Wilmington District News

Volume 24 • Number 2

June 2003

Operation Iraqi Freedom Gets Expert Help From Wilmington District FEST

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US Army Corps of Engineers
Wilmington District

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Volume 24, Number 2
June 2003

Wilmington District News is an unofficial publication authorized under the AR 360-1. It is published monthly by U.S. Army Engineer District, Wilmington, reproduced, and circulated through distribution to CESAW employees. Submission of articles, photos, letters, and graphic arts of interest to the general readership is encouraged. Letters to the editor are welcome. All manuscripts are subject to editing and rewriting prior to publication. Deadline for submission of copy is the eighth of each month. All photos are official U.S. Army photos unless otherwise stated. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. Printed circulation: 750.

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On the Cover:
FEST members Eugene Tickner, Tara Williams, John Hazleton, Hasan Pourtaheri and MAJ Randy Powell pose in an Iraqi palace.

Up Front: Commander Applauds District's Efforts in First Year on Job

Wilmington TEAM,

Just over a year ago I assumed command of this District. I can't believe twelve months have passed so quickly. When we first met, I said my lack of experience in "USACE" represented a blank sheet of paper, and I asked you to help me fill it in. As I sat down to prepare my annual efficiency report, I realized that collectively, we've done a lot of writing on that glossy sheet of paper. Together, we have accomplished a great deal, and I now have a fuller appreciation for all you do in service to our Nation. Frankly, it amazes me.

Together, we've aggressively pursued and supported the Corps' Vision to be the World's premier public engineering organization. When we were needed, we sent our very own team members in service abroad during a time of great peril. We've maintained, repaired, and developed new relationships with customers, stakeholders, and elected officials throughout our District. We exceeded program execution in all areas while working closely with a fiscally constrained state sponsor. We successfully executed our FY 2002 Operations Plan, and we are well on our way to meet the objectives in the FY 2003 plan. Our Water Control Team has superbly orchestrated the District's efforts and has met the needs of competing interests in dealing with both drought and flood conditions. Corporately, we embraced the learning organization culture, and have integrated the Project Management Business Process in everything we do. The Project Management branch, the hub of our corporate business process, masterfully facilitated project delivery teams and program execution and interfaced with our customers on a daily basis.

Our accomplishments are praiseworthy, for they meet the President's top priorities – supporting National Security, Economic Development, and Environmental Sustainment. We made a vital contribution to national security as we participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom, deploying several of our team members to Iraq. Other District staff answered the call to active duty. Our contribution to the nation's economic strength is equally strong. The Wilmington Harbor navigation project remains this District's largest Civil Works project ever. It is a model in partnership and execution and to date, remains on track and on budget. Our coastal projects range from shore protection to dredging coastal navigation channels and the

Continued on pg.16

2004 Operations Plan Takes Shape

Ten years ago, Wilmington District crafted a first annual operations plan. This year, what some might call our 'tin' anniversary, saw the District build an effective plan in two days with little fuss and a lot of creativity. "You continue to be my model," said facilitator Bill Hatch. "Nobody involves the work force as broadly as you do, nobody has the year-round commitment to accomplishing the plan that you sustain."

Hatch also complimented Wilmington's planning team for building far more specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely (S.M.A.R.T.) objectives today than when we began in the early 90s.

For example, this year the team set as a goal, "Increase the Efficiency of Our Project Delivery Teams (PDT)" by

- Establishing a framework for PDT meeting processes
- Reporting the results of PDT meetings
- Developing and maintaining a comprehensive district subject matter expert contact list
- Maximizing the use of virtual technology for PDT meetings

In 1993, the roughly equivalent goal was to "give a minimum of 25 percent of our employees the opportunity to serve on problem-solving teams." That's just one example of the way the District has built progressively stronger, SMARTer objectives over a decade of accomplishment.

This year's meeting resulted in a modest number of objectives – just 14 in all. Yet the balance of goals in our "People, Process, Communication, and Customers" categories gives us a set of demanding targets to aim for over the coming year.

Col. Alexander, participating for the first time in our Operations Planning process, said "I had no idea how much effort goes into making one of these plans. I can tell you, I'm committed to the plan we are working, but my commitment to this plan we have just made together is going to be even more focused!"

Meanwhile, the Quality Steering Group continues to focus on the 2003 plan. A highlight of this month's meeting was the revelation that District folks have increased our work for others and support for others greatly this year, with support for the Environmental Protection Agency bringing the district significant work. "We will validate the dollar figure here," said B.J. Suggs, District Quality Manager. "I think we may actually win some extra credit points on this objective.

"We are now entering our 4th quarter!" she added. "Those who have work to do should start pushing . . . and don't hesitate to ask for help if you need assistance to get to your goal!"

Les Dixon Shares his Views at Ops Meeting

South Atlantic Division's newly arrived Deputy for Project Management, Les Dixon, stopped by Wilmington in June for a brief get-acquainted visit with our District. After getting our feedback from Operations Planning participants about South Atlantic Division's support for the District, Dixon took time to share his views about the world we're working in today.

- Only the Commander of SAD can say 'no' to your Commander. Our job is to support the districts.
- Let's not have any surprises . . . In my experience problems come from two sources. First, somebody was blindsided. Second, we didn't have adequate resources.
- High performance organizations are founded upon relationships characterized by loyalty and trust.
- The 30:10 rule. If you send a request through your Commander or DDPM, Division will respond to you within 10 days, or 30 days if Headquarters must be involved.
- I will ask permission to be a "headquarters forward" to serve you better.

