National Guard's new recruiting commercial. The National Guard worked with the Los Angeles District to secure a filming permit for the shoot, which took place at Whittier Narrows Park March 8. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

— NATIONAL GUARD from Page 1 —

"We're out here today in the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and we're supporting the filming of an Army National Guard commercial, which is involving the use of a Black Hawk helicopter, fast rope techniques, cranes, wind machines," McCombs said. "We've got about 100 people out here that are permitted to do the filming."

Much of the property owned by the federal government can be made available for filming projects and permits can be obtained by applying with the respective federal agency. In the district's case, permits can be obtained by applying with the district's asset

management section.

"The Corps of Engineers was very supportive in helping us. Securing this location is one of the added benefits of working with the Corps. It was very flexible," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lisa Bryan, the Army National Guard's new media program manager in charge of the service's social media, web design, and advertising. "The Corps is a great agency to work with. Like with anything, you want to stage yourself for success and believe me, working with the Corps definitely helped us. We look forward just look forward to the successful and continued relationship that we have working with the Corps of Engineers."

Dear District Teammates:

For my family, Memorial Day weekend signals the official beginning of summer! For those of us who have school age children, we know that the kids will soon finish their academic year and we as parents have to figure out what to do with them for the next three months. If you are facing the same dilemma and looking for fun things to do, consider taking your family to kayak the L.A. River.

I was very lucky to be part of a historic event over Memorial Day weekend: The opening of the 2.5 mile stretch of the Los Angeles River which had previously been closed to the public for nearly 80 years. Gaining access to the river is great for people here and is certainly in line with President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative. The real victory marked by the occasion, however, was the successful coordination among the vast myriad of interagency partners that this effort required. And it was a long time coming.

As river supporters know, the L.A. River system has been heavily altered over the last two hundred years by development, flooding, and channelization. After flooding caused catastrophic damage in the early 20th century, the Corps and County built the Los Angeles County Drainage Area flood risk management project that further channelized the river.

While that project remains critically important in protecting the public from floods, plans in the 1930s didn't take into account the environment and recreational use the way we would today.

During the past 25 years, support for restoration and recreational use of the river has grown by leaps and bounds, through efforts by Friends of the Los Angeles River and many others. The federal perspective on the river has also evolved with changing environmental values, more protective laws,

and the development of ecosystem restoration as one of the Corps' key missions.

Making this stretch of the river accessible to the people of Los Angeles was the right thing to do, but it wasn't easy. Members of the district staff worked with the Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority, the City of Los Angeles, and the County of Los Angeles, among others, to accomplish the historic task that called for a fully joint effort to allow access to the river while continuing to provide a habitat for wildlife and maintaining its role as a flood risk management feature.



It's hard to make everyone happy, especially when our role in flood risk management is to mitigate the effects of a flood, should a flood event occur. This is certainly a step in the right direction, and I was very happy to see the numerous articles and television stories that accurately reflected our partnership with other agencies to accomplish this.

In my humble opinion, the future of the L.A. River is the future of the Los Angeles District. On my second day on the job as district commander, I was on a tributary of the L.A. River with the Mayor of Los Angeles, the Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. All three high level leaders were discussing the vision for a new L.A. River: a river that would combine flood risk management, ecosystem restoration, and recreation. Thirty-five months later, as my command of this great district comes to a close, I'm amazed at all that we have accomplished together to make this vision become a reality.

I could not ask for a better group of professionals to work alongside, nor a better place to continue Building Strong and Taking Care of People!

Warm Regards,
COL Toy

District Commander: Col. R. Mark Toy	The NewsCastle is published monthly under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the employees and extended Engineer Family of the Los Angeles District, USACE.
Public Affairs Officer: Jay Field	
Editor: David A. Salazar	Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the District or of the Department of Defense.
Staff: Daniel J. Calderón, Greg Fuderer, Brooks O. Hubbard IV, Beverly Patterson, Kristen Skopeck and Mario Zepeda	Address mail to the Los Angeles District Public Affairs Office, ATTN: NewsCastle Editor P.O. Box 532711, Los Angeles, CA 90017-2325
Tel: (213) 452-3922 or Fax: (213) 452-4209.	E-mail the Public Affairs staff at: publicaffairs.SPL@usace.army.mil



Click here to take the
2013 NewsCastle Readership Survey!

LA District cleaning up FUDS in Kingman

Daniel J. Calderón

KINGMAN, Ariz. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District team is moving along with its clean-up work at the Formerly Used Defense Site just outside of Kingman, Ariz. which began Apr. 15.

The work being done by the district and its contractor, Eco & Associates, is part of the time-critical removal action for the former skeet range, which is referred to as Munitions Response Site 03 of the former Kingman Ground-to-Ground Gunnery Range. The site covers approximately 75 acres.

The site was used as a skeet range during World War II. World War II-era clay pigeons were constructed with coal tar pitch which contains chemicals known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Skeet remnants, or the debris from these particular clay targets, remain in the area. The

Corps and the contractor will “abate, prevent, minimize, stabilize, mitigate, or eliminate the release or threat of release” of contaminants according to 40 Code of Federal Regulations 300.415(b) (1).

“Most of the MRS03 – 15 Skeet Ranges site is located in a residential area. Therefore, expedited action to remove the scattered clay pigeon debris and PAH-impacted shallow soil is required,” said Fran Firouzi, the district’s project manager. “The full environmental delineation associated with the site will be completed in upcoming fiscal years.”