He added some advice based on the current potential for change and reorganization:

- Can someone do your job better? Don't sit back and refuse to worry. We will be doing competitive sourcing within the next five years. Don't wait. Act.
- Your challenge: Become a world-class organization. Ask yourselves, what are you doing that no other district is doing? Be at the cutting edge.
- Be nimble. Anticipate change.

"The Corps' future is bright," Dixon concluded. "National infrastructure, the environment, water resources issues and navigation remain areas where no one has the expertise and strengths we have. The challenge is to make sure we can deliver our expertise to our customers in a way that delights them."

Wilmington District Supports Operation Iraqi Freedom

You. Yes, you, Wilmington District, signed up and stepped up to the Corps Vision: "Supporting the full spectrum of engineer operations in peace and war."

As the pace of mobilization and deployment to the Gulf Region rose during the early weeks of 2003, District people took on new duties and assumed undreamed-of risks. Whether through long hours of extra paperwork, the donation of a can of peanuts for a care package, or putting a life on the line and volunteering to deploy, most people in Wilmington District have taken some part in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

FEST Volunteers Reach Baghdad

Both military and civilian members of the District stepped forward to support the Corps as it positioned itself to assist in post-combat operations. Maj. Randy E. Powell and Deputy for Programs and Project Management Eugene Tickner were our first team members to arrive in Kuwait. In April, they were followed by Phil Kadala, Chris Frabotta, John Hazleton, Hasan Pourtaheri, and Sherry Gaylor. Tara Williams joined the team after a few weeks.

Gaylor has since redeployed to the District, and all the other team members are wrapping up their tours of duty in Iraq. Sometimes they're performing duties they never would have predicted. Hasan Pourtaheri reportedly has served as the paymaster for a cash payroll consisting of $3,000,000 in U.S. dollar denominations of from $1- to $20-dollar bills. He is a vital part of the effort to get Iraqi ministries up and functioning again, and people back to work and receiving pay. We're glad to report that when Hasan goes to payday, he travels in an armored vehicle accompanied by U.S. troops. We're guessing he'll never watch a stagecoach carrying the payroll strongbox in a vintage western with quite the same feelings as before.

All have been seeing at first hand the almost-impossibly deteriorated and damaged conditions of the Iraqi infrastructure. Maj. Powell reports that what a dozen years of neglect did not destroy, post-combat looting has often demolished completely. Hasan reported that in one ministry building, not only had computer equipment and telephones been looted, but all the wiring had also been systematically ripped out of the walls. In many cases, the nation will have to start from something less than zero.

Our team in Iraq often works 15 to 18 hours a day. Temperatures in the Baghdad summer are up around 115 degrees on a regular basis. Tickner said that he had been 'mudded on' by a combination of hot rain and dust one day. And no, those Baghdad palaces in the photos are not air-conditioned havens.

And yet the team says they feel they are beginning to make a difference. They agree that Iraqi citizens are eager to take control of their own lives and willing to work hard to overcome the damage to their nation.

The whole team except John Hazleton, who has extended for a few more weeks, will be returning to the states in July.

The Wilmington District and the Corps have every reason to be very proud of these great people who volunteered to go into a fluid situation and deal with circumstances in which everything from their day's mission to their night's resting place might be uncertain. They have certainly taken it to the wall to support the Corps and the nation in a time of war.

Reservists and Guard Members Deploy

The extra dimension a Reserve or Guard career offers can suddenly take up the whole screen of a life. That happened for LCDR Roger Bullock, of Wilmington District and the U.S. Coast Guard, and also for Buddy Ray, who usually serves as Lockmaster at Lock and Dam No. 2 on the Cape Fear River, and dredge fleet members Walter Evans and George Tootle.

We were delighted to see Bullock back at his desk in the Navigation section in early June. As an expert in port security operations, Bullock was Operations leader and trainer for one of the Coast Guard's six port security teams. He spent the months of February through May making sure that ships and shipping lanes in the eastern Mediterranean stayed safe for military traffic moving into the Gulf area as a forward observer and trainer. "I logged more air miles than I even want to think about," he said.

Bullock reports that sentiment about the war varied greatly from country to country. "Sometimes people hailed us with the "V" for victory sign, sometimes it was something else!" His unit often aided host countries in protecting entrances to port facilities.

Bullock's return home was a complete surprise to him. "We were all packed and set to go for another six months deployment, literally waiting for the airplane when the orders came that we were coming home," he said.

Could he be called back for further duty? "You bet," he said. "With only six units of our type, and four deployed, the chances are good that we will be recalled to active duty."

District Team Supports War Effort

Power projection is the military phrase for getting our soldiers and their equipment to the world's hot zones. Wilmington District team members played an important role in projecting Wilmington people power to the theater of operations.

Folks from our Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, Resources Management, Logistics, Information Management, and Emergency Management offices spent long hours clearing up paperwork and riding a tide of continually changing directions as higher headquarters grappled with the how and when of civilian deployments. As all of these support folks can testify, the 'smoke of battle' sometimes gets thick far behind the front lines!

A "yellow ribbon" bulletin board in our center lobby displays pictures of deployed team members, and of soldiers, sailors and airman who are loved ones of our own team. We all hope to celebrate the safe return of these colleagues, sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews to home base.

The ever-generous Wilmington District also sent out several boxes of goodies and personal items to support our deployed team members. Thanks to the efforts of a Greenville Girl Scout team led by the wife of Wilmington Harbor Project Resident Engineer Jim Mullins, something like 169 boxes of Girl Scout cookies, each sporting a supportive note from a Girl Scout, made their way to Iraq.