The current work focuses on ten of the affected properties in the area. Both The Corps and Eco said the cleanup work is important for the members of the community Firouzi said the primary concerns at this site are the abundant, but scattered,

— see KINGMAN FUDS, Page 5 —



Workers excavate soil around a home Apr. 19 during cleanup work being done by the US Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District at a Formerly Used Defense Site just outside Kingman, Ariz. The work being done by the district and its contractor, Eco & Associates, is part of the Time Critical Removal Action for the former Skeet Range, which is referred to as Munitions Response Site 03 of the former Kingman Ground-to-Ground Gunnery Range. (Photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

OPM issues alert for unpaid military deposits

Office of Personnel Management

Employees planning to retire in the near future and who have an unpaid Military Service Deposit need to be aware of a change in procedure which may impact their ability to pay the Military Service Deposits at retirement.

In the past, employees who retired were allowed to make payment for military service even after the date of retirement, up to the date that their retirement was finalized. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently directed that payment of Military Service Deposits after the date of retirement may only be made in cases of administrative error. Military Service Deposits MUST now be paid in full prior to the date of separation or retirement.

Employees should allow a minimum of 120 days processing time prior to their anticipated date of retirement in order to ensure that payment is posted prior to the date of retirement. Employees who are anticipating retirement in the next six months and who wish to pay their Military Service Deposit should initiate the process immediately.

Questions regarding deposits and the process for initiating the payment may be directed at the Army Benefits Center at 877-276-9287 between the hour of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Central time to speak with a retirement counselor. Instructions and procedures for initiating the Military Service Deposit are also available on the ABC-C website at <https://www.abc.army.mil>. For additional questions contact your servicing Labor Management-Employee Relations and Benefits Specialist.

— KINGMAN FUDS from Page 4 —

clay pigeon debris and the associated high concentrations of PAHs in the soil.

“Soil samples analyzed during the 2010 site inspection contained PAH concentrations 1,000 times higher than permitted under 2007 Arizona residential risk-based screening levels and 10,000 times higher than the updated 2012 US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) residential risk-based screening levels” Firouzi explained. “The surface soils of approximately 52 residential lots have been impacted by skeet fragments and PAHs.”

Rick Lainhart, a civil engineering technician with the district, has been doing similar projects for more than 20 years. He said the project is important to the community and is proud of the Corps’ efforts in Kingman. Lainhart said the district is working with the residents to ensure they are informed and aware of the district’s activities in their neighborhood.

“We try to keep the public informed and to make sure the contractor takes care of their homes and property during the operation,” said Lainhart. “The people that live in the homes that are being cleaned have been kept informed and

their concerns are addressed at every step of the process.”

The sites involved in the removal action at the Formerly Used Defense Site were used as skeet ranges during World War II. The area was home to the Kingman Flexible Gunnery School, one of only seven schools of its kind in the U.S. There were 15 skeet ranges located at the gunnery school. The ranges were constructed side-by-side in an overlapping pattern.

The Corps and the contractors involved studied the area extensively before beginning the excavation operation. Quin Kinnebrew, Eco’s senior geologist onsite, said the work is proceeding well.

“As with all construction projects, we have encountered some items that were not anticipated, such as utilities at 6 inches below ground surface and relatively high winds,” he said. “There are contingencies for this, so work continues on after some modification to the original plan. The excavation activities are on schedule.”

While the work is going on, the team members are sensitive to the fact that they are working in a residential neighborhood. Contractors work to mitigate dust in the area by using water spray and there are monitors around each

work site to keep tabs on the air quality.

“It’s looking really good,” said Hadi Murad, safety officer for El Capitan, the subcontractor hired by Eco. “Everyone is really working hard and making sure they keep each other safe.”

Murad said the work is fairly delicate, even though there is construction equipment onsite. Workers use the equipment to dig away up to a foot of soil.

“Everything is done in small movements,” explained Murad. “We have to work delicately and take extra care because we are in this residential area.”

The work on the first ten sites is scheduled to be done late in May. During the next phase of the TCRA, the Corps will begin working on the remaining 42 lots. Firouzi said the work being done in Kingman is an example of the district’s commitment to “Building Strong and Taking Care of People.”

“We are here to take care of the people in these communities and build a stronger relationship between them and the Corps of Engineers,” she said. “We want to make sure the people understand that we are here to do all we can to clean up the debris left over from the use of this land during World War II, and we will mitigate the risk to the health of the residents here.”

— WHEN YOU MAY HAVE ENCOUNTERED A MUNITION.

— DO NOT TOUCH, MOVE OR DISTURB IT, BUT CAREFULLY LEAVE THE AREA.

— CALL 911!

District hosts ‘Room for the River’ info exchange

Kristen Skopeck

LOS ANGELES — Prior to the start of the two-day Room for the River: Los Angeles conference, Corps Ecologist Carvel Bass conducted a tour of the Sepulveda Flood Basin May 15 for a working group of invited water experts from the U.S. and the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, Room for the River is a government design plan intended to address flood protection, as well as improve environmental conditions in the areas surrounding the nation’s rivers.

The Los Angeles conference, hosted by the City of Los Angeles, its partners, and in cooperation with the Consulate General of the Netherlands (in San Francisco), was held May 16 and 17 for the purpose of building on existing initiatives to revitalize the Los Angeles River and on the experience of the Netherlands as it pursues its Room for the River plan.