Staying in touch, cyber-age style thanks to computers, hotmail, and AKO accounts, many of our team members have been staying in touch with stateside friends and relatives through emails and digital photos.

Bullock reports that even with his constant moves around the Mediterranean, he was able to get in touch with home about every three weeks. "Mail still takes three to six weeks to arrive," he said. "But now every ship has an email room or cyber-café or phone bank. You sign up and wait your turn for 10 or 20 minutes on a phone or terminal to call or send email home. Sometimes they are showing a movie, so you can be entertained while you wait your turn. Our folks out on the oil rigs and other places where ships passed regularly had access to email maybe every three days or so."

Satellite phones have enabled Maj. Powell and Tickner to remained linked to the District on a regular basis. Better still, the District was able to coordinate a Video Teleconference with our FEST members, using the Corps' sophisticated teleengineering network. Stations in Vicksburg, Mississippi, Kuwait, Baghdad, and Wilmington all linked up to make a real time conversation possible. Although we benefited greatly from the operational information exchanged, and provided access for a local reporter, the highlight for all of us was the opportunity to arrange a 'family reunion' for Maj. Powell with his wife Siobhan and children Kaitlyn and Ryan.

We will all be grateful to see our colleagues and family return safely, yet we know that the job they began is far from completed, and that more Corps and even District members may become part of the recovery effort in the future. As always, Wilmington District has proven ready to support the mission, wherever and whenever we are needed.

– By Penny Schmitt

John Hazleton, MAJ Powell and Hasan Pourtaheri give the daily report.

Diane Lastinger, Coleman Long, Wayne Bissette, Ben Wood and COL Alexander listen intently to FEST members giving a report live from Iraq.

Wilmington District Winning "War on Mosquito Ecoterrorism"

The battlefield is Eagle Island, an area across the Cape Fear River where the District is placing dredged material from the Wilmington Harbor Project. Making its home there is an insect with a 250-million-year history of feeding off other living creatures. It is, of course, the mosquito, nature's well equipped, backyard ecoterrorist that can transmit potentially life-threatening diseases like West Nile Virus or Triple-E virus. Its guerilla-like tactics on the island are becoming fewer, though, because of an all out declaration of war on the pest by the Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District and biologists and health officials from the counties of New Hanover and Brunswick.

The mosquito population, which is attracted to the abundance of freshly dredged wet material, has been contained on Eagle Island through an on-going, effective partnership among the organizations. This intergovernmental group withstood mistrust in the early stages of its development, yet it has achieved mutual respect and cooperation and is winning the "War on Mosquito Ecoterrorism."

Spearheading the effort for the District was Howard Varnam of the Navigation Branch. He also found specific guidelines within the Corps for resource sharing, and has helped provide the counties with extra support with use of contracted heavy equipment.

Mosquitos like this can spread disease and disrupt everyday outdoor activity.

Brunswick County Mosquito Control Officer Rick Hickman casts a mosquito fish trap in one of the mosquito fish breeding ponds.

Over the years the joint venture has developed a basic warfare strategy; know your enemy, and know the means to defeat that enemy. High on the enemy list is aedas sollicitans, the eastern saltmarsh mosquito. Biologists are quite familiar with where and when it breeds, and its assortment of other behavioral traits.

"It's the most aggressive biting mosquito on the planet bar none," says Ken Sholar, a mosquito control biologist with the New Hanover County Health Department.

"It'll literally distract you so much that it's almost a safety issue to be exposed to many of them if you're operating equipment."

Contractors working on Eagle Island faced endless attacks from the relentless bug when operating such equipment like road graters, bulldozers and other heavy equipment that moves the dredged material.

One of the key tactics in the war is surveillance. This year-round mission tracks the enemy's population which can fluctuate with the seasons. Realistically, total defeat isn't in the cards, but containment is. Natural containment tactics have made managing the mosquito swarms less difficult. Rick Hickman, Brunswick County's Mosquito Control Officer, says one very efficient containment tool is the mosquito fish, a highly adaptable species that preys on mosquitoes and their young.

"Its habit is not to swim with flowing water, but to swim against flowing water. By swimming against flowing water it comes up to the upper areas on the landscape where the mosquitoes are actually breeding."

The fish are scooped up from a breeding pond and distributed to areas where there are high concentrations of mosquitoes and mosquito larvae that live in scattered pools of water in the dredged material. Water-filled cracks and crevasses in which the insects live sometimes makes access for the fish a problem. But Hickman says a hoe or machinery is used to make channels for them to swim to infested areas. Instinct takes over from there.

"That habit is what's so useful about gambusia assinis. They just take off and find the sites themselves. It's not like you have to walk around and find it. They'll find it for you."

Hickman adds he and Sholar also depend on dragonflies and diving beetles, natural predators who regularly feast on mosquitoes. There are, however, times when they must use larvicides, especially after severe flooding or hurricanes. And that's where having every available means to do the job comes into play.

"We don't want to be caught off guard during hurricane season," says Varnam, "and not have chemicals stockpiled. We have contracts in place for aerial spraying with larvicides if we need that."

The joining of forces has meant that swarms of mosquitoes must make Eagle Island their permanent home, not the backyards of Wilmington and the surrounding area. Varnam says other towns such as Virginia Beach have heard about Wilmington's success and have adopted the natural, proactive approach….an approach that's winning in the "War on Mosquito Ecoterrorism."

Story and photos by Hank Heusinkveld

Mosquito fish are some of the most effective weapons for controlling mosquito populations.