Bass described to the group how the 2100-acre Sepulveda Basin is a federally owned flood management facility, most of which is leased by the City of Los Angeles and various others for recreational and agricultural purposes. The basin is the largest open space along the river and features a variety of recreation amenities, including a wildlife management area, golf courses, sports fields, model airplane flying area, riparian corridors, and a lake. He mentioned that, from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers perspective,

the existence of the basin is critically important to the hydraulic integrity of the river during rain events, at which time the Corps and Los Angeles County hydraulic managers closely coordinate water-holding and water-release data to allow for the most beneficial management of temporary peak flows in the region.

The group was also taken to an area of the basin where the Los Angeles Conservation Corps conducts a non-motorized boating program, which will enter its third season this summer. The Los Angeles District grants the license to LACC to ensure they

operate a safe program that will allow for public access without damaging the sensitive habitat found in the river.

“Conferences like Room for the River: Los Angeles enable people from diverse areas and backgrounds to consider what physical, political and policy adaptations are necessary to support resilient societies in the future,” Bass said. “The information exchanged will help define priorities here in Los Angeles and in the Netherlands and help establish prerequisites for improving environmental education and local conditions.”



Corps Ecologist Carvel Bass conducts a tour of the Sepulveda Flood Basin May 15 for a working group of invited water experts from the U.S. and the Netherlands. (Photo by Kristen Skopeck)

Documentarian remystifies yoga

David A. Salazar

LOS ANGELES—To many Americans, the thought of yoga invokes images of a group of people performing stretches in unison in the cardio room of a gym. This is exactly the idea Gita Desai set to dispel when she produced the documentary “Yoga Unveiled.”

Desai spoke to dozens of employees at the district headquarters in downtown Los Angeles May 7 as part of the district’s Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month activities. Desai shared some clips from her film and answered several questions from the audience.

“Deep within each individual lies a reservoir of tranquility. All and one can lay claim to this unchanging eternal bliss that is our true nature,” said the film’s narrator, Ajay Mehta, during its opening sequence. “To most practitioners in the West, yoga is merely a series of postures that offer physical benefits. This view confines the yoga experience to only what occurs on the mat.”

Yoga, which means “to join together,” is a system comprised of physical poses, meditation, and controlled breathing meant to attune the practitioner’s mind, body, and spirit. The practice is believed by scholars to predate written history and archaeological evidence discovered in the Indus Valley suggests that yoga has been in existence for as many as 5,000 years.

Yoga has been widely practiced in numerous Asian cul-



Gita Desai, producer of the documentary “Yoga Unveiled,” spoke to district employees May 7, during an Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month observance event at the district headquarters. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

tures for centuries. Yoga was brought to the United States in the late 1800s, and the practice became more widespread in the 1960s when it was associated with the hippie and environmentalist cultures. Yoga has since become commonplace in gymnasiums across the country, but Desai asserts that Westerners are only reaping a fraction of the true benefits yoga provides.

“The western view of yoga is physical—to do the asanas or postures and to become strong and healthy—but that is just a stepping stone in the whole vision and prescription of yoga that the sages and ancient figures left us,” Desai said. “It’s not even the half of it. It’s very necessary to work through the body because you have to become very limber and strong and devoid of toxins and impurities. But the goal is meditation because the highest goal of yoga is to realize that in each one of us is this very peaceful inner-self.”

Desai, who was born in Uganda to East Indian parents, became enthralled with yoga at the age of 40 after her father, whom she described as a “great proponent of yoga,” died. Like many others, she went to a yoga studio to get started. It wasn’t long before she felt that something was missing, and she decided to embark on the two-year journey to make the documentary. In the film, she interviews world renown yogis and medical experts and details the extensive history of yoga during its three hour run time.

Since the film was released in 2005, Desai has been invited to speak all over the world, including China and the Arctic. For Desai, making the film, which was funded by her husband and written by her son, was a labor of love. A labor of love meant to highlight the rich and lasting contributions of India to the rest of the world.

“The sages of India made it their one pointed work to research, work on themselves, and went into the caves and experimented on themselves,” Desai explained. “This is thousands of years it took to evolve. It’s universal and applicable everywhere and it is the way to find the inner-peace that will last forever. This is the gift of India because they have given something that is timeless.”

This observation is exactly what made this presentation to district employees important, said Lt. Col. Alex Deraney, the district’s deputy commander, during the presentation’s opening.

“Assimilation into American communities is an extremely powerful force and it has a way of causing us to quickly lose our family’s cultural traditions,” Deraney said. “I think these events are important because they allow us to reflect on the people we share this beautiful world with. America has an incredible geographic isolation and it causes us to lose touch with anything that isn’t ‘American.’”

In 1978, Congress passed a resolution to observe Asian/Pacific Islander American Heritage Week the first week of May. In 1990, Congress voted to expand the commemoration from one week to the entire month of May. In 1992, May was permanently designated as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.



William Kramer, a dam operator with the district assigned to Prado Dam, shows students the gate controls during a portion of the field trip. (Photo by David A. Salazar)



More than 80 second grade students from Cortez Elementary, a math and science magnet school in Pomona, Calif., took a field trip to Prado Dam May 16. The tour included a nearly two-mile trek through the flood control basin up to the dam's 627-foot control tower. (Photo by David A. Salazar)



Cortez Elementary second-graders tour Prado Dam

David A. Salazar

CORONA, Calif.—A group of second graders from Cortez Elementary, a math and science magnet school in Pomona, Calif., toured Prado Dam as part of a larger effort to spark the interest of students in science, technology, engineering, and math May 16.