Training Course Emphasizes Interagency Cooperation

It's all about interagency cooperation. That was one of the major take-home messages from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) training course attended recently by Corps regulatory and civil works staff from the Wilmington District.

Titled Federal Activities and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the course was designed to explain the workings of the Act and how it relates to Federal activities. USFWS instructors described the Coordination Act as one leg of a "3-legged stool" for the protection and management of environmental resources. The other "legs" are the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. Optimal efficiency of Federal programs relies on increased coordination from a multi-agency approach, the instructors said.

Frank Yelverton of the Corps' civil works program described benefits from interagency cooperation and described the success of the fish passage project at Lock and Dam No. 3 in the Cape Fear River.

"The project relied heavily on a two-year cooperative study by the Corps' project delivery team plus a U.S. Fish and Wildlife the fact that many potentially hot-button projects never show up on the USFWS radar screen. Corps regulatory project managers often require reductions of adverse environmental impacts from projects before the Fish and Wildlife Service ever gets to see them, Ken said.

"We often come from two different sides of an issue, but when kept on a professional level, we can maintain working relationships," Ken said. It's been estimated that if it were not for the Corps regulatory program, wetland losses in the U.S. would be more than 300,000 acres per year, he added.

"Opportunities for interagency coordination have never been greater," said Dan Smalley, one of the USFWS instructors. This is largely from improved cooperation among the agencies. Over the years, the direction of the Corps has changed and U.S. Fish and Wildlife no longer draws lines in the sand, the instructors pointed out.

An interesting offshoot from the course was the results of an informal survey taken among course participants. The purpose of the survey was to identify the most important or unique natural ecosystems in North Carolina that Corps and USFWS staff want to see protected. Staff identified more than 20 distinct types of ecologic communities in the state.

The survey yielded the following list of ecosystems that Corps and USFWS staff believe deserve the highest level of protection:

1. Maritime forests
2. Virgin cypress stands along the Black River (Bladen County)
3. Marl forests of the southeastern coastal plain
4. Upper Piedmont mountain bogs
5. High altitude montane forests
6. Mafic wetland depressions in the Piedmont region
7. The Lake Waccamaw – Green Swamp ecosystem

– By Thomas Farrell, Regulatory Office

Water Forum 2003 Targets Specific Groups for Boating and Water Safety

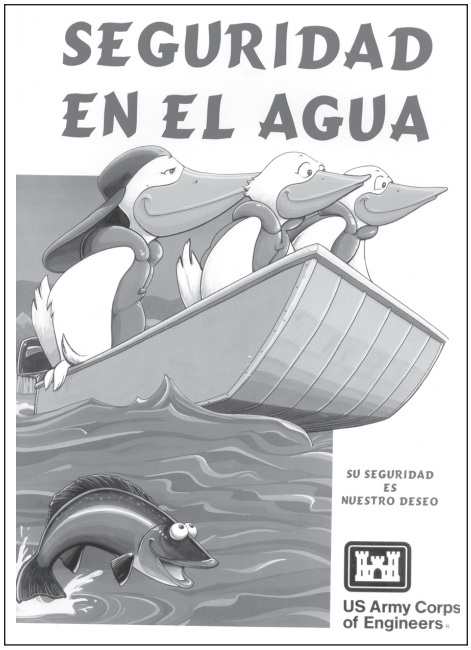
On May 26th 14-year-old Guillermo Flores became another statistic.

He died at UNC Hospitals in Durham after having been pulled from the Seaforth Recreation Area at Jordan Lake. Officials said he had been under water for 40 minutes. According to his mother and brother, he could not swim.

Guillermo fits into a growing demographic profile of drowning fatalities that has been rising steadily across the country: Hispanic males between the ages of 15 and 30. It's a group that water safety officials within the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies are targeting to end tragic, fatal accidents like Guillermo's.

Jeff Pobliego, a Park Ranger at Carters Project Office in Georgia, told a group attending the annual Water Safety Forum at W. Kerr Scott Reservoir that six Hispanic males have drowned in the past six years at Carters Reservoir.

"The average age at our lake has been 23. We average about one drowning a year, so therefore, we've identified a trend and are targeting that audience so that we can help reduce one drowning a year to zero."



Spanish language posters like this inform people of water safety.

North Carolina is not immune from this trend. In Mecklenburg, for example, five out of the eight people who drowned in Charlotte-area lakes from June 1999 to August of last year were Hispanic, a group that makes up only 6.5 percent of that city's population.

Part of the problem that persists, says Pobliego, is not only a language barrier, but a cultural one as well. Water safety in some countries from which Hispanics immigrate is not a top priority. One way that USACE is targeting this particular group is through Spanish-language flyers, signs and outreach programs.

"When we go out and do public education programs the public is very supportive and they are eager to learn. It's just that it's basically a learning process."

Carmen Boyette, a Park Ranger at B. Everett Jordan Dam and Lake, says she's identified a few Spanish-language radio stations in the Raleigh-Durham area to reach her target audience. She and other park rangers also distribute Spanish-language coloring books to gate attendants at state parks. Not long ago, she says, the Wilmington District gave a Spanish-language water safety public service announcement video to the Mexican Consulate in Raleigh.

Hispanic males are not the only targeted audience USACE is trying to reach. U.S. Coast Guard Commander Kim Pickens, a guest lecturer at the forum and an active participant in the USCG's Operation Boat Smart which closely follows raw data and statistics, says hunters and anglers surprisingly make up a large group of water-related deaths.