Fernando Cano, a project engineer out of the Los Angeles District's office in El Monte, Calif., led the group of more than 80 students and a dozen teachers and parent volunteers on the winding path to the dam's control tower like a conductor driving a long train.

Along the way, Cano, who was assisted by Gus Ruiz, an engineering technician also from the El Monte office, pointed out wildlife and native plants and trees to the students.

One little boy asked Cano, "Does all this land belong to the government?"

"Not just the government, the federal government," Cano replied.

"Is it true they hide aliens here?" the boy asked.

"I haven't seen any aliens yet. But maybe," Cano said with a chuckle.

The boy looked down at the ground and thought for a moment. "Nah, probably just coyotes," he said.

Although Cano no longer works at the dam, he is very familiar with its structure. He served as the project engineer for the elevation of the dam's embankment from 2003 to 2007. Although this field trip is nothing out of the norm for the district, this one holds a special significance for Cano: his son, Lorenzo, is a student at Cortez.

Through the course of the normal curriculum for the school's second grade class, the students have participated in a number of engineering projects in the classroom, including building bridges and towers out of items like uncooked spaghetti and straws. The lesson recently changed to include the construction of dams.

"Exposure like this makes a big impression on them. Especially for a dam," Cano said.

"They've never seen one before. They can read about it, but it's just not the same as actually seeing it in person."

Alison McAllister, a second grade teacher at Cortez who brought her students on the trip agreed. "Engineering is a profession that is hugely important for the environment and society," she said. "For this age group, hands on activities are much better. They are able to learn better. It's very practical in the sense that they can see it in person how it affects their daily lives."

Students were able to see the different features of the dam in order to get a better understanding of all of the different components of a dam, including the spillway.

"Are there piranhas in there?" asked one of the boys pointing to the reservoir.

"No piranhas, just fish," Cano answered.

"But piranhas are fish," the boy said.

"Yes, but not those fish. Mostly just carp," Cano explained.

Once the group meandered its way up the sloping paved road to the dam's control tower, they were treated to a brief and orderly tour around the tower's outer walkway and got to see some of the controls used to operate the gates used to control the flow of water going through the dam.

After a day of walking and learning about the dam, the students were guided back to the two buses that brought them into town, but not before shouting "thank you" in unison in the sing-songy voices that can only be made by happy second graders.

Prado Dam is a single purpose flood risk reduction project located in Riverside County on the Santa Ana River, near the head of Santa Ana Canyon. Its primary purpose is to reduce the risk of damage from floods for the metropolitan areas in Orange County, Calif., and for the highly developed urban and agricultural areas of the Santa Ana Coastal Plain.

Tornadoes remind us to prepare

Steve McCombs

I am writing this the day after the Oklahoma City tornado devastation. I spent yesterday afternoon texting with my son while he was in a storm shelter, perhaps 3 miles north of the tornado's path. He is stationed at Tinker AFB and, as I write this, is working rescue and response with other Air Force units. Unlike earthquakes, tornadoes can be predicted to some extent, based on the weather patterns that produce them. When you live in "Tornado Alley" you simply expect them. Many folks have tornado shelters – in fact, all new residential construction in Oklahoma requires one. Similarly here in California, there are building codes relating to earthquakes. Which brings me to the topic at hand: Are you prepared?

We will have a large earthquake along the San Andreas Fault at some point. Dr. Lucy Jones from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) recently spoke here at the district Office and stated as much. In fact, it is overdue based on the scientific data. There are also other faults in and around California, Arizona and Nevada that can, without warning, rupture. There are also other natural or man-made disasters that can affect us, and we need to be prepared at home and at work.

What I want to talk about at the moment is the "Shelter-in-place" option, should you find yourself at work and unable to leave. Think for a moment or two about what you'd need if you found yourself having to stay put for a few days. Do you take regular prescription medicine? What would you do for food and water? How about sleep? What about personal cleanliness? So here's a list of essentials:

1. Three days' supply of any prescription medicines you take every day.
2. A case of bottled water and 3 days worth of some type of non-perishable food. You might also consider keeping some type of nutrition shake like "Ensure" or some other brand. These shakes have calories, vitamins and minerals.
3. A pack of baby or personal cleansing wipes.



The Oklahoma tornadoes have served as a tragic reminder to prepare as well as possible for any disasters or emergencies. (File photo)

4. You'll probably want a blanket and small pillow if you have to sleep at the office, yes?
 5. You may also wish to purchase a travel tooth brush and other small personal care items that are sold in sizes you can take on an airline.
 6. A comfortable pair of shoes.
- All of the above-listed items can easily be stored in your cubicle or office. We all have cabinets with "stuff" in them we almost never use; why not turn

that one cabinet into your own personal shelter in place stockpile? You'll want one that you can lock.

The bottom line is simply this; be prepared. You never know when disaster will strike and you need to be ready, both at home and at work. Here's a link to the USGS you'll find useful in helping you prepare.

And, as always, drive safe, drive sober and buckle up!

Steve

The truth: Fat turns into muscle; Muscle turns into fat

Cecy Ordonez

If you knew that a certain type of exercise could benefit your heart, improve your balance, strengthen your bones, and help you lose weight as it made you look and feel better, wouldn't you want to get started? The answer is strength training. Strength training is not only for bodybuilders and power-lifters, but it can benefit people of all ages, abilities, and people who suffer from various health conditions. When I follow up with someone after I have prescribed a complete workout program (i.e. aerobic, flexibility and strength training), I find too often the exercise that is skipped is strength training. Besides the "I-don't-have-time" excuse, one other reason I often hear that deters people from starting or continuing a strength training program is the idea that "muscle turns into fat". On the other hand, I have those that are motivated to incorporate strength training and they ask me how to turn "fat into muscle".

It is impossible, yes impossible, for muscle to turn into fat or fat to turn into muscle. That would be equivalent to magically making an orange turn into an apple. Let me explain.

There are several hundred different types of cells in the human body (muscle, fat, liver, nerve, bone, skin, etc.) and they each usually come in a few different varieties. Muscle for example has three. One type is smooth muscle (lines the organs and blood vessels) and the second is cardiac muscle (found in the heart). The one we are concerned with is called skeletal muscle. The skeletal muscle is made of threadlike fibers (cells) of 10 to 100 or more that are bundled together into what is called fascicles. These fascicles are themselves bundled by a sheath called epimysium which forms the muscle and attaches via a tendon to the skeleton. Muscles are a very specialized tissue that has both the ability to contract and the ability to conduct electrical impulses.

Fat cells on the other hand, called adipocytes, have two types: brown and white. For our purposes, we are concerned

with the white fat cells which collectively form adipose tissue. Each fat cell is filled with a single droplet of triglyceride that occupies most of the volume of the cell. Its function is to insulate, protect major organs and is a means to store energy. The muscle and fat cells are both anatomically different and serve different functions in the body. So where do we get the idea that a muscle cell can convert to a fat cell or vice versa?

The myth stems from bodybuilders. When bodybuilders stop training after a competition they begin to look soft. Although there are many contributing factors as to why this happens, there are two primary ones: muscle size and calorie intake. A body builder in training will lift weights that cause the fragile muscle fiber to microscopically tear. When the fiber heals it becomes thicker and stronger to prevent future breakage. This is what causes muscles to become bigger, called muscular hypertrophy. Since the muscle is metabolically active, the bigger the muscles the more calories it burns even at rest, much like an engine running in neutral. When a bodybuilder stops strength training, they instantly lose the need for the extra calories and slowly the muscle will begin to shrink. Over time the growth factors lessens, as the muscle fiber continues to shrink and the calorie needs becomes even less. If the bodybuilder, who has now become accustomed to eating more calories, does not decrease their calorie intake, the result is a simultaneous decrease in muscle size and increase in fat. This gives the illusion that the muscle turns into fat. The reverse is true as well. A bodybuilder who is religiously training and feeding the body the right foods to support their current muscle mass while decreasing body fat, will result in an illusion that the fat cells turn into muscle.

The bottom line, regardless of what the goal is, carefully monitoring your calorie intake as well as properly training your muscles can bring many health benefits for you. You don't need to be a competitive bodybuilder to support any muscle you do build; the secret is in the nutrition. Edward Mitchell, a Civil Engineer in the Asset Management Division, and a 13 years and current competitive natural bodybuilder says, "Without proper nutrition and supplementation, you're not going to make anywhere near the gains you could make had your diet been spot on. With a good diet and supplementation plan, you will increase your muscle mass and lower your body fat fairly quick. I can see why people would think that they turned the fat into muscle, but I'm pretty sure science has proven that you can't chemically convert a fat cell to a muscle cell or vice versa. My advice to someone who wants to start strength training is to go out there and do it. It is intimidating, I totally get that, but you have to take that first step. Once the muscle mass and strength gains start showing, you'll be hooked. I guarantee it".



District promotes Army's eCyberMission STEM contests at local schools

Equal Employment Opportunity Office

LOS ANGELES -- While the U.S. Army's civilian scientists and engineers deliver technical solutions to Soldiers in the field, its eCyberMission ambassadors are dedicated to attracting students into scientific fields to help build the Army's bench for tomorrow.

The Army launched its Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM, interactive contest 11 years ago and employs eCyberMission ambassadors to conduct outreach about the contest in underserved communities and to non-traditional education students. The district's first eCyberMission ambassador is equal employment opportunity specialist, Sonya Trammell-Jones.

Trammell-Jones kicked off her outreach duties May 24 at the Compton High School Science Fair, with the help of Compton High School's Dr. Lelena Holloway, who heads the Science Department. She introduced the competition to eighth-grade students and staff members at feeder schools and discussed the program with those interested in becoming team leaders, student participants and judges. Additionally, students participating in the science fair had opportunities to win \$8,000 in series EE Savings Bonds, at full maturity.

The event marked the culmination of more than a year of partnership and teamwork between the U.S. Army Accessions Command the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command. Trammell-Jones said the initiative represented the Army's commitment to strength through STEM today and in the future.

"Sharing and facilitating the implementation of this program within our district's area of operations will help us find our talent pool and, hopefully, give us the ability to keep the students motivated toward education and careers in STEM, and possibly with the Corps

of Engineers," she said.

The eCyberMission Contest is a challenge to students to build on their ideas that can have positive effects on their community and bring Army technology across America to reinforce the importance of STEM.