"Sometimes by looking at the accident data it can just pop up at you. This is a group that needs some help. And I realize now that this is a group that we really haven't done anything with because we don't know anything about them."

Park Rangers Jerod Eatmon and Kevin Hughes patrol the W. Kerr Scott Reservoir during the annual Water Safety Forum.

Pickens says targeting this group is difficult because its members don't think of themselves as having to follow water and boating safety guidelines as well as they should. However, she points out that statistics clearly show that this group makes up a third of boating deaths each year.

"Unfortunately, if we try to talk in general terms about boating safety, this is a group that may not be listening because they don't consider themselves boaters. When they're fishing, they're fishing. When they're hunting, they're hunting. They're not boating."

According to Pickens, other boating populations have gone down since the 1970s. In recent years deaths among anglers and hunters has remained steady, and has been has been going up in proportion to all the other populations.

"So, this is a big group that we need to reach."

Pickens adds Operation Boat Smart is monitoring the statistics associated with small water craft such as jet skis which are gaining in popularity and are increasing in numbers at USACE lakes and reservoirs.

For more information see **watersafety.usace.army.mil** or **uscgboating.org**

– By Hank Heusinkveld

Philpott Ranger Takes on High-Tech Hobby

You could call it high-tech treasure hunting.

Geocaching brings a new twist to Global Positioning System or GPS. Throughout the world geocachers have hidden boxes or containers with trinkets, pens, pencils and other items for fellow geocachers to find. Cache coordinates are posted on various geocaching internet sites. All you have to do is plug in those coordinates to your GPS and you're off to a fun-filled adventure.

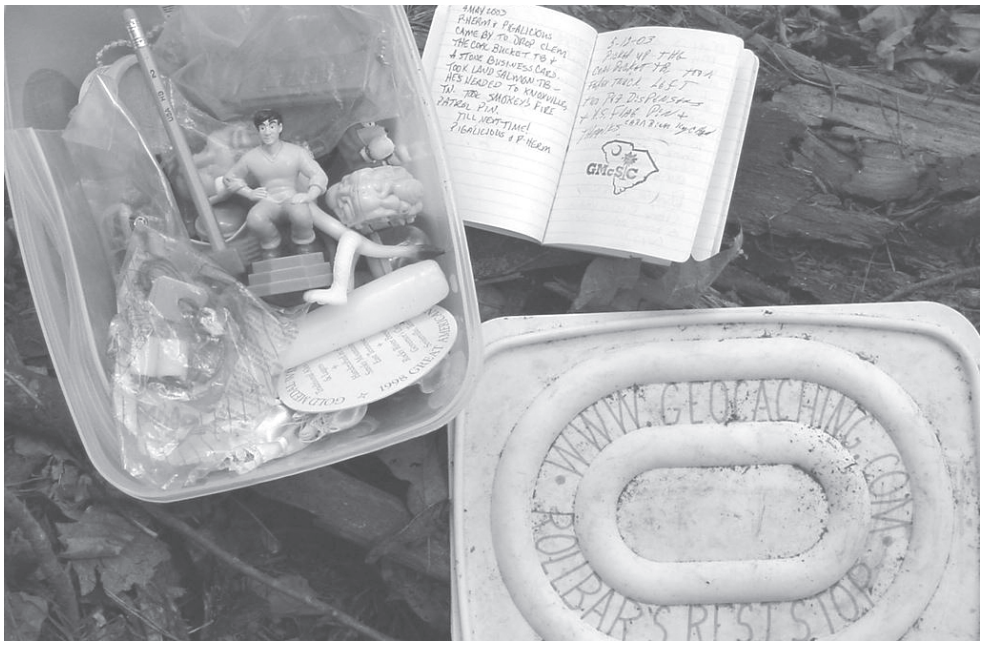
Park Ranger Susan Traxel of Philpott Lake discovered geocaching in February after someone introduced it to her at a ranger conference in Florida. She tried it at Philpott Lake and has been hooked ever since. For her the combination of technology and wits makes the activity always challenging.

"It's part analytical and part common sense," said Traxel. "You use a little bit of detective work by deciphering the code."

Traxel says it's different from the precursor to geocaching, orienteering. That hobby required the ability to use a compass and read topographical maps. Use of technology was not even an issue.

According to Traxel, a GPS readout can be a little misleading, which forces a geocacher to use common sense.

Susan Traxel gets a bearing on her location on her way to finding the hidden cache.



Trinkets and other small objects are what you'll find in most caches. There's also a log to let others know you've been there, and for data that can be put on geocaching websites.

During a geocaching experience at W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir, for example, she plugged in the coordinates of a cache just seven tenths of a mile away from a parking lot at the reservoir. An arrow indicator on her GPS pointed straight, but there was a small problem; a sheer cliff proved to be a major obstacle. So, rather than do it the hard way by bushwhacking she employed her common sense and used a trail that was off to the side. After climbing to the top of a small hill overlooking the reservoir, she saw that the distance indicator continued to decrease, and the arrow indicator showed that she was in the general area of the buried treasure. Using a copy of clues that she printed from a geocaching website she was able to find the cache buried under sticks and other forest debris within minutes.

The thrill of the hunt is one thing for Traxel, but she enjoys other tangents of this unique hobby, like being outdoors, getting exercise by hiking, and making it a family outing or spending time with friends. She says there are three simple rules: take something from the cache; leave something in the cache; and leave a note in the logbook at the cache site.

Traxel stresses that you shouldn't rely on technology alone when geocacheing. You should have familiarity with the area that you're in, and know at least a little bit about basic land navigation. After all, she says about GPS devices, "batteries do die."

To learn more about geocaching go to www.geocaching.com. For more information about global positioning system check out **http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/longitude/gps.html**.

A GPS device like this pinpoints your exact location just about anywhere on the planet.

How I Cleaned up my Office with Feng Shui

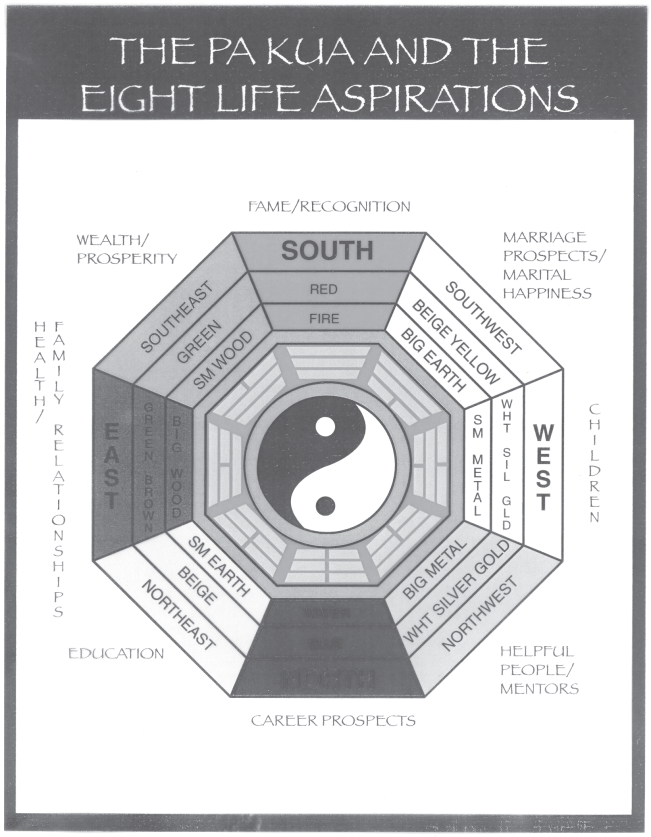
After a year in my brand new office, it already looked just like my OLD office. Exhibit materials jumbled pile-high in the cubbyhole behind my door. Stacks of yet to be unpacked pictures and books topped the not-so-temporary filing cabinet shoved into a corner. The table and chairs carefully chosen to offer an attractive meeting space lurked somewhere deep under a pile of exhibit panels. The usual detritus of a busy office, including CDs full of photos, recent news stories, empty coffee mugs, and overstuffed file folders spilled across my once-pristine work surface. Yes, I was back to picking my way past almost dangerous obstacles to get to my desk, and when I sat down, chaos greeted me in every corner.

Fortunately, as the I Ching of Taoism says "danger is opportunity". For one of our Asian – Pacific Islanders month seminars, program coordinator Patty Hargrove invited a feng shui specialist. Interior designer Misty Woody gave a workshop to explain the basics of feng shui (pronounced fung shway), an ancient Chinese approach to creating harmony and good conditions in our environment.

Like many systems of thought, it can be followed to extremes that seem alien to other cultures, but its design principles make intuitive good sense. After just an hour in the class, I was eager to arm myself with a compass, the "Pa Kua" diagram that shows where beneficial energy fields lie, and go back to my messy office with a mission.

Here are a few of the feng shui principles that appealed to me as guides for any office.

- Clutter blocks the harmonious flow of energy
- Don't sit with your back to the door
- Don't let sharp angles or "poison arrows" direct themselves at you
- Flat, cool, smooth, dark, rounded objects, or "yin" need to be balanced with textured, warm, bright, tall or sharp objects, or "yang" to promote good energy.
- As a fire person, wood objects are a good thing to have near me, because they feed fire. Earth and metal are two other elements needed for balance.
- Having a windowless office is not a good thing.



A diagram like this is easy to follow once you know how to read it.

Feng shui goes back about 5,000 years, and is connected to ideas of balance and harmony that are basic to Taoism.

Well, we all have to work with some basic conditions! I don't have windows, but my desk and computer are at a good angle toward my office door. Clutter is relatively easy to manage . . . it's a 'Just DO it!' thing. The balance of round and flat, vertical and textured items in my office is good. But everything is metal and nothing is wood. Maybe a plant or some pleasant wood object could improve the balance and make my office seem less cold and sterile. Maybe a quilting project brought from home could bring more texture and bright "yang" color into the environment. Maybe I should get to work!

How did my adventure with Feng Shui turn out?

More than anything else, I found that de-cluttering my office made the space better. Boxes waiting to be sent to Iraq are now somewhere in the US Mail, and not on my floor. Exhibit art is safely stowed away. I have returned some items to their original owners. Getting rid of self-generated clutter, like news clips and notebooks from long-finished conferences was more difficult, but not impossible.

I can't say whether the excess stuff clogged the flow of 'good chi' or just made a mess. The difference was inspiring either way.

My next step was to empty a planter full of dirt – all that remained from a failed attempt to nurture a plant. According to feng shui, fire people like me need to have plants around them, but can also have trouble keeping them healthy because they pull energy from the plant. At last, an explanation for my killer touch! Armed with a spray mister and a new plant, I am trying once again. If all else fails, a silk plant to symbolize a live plant, would be ok.

Pre-Fung Shui: Chaos reigns on the desk of the chief of public affairs as she works frantically at her computer.

Post-Feng Shui: After a few lessons of creating harmony in her office Penny is much more relaxed and her office is back to the pristine setting it once was.