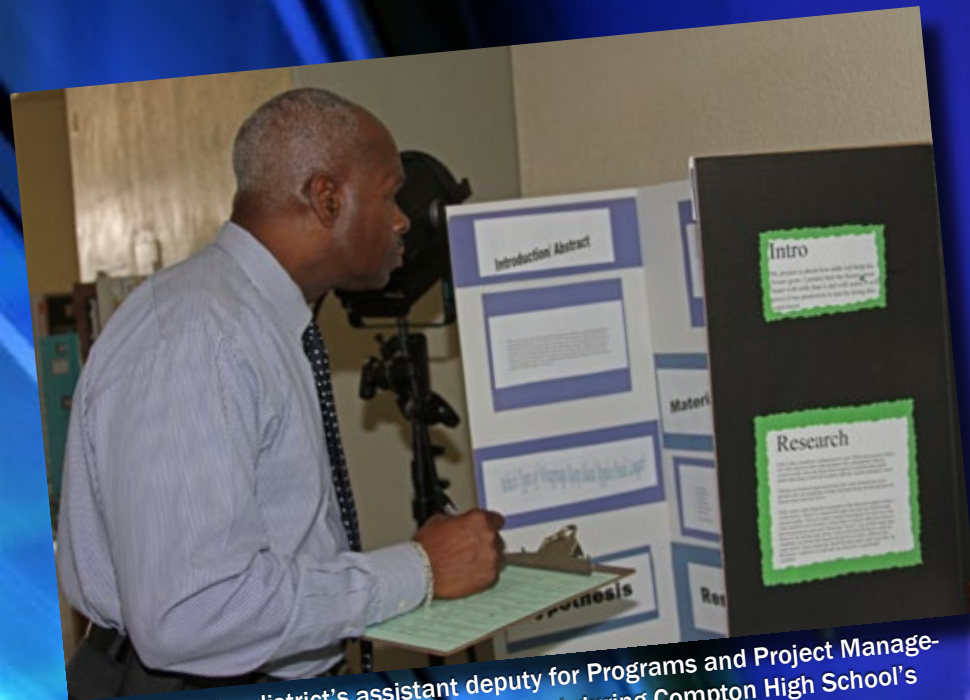
Trammell-Jones reminded students that countering threats to harm the nation through cyberspace will require an influx of young scientists.

"If we can get young people to participate in changing their environment and get them turned on to be science, technology, engineering, math-focused young people, whether they join or work for the Army or not, they will not only make us Army Strong but nationally strong." Says Maj Gen Nick Justice, Commander of RDECOM, and leader of ECYBERMISSION, a free web-based STEM competition for students in grade six through nine.

"Coaches and teachers tell me how much other students in schools around the nation are starting to get interested in what kids involved with the eCyberMission are doing because of the excitement built around some of the events the Army has done," Justice continued.

Trammell-Jones hopes to draw in students and professionals that have that same drive and excitement around Los Angeles communities.

"I enjoy the diversity and team effort this promising program offers," she said. "Minority children and home schooled children often have great ideas but don't have a venue to express or showcase their gifts. It makes me very proud to work for the Corps and to know that, together, we can have a shaping effect on the youth in our nation to get involved in the things that will revive our economy to build a new future for the Corps and our world."



Ken Morris, the district's assistant deputy for Programs and Project Management, evaluates a student's science project during Compton High School's science fair. (Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)



Sonya Trammell-Jones is interviewed by actor Richard Gant. Gant volunteered his time as an interviewer for a world-wide news conference on the eCyberMission at the digital news room at Compton High School May 24. (Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)



The Los Angeles district sent four judges from the district to judge students STEM related projects as part of the schools "All things Science." (Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)



Students from Compton High School participate in the eCyberMission presentation on May 24. (Photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)

Taking care of people, one wounded warrior at a time

Debbie Lamb
Special Emphasis Program Manager
for Individuals With Disabilities

Modern medicine is a wonderful thing. Advances in medical technology in the last 25 years on and off the battle field has created one of the largest returning wounded veteran populations this country has ever welcomed home. Wounds are not always visible we have learned. Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) are the invisible scars many carry long after they take off their uniform.

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta illustrated this when he acknowledged in testimony before a joint hearing of the House Committees on Armed Services and Veterans Affairs that “the system’s ... already overwhelmed.” And “adding another 100,000 per year” with the anticipated drawdown of forces will further overwhelm a Department of Defense system in which many now are not getting the care and benefits they should. The VA faces similar challenges, particularly in providing timely, effective mental health care and other services. Over 12% of returning veterans are estimated to have PTSD or TBI, let alone the over 23% with a physical injury.

In less than 10 years the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) has become the major force in providing support and services to Wounded Warriors and their families. It took just one man to make a difference, starting with delivering one backpack to now providing services to over 29,000 returning Wounded Warriors.

Given this stark landscape, it is particularly important to confront systemic problems and barriers to returning warriors’ successful reintegration to civilian life. The Wounded Warrior Project offers support to wounded warriors to find their new normal. The WWP has four goals; mind, body, economic empowerment, and engagement. WWP expands these goals with objectives including; closing gaps and eliminating barriers to improved mental health of warriors and their families and caregivers and fostering the economic em-



Jerry Majevitch found a rewarding career as a stockbroker after an IED blast in Baghdad left him with severe burns on his face, scalp, and body. He subsequently lost both ears, his nose, and fingers on both hands, but hasn’t let his injuries stop him from excelling in his civilian career field. (Photo courtesy of woundedwarriorproject.org)

powerment of Wounded Warriors through policy initiatives to eliminate educational and employment barriers.

The Warriors to Work program was developed to help wounded warriors transition back into the civilian workforce by providing counseling, job placement assistance, and resume writing assistance. The program matches a warrior’s skills and experiences to the needs of hiring managers. The goal is to match the right person to the right job.

The Warriors to Work Program also supports employers by helping them connect with qualified candidates, providing information and education about combat-related injuries (such as post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury), reasonable accommodations, facilitating a productive on-boarding process, and developing a long-lasting relationship throughout the life cycle of employment.