Fortunately, I chose an office design that permits me to sit facing the door. Cleaning up the clutter has enabled me to open the door wide enough to block what Feng shui dictated is bad 'poison arrow' energy emanating from a column.

I began to consciously make use of the task light over my desk surface. It sure brightens up an area that was too often left as a pool of darkness – a condition identified as 'too yin' in feng shui terms.

Using the compass and pa kua diagram, I determined to the best of my ability the most appropriate places to display awards (in my fame sector right behind my desk) and place pictures of my children.

For those who like them, a small water fountain can also be a nice addition to the office. Clear, moving water is said to bring good energy into your surroundings. Of course it should be placed in the part of your office where water is the most appropriate element.

Though some of these feng shui ideas seemed a little peculiar to a westerners like me, many aspects made perfect sense and gave me a fresh perspective on my surroundings. Learning about feng shui was a little bit like tasting unfamiliar items on a Chinese menu. A few things proved to be too exotic for my taste, yet I really enjoyed learning about this ancient art. Following some feng shui suggestions brought more order harmony and balance into my work place. It's just one more reminder that whether we are from the across-the-hall or the across-the-world cultural divide, we can all learn great things from one another!

– By Penny Schmitt

Audubon Society Names Jordan Lake as Top 15 Urban Birding Spot

Ospreys and bald eagles are some of the birds at Jordan Lake.

"The Audubon Society is right! Bird-watching is superb around Jordan Lake," said Michael Hosey, Conservation Biologist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"We have Bald Eagles, Osprey and many other resident and migratory birds nesting on Corps land. Active management of these public lands by the Corps and our partner agencies the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC Division of Parks and Recreation, NC Division of Forest Resources, and Wake County Parks sustains the habitat for these birds.

"To highlight birding, every spring, we participate in Wake County Park's 'Songbird Celebration' in recognition of 'Neo-Tropical Migratory Bird Day' highlighting the efforts of Partners in Flight and others to conserve populations of neo-tropical migratory birds. This event helps kids recognize and enjoy the many songbirds that nest in our area. Of course we are very proud that Jordan has been identified by the Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area and named as one of the best locations for bird watching in an urban area. Partnering with New Hope Audubon, our local chapter, on bird counts and public outreach is an important part of making people aware of this wonderful resource here in there own back yard".

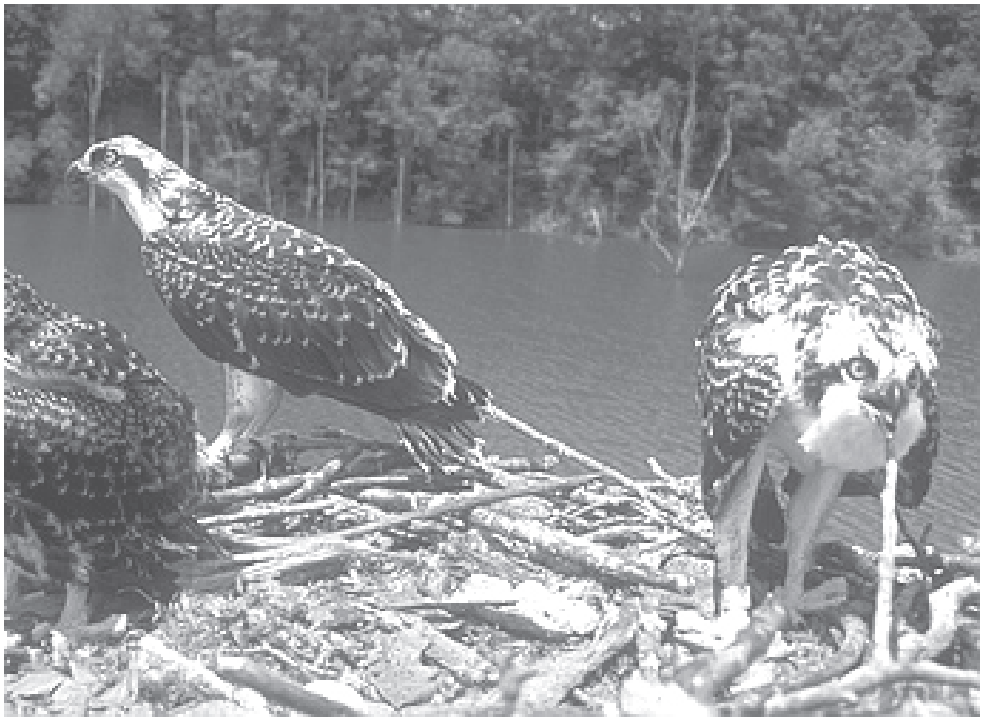
"This recognition serves to highlight the environmental importance of our Corps of Engineers reservoirs in to the Triangle region," Hosey said. "The public lands around B. Everett Jordan Lake and Falls Lake make up about 50 percent of the protected open space in this rapidly developing urban area. We certainly want the public to enjoy the natural beauty entrusted to us, including the birds."

For more information on birding at Falls and Jordan, contact the Visitor Assistance Center at B. Everett Jordan Lake at (919) 542-4501 or Falls Lake at (910) 846-9332.

For information on Partners in Flight contact Mr. Mark Johns, Coordinator, North Carolina Partners in Flight P.O. Box 564 Cary, NC 27512 Phone: 919-852-5124 or **http://www.partnersinflight.org/**.

For information on the New Hope Audubon chapter visit their web site at **http://www.newhopeaudubon.org/**.

– By Sherrie Storm



Corps Day 2003

Ben Wood gets an extreme makeover to the amusement of a very young crowd.