But this isn’t always easy. A company CEO often gets onboard and makes a commitment, but doesn’t always communicate with the company hiring managers and human resources. Often, a reasonable accommodation is needed that has not always been in the forefront of the company’s policies or day-to-day busi-

ness practices. The hardest challenge that many Wounded Warriors face is the lack of understanding and acceptance of an uneducated workforce. Leading corporate hiring managers have told researchers they fear these veterans might fly into a rage or “go postal.” As a consequence, veterans say they’ve seen blatant discrimination.

The WWP has been most visible in making connections with sports teams including Boston College’s baseball team and last year’s NBA playoffs. For the last two summers NFL team members have led week long camping trips for small groups of Wounded Warriors. All across the country, walk/runs are being held almost monthly in support of WWP. Soldier Ride is a four day event with several days of extensive bicycle riding for all held in several states.

Other programs available include family support, education grants, and emergency financial assistance and WWP just recently has started publishing After Action Report magazine.

My thanks to Duane DeVorak, Public Relations Coordinator for the WWP and Dan Lessard, Warriors to Work Director for their valuable time for interviewing them and answering my questions.

Overuse tends to cheapen even the best words

Daniel J. Calderón

“Are you sure you know what that word means? Because I don’t think it means what you think it does.”

--Inigo Montoya from “The Princess Bride”

I don’t watch sports with any sort of rapt attention. I find it fairly tedious. There are games I do enjoy watching. When the Cowboys play, I do my best to tune in; but, it’s just not the same as it was when I would go over to my grandmother’s house and watch the game with the rest of my family. There’s just something about a bunch of Calderóns crammed into a little living room with a belly full of barbacoa, pan dulce and Big Red (or coffee in the case of some of my aunts and uncles) yelling at the TV. I try to do that at my own house and my oldest son does his level best to keep up the volume with me; but, I find I miss seeing my uncles, aunts, cousins and my grandmother as they both enjoy the game and make conversation. I guess it’s one of those growing up things that hurts the heart if you think too much about it.

But, back to the original point. I don’t watch sports too much. I watch sports news even less. But, the story of Jason Collins coming out and being hailed as a hero by everyone from pundits to the president was national news for a while. Wait. What?

Yep. Coming out as a homosexual NBA player was reason enough to place this guy on the same pedestal as the Marines at Iwo Jima, the firefighters and other first responders on 9/11 and the “tank man” of Tiananmen Square. I wonder if people are so desperate for a hero, they are grasping at anything that even shows the remotest hint of being semi-heroic. And, I wonder if even the semi-heroic has become so diluted by what seems to be a general apathy people normally show each other; but, that’s a whole different topic.

I’ll make it easy. Just so there’s no confusion. I don’t think Jason Collins is

a hero.

I don’t understand how it is heroic to say “This is who (or what or why) I am.” He’s gay. Awesome. I’m Latino, or brown skinned, or Hispanic. Thirty years ago, I would have been labeled



Chicano. I think there are some places where “my kind” still either use that term or have it used for them. Would it be heroic if I went to an LGBT convention and announced, “I’m straight”? Probably not. Some would consider that suicidal and foolish.

Again, in the interest of clarity – it’s not suicidal, nor is it foolish to come out in the NBA, the NFL, the NRA, the NCAA or the NAACP (tried to think of a few acronyms beginning with N) or any number of other organizations. To me, it’s the same as saying, “I’m a man,” “I’m a woman,” “I’m a Republican,” “I’m a Democrat,” “I’m Independent” or any of a host of things. Being gay is just a part of who he is. Coming out and admitting it doesn’t make him a hero. It just means he understands who he is, accepts himself and he’s honest about it.

Is there a stigma against being gay and a professional athlete? I didn’t know there was if there is. I had no clue being a gay athlete was frowned upon in any circles (other than those in which being gay at all is a bad thing; but, again, that’s a separate issue) in which athletes congregated. Is it as bad as being black was in the Deep South more than 50 years ago (or today in some places – not necessarily just the Deep South – where marrying your twin sibling isn’t just not frowned upon, it’s almost expected)? Was there the potential for other athletes to take Collins, wrap him in chains and drag him behind a pickup truck until he died? Was there any other imminent danger to Collins for admitting he is gay? If not, then the only “danger” was in the court of public opinion.

I’m not trying to belittle being gay. I don’t think being gay is a choice any more than being born with two eyes,

hair on your head or skin all over your body to cover your vital organs. I know there are differing opinions on this, though. I think I even read that an ESPN commentator was censured for saying he thought it was a sin, according to his own (the commentator’s) religious beliefs, to be homosexual when he discussed the Collins story. So, it’s alright for people to say Collins is a hero; but, not alright for people to say they disagree with what they see as a lifestyle choice? I find that sadly hypocritical. I think if there is someone saying it’s alright to be gay then there should be room in the public discourse for someone to say being gay is wrong. Debate is a healthy thing. It encourages ideas, thinking and tends to (if done well and with willing and intelligent participants) expand mental horizons.

But, I still don’t think Collins is a hero for saying he is homosexual. According to Dictionary.com, a hero is:

1. A man of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities.
2. A person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal: He was a local hero when he saved the drowning child.
3. The principal male character in a story, play, film, etc.
4. Classical Mythology.
 - a. A being of godlike prowess and beneficence who often came to be honored as a divinity.
 - b. (in the Homeric period) a warrior-chieftain of special strength, courage, or ability.
 - c. (in later antiquity) An immortal being; demigod.

NOTE: In the interest of full disclosure, there is a #5 – hero sandwich; but, I didn’t think it applied here at all.

Do you know who I think is more heroic? Dads. Generally speaking, a good father is more heroic on a regular basis than Collins.

I don’t know what kind of relationship you have with your dad, your father, your daddy, your papa or your old man. Whatever name you have for the

— see FINAL WORD, Page 14 —

man who helped raise you, I don't know the relationship. It could be great. He could be the epitome of sage strength – like Atticus Finch. Or, he could be more like Homer Simpson – a well-meaning buffoon who somehow manages to keep his family alive. Or, he could be like Tywin Lannister (Game of Thrones. If you haven't been bitten by the bug, it's not too late to get the first two seasons on DVD from the library and then try to catch up with season 3) – a scheming manipulator who sees his children as little more than pawns to advance the fame of the family name. Dads come in all shapes, sizes and temperaments.

If I had to make a simple comparison, I'd say I'm kind of a cross between Daniel Hillard (Robin Williams' character in "Mrs. Doubtfire") – a dad who likes entertaining his kids and will do anything for them and Jack Arnold (from "The Wonder Years") – a dad who is away from his kids more than he wants to be, but knows he has to do what it takes to keep the family going. Am I the best father in the world? Probably not. Do I have a good relationship with my kids? Yeah, I think I do.

For a lot of folks, dads are kind of like the walls in a house. They're what keep the outside out and in the inside in. They are strong enough to stand against the weather, strong enough to hold up the family's prized treasures and strong enough to pound against whenever something is really upsetting. They're plain enough on the inside so anyone can see the family hanging there and rough enough on the outside that anyone knows there is something worth protecting inside. They hold warmth for the family in the winter and cool for the family in the summer. They hide away enough energy to power all a family's needs and have transparent spots to allow the family to safely view the outside world until they are ready to enter it. They can take a hole being punched straight through their heart by a member of their family and they will still stand. And they stand even when the rest of the family is asleep. Yeah, dads are kind of like that.

You (if you're a regular reader of my little rantings) know how I like to throw

in musical quotes. Here's one for this month:

"Every generation blames the one before

When all of their frustration comes beating on their door.

I know that I'm a prisoner of all my father held so dear.

I know that I'm a hostage to all his hopes and fears.

I just wish I could have told him in the living years."

-- from "The Living Years" by Mike and the Mechanics

I leave it to you to figure out who you think are heroes. Is a hero someone who admits something about him or herself that really isn't controversial? Or, is a hero a man (for anyone who wants to accuse me of being sexist, just keep in mind that I'm talking about dads right now and hang on to that particular piece of indignation for another column) who is quietly noble in his deeds? Fathers across the country don't get upset (if they do, they shouldn't) that Mother's Day gets the better press and more recognition than Father's Day. I'm not upset that the local church gives the kids a day off from their Sunday School lessons for Mother's Day and then takes the kids who are in a certain program out for a week and begins that week on Father's Day. Being a dad is not about

being recognized. It's about making sure we are there when our kids need us.

So, who are your heroes? Why are they your heroes? What do they do to warrant being heroes and are those deeds or lessons enough to share with others? Do you think others would find your heroes heroic? To be sure, your heroes are your heroes. As long as they're not total pieces of garbage (I'll let you fill in your own definition. I know who I consider more recent POGs and who I think are some historic ones), then I leave you to be happy with your choices. I do encourage each of you to look at what it really means to be a hero, though, and ask yourself a couple of questions – Do my heroes really make the grade? Am I missing someone who should be recognized as a hero?

Again, being a hero (like being a dad) is not about recognition. But, if you're looking for heroes, I'm hoping you'd want to look in the right places and that you'd want to give credit (even silent credit) where credit is due. The heroes are out there. They're out quietly doing the right thing just because it's the right thing to do. Only rarely are they spotted. It's our job to keep our eyes open so we can see them. If we don't, how will we really know just who the heroes are? Just a thought...



"Hero" is a relative term but all too often it's bestowed upon the decidedly unheroic. According to Dictionary.com, a hero is "A man of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities." (File photo)

Around the District professional pride

Col. Mark Toy, the district commander, and David Van Dorpe, the district's deputy engineer for programs and project management, present Deborah Leighton, the former district workforce management administrator, with a commander's award for civilian service during a ceremony at the district headquarters May 31. Leighton is staying with the district, but moving from the temporary position to her permanent position in the regulatory branch. (Photo by Richard Rivera)



Col. Mark Toy and David Van Dorpe present retirement certificates to Larry Flatau, a project manager with the district's Interagency and International Support program office, who retired in a ceremony at the district headquarters May 21. (Photo by Richard Rivera)



Col. Mark Toy and Warren Quesnell present Luis Perez, a transportation support specialist with the district's USACE Logistics Agency office, with a certificate of appreciation during a ceremony marking his departure from the district May 31. (Photo by Richard Rivera)



Frances Jones, the district equal employment opportunity program manager, presents Nazli Ghassemi with a plaque as thanks for her speaking to district employees about her book "Desert Mojito," as part of the district's Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month activities May 21. (Photo by David A. Salazar)

BUILDING STRONG® and Taking Care of People!

FINAL SHOT



Above, a crew films close ups of actors positioned atop a roof submerged in Legg Lake at the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area as part of a scene in the U.S. Army National Guard's "Soldier of Steel" recruiting commercial March 8. Click the image below to launch a behind-the-scenes video of the making of the commercial. (Photos by David A. Salazar)

INTERACTIVE!
Click image to
play!