Bailey "Gums" Williams, daughter of Greg Williams, gets a kick out of Mr. Wood's makeover.

Olivia Sandy, grandaughter of Alverta Sandy, watchs the clown with cute suspicion.

Congratulations to Susan Lane of Jordan Lake for the Employee of the Year Award.

Marcus Gore, son of Stephanie Gore, peers over the inflatable slide.

WebsiteHighlights@janwutkowski.wdn

E-mail…snail mail…newspapers …magazines...

We are constantly bombarded by information. Throughout the workweek I continually find websites of interest not only for the work we do for our customers, our community, and our nation, but for ourselves, our children and our families. Beginning in this edition of the Wilmington District News I'll be sharing some of the websites filtered from the information bombardment. I hope you find them useful.

Hotlinks to these sites will be posted each month on the Technical Library's website at ***http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/library/bulletin-board.htm*** Be sure to bookmark the ones of interest to you.

http://www.infoworld.com/reports/SRbattle.html
A series of reports on the use of IT technology on the battlegrounds of Afghanistan and Iraq to strengthen intelligence and military capabilities.

http://www.jacobsschool.ucsd.edu/ResearchReview/index.html
Univ. of CA San Diego Engineering School's 22nd annual Research Review addressed new developments and trends in engineering with the speakers' PowerPoint and video presentations available at this website.

http://www.techdictionary.com/
Trying to find what that elusive file extension stands for, new emoticons, html tags, or domain suffixes? Then this massive site can help. Included are links to technology and virus related news items on a daily basis.

http://www.fwee.org/Tours.html
The Foundation for Water and Energy Education's site provides lots of animated illustrations for their 'tours' including a hydroelectric plant, fish passage, and a generator.

http://www.pbs.org/greatprojects/
Online version of the PBS series chronicling the greatest engineering feats in American history. Includes the Mississippi levees, Hoover Dam, NYC bridges, and Boston's Big Dig.

http://www.msnbc.com/news/910115.asp?vts=050820031455
and
http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/renewable/technologies/ocean/tidal.html
These two websites address tidal power as a potential energy source. Sea floor turbines are illustrated and discussed on these sites for San Francisco and Australia.

http://www.census.gov/statab/www/ccdb.html
A remarkably compiled site for the 2000 Census which includes business data for all US counties, cities of 25,000+ inhabitants, and areas of 2,500 or more inhabitants. This useful site also includes links to state and county quick facts, mapstats, and the Statistical Abstract of the US.

http://www.usbr.gov/dataweb/
Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation's Dams, Projects and powerplants site allows users to search by dams and reservoirs, power plants, or browse 200 projects by name or state. Designed for state and federal officials, water users, engineers, educators, and others interested in water resource development.

http://www.lib.noaa.gov/docs/historic_maps.html
NOAA Library's Historical Maps and Charts Web site contains over 20,000 maps and charts from the late 1700s to the present, some of the nation's earliest nautical charts, hydrographic surveys, topographic surveys, geodetic surveys, city plans, and Civil War battle maps.

One For Fun!!

http://www.yesterdaystomorrows.org/
An intriguing look back at how past authors wrote about the present. Some were incredibly accurate while other perceptions were way off. This site is the online home of the Smithsonian's traveling exhibition exploring "the history of the future."

Have a website you'd like me to review for a future column? Send an email with a link to the site.

Corps Family News

Anna Davis, daughter of **Design Engineering's Allen Davis**, graduated on June 3rd with honors and is a North Carolina Scholar from Wilkes Central High School.

Terry S. Brooks, a mechanical engineer at the John H. Kerr Powerhouse, and his wife **Jeannie** are the proud new parents of a baby boy born May 24. **Merritt Bartlett Brooks** weighed seven pounds, 15 ounces and was 21 inches long. He is the first-born child to Terry and Jeannie.

Another Powerhouse employee, Construction Representative **Leon "Buddy" Sikes'** daughter **Bethany** earned the title of Athlete of the Year at Northern Vance High School in Henderson, NC for her achievements on the Swim & Track Team. She also won a scholarship for being chosen Athlete of the Year through a local radio station contest, and an academic scholarship for being in the top 10 percent of her graduating class. She was all-conference champion in pole vault for the track team, and won fourth in the state championships for the swim team.

Coastal H&H's Michael Wutkowski's two daughters graduated this Spring. **Meghan** graduated with a masters degree in chemical engineering from North Carolina State University and will be working for Eastman Chemical in Kingsport, TN. **Karey** graduated from University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with a journalism major and a business minor. She'll report for the Pacific Coast Business Times in Santa Barbara, CA. Both graduated with honors.

Seaman Leonard Keith Harris

Leonard Keith Harris, son of **Gloria Harris** of **Coastal H&H**, graduated on June 6th from the Navy Great Lakes Training Center. While in naval boot camp Seaman Harris participated in the recruit honors chorus and the Great lakes Chapel Choir. He'll be stationed in Pensacola, Florida for advanced training to become a cryptologic technician.

The American Federation of Government Employees Union Local (Wilmington District) just celebrated its 6th year anniversary at Port City Chop House near Wrightsville Beach on 12 June 2003. They had 22 members, 1 friend and added one new member.

Jason Linder and Melissa Tant were united in marriage on June 14 at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in Wilmington. Jason is the son of proud mom **Linda O. Linder**, Resource Management Office. Jason and Melissa live in Kinston where he serves the city as a police officer. Melissa is a nurse on the medical/ surgical floor at Wayne Memorial Hospital in Goldsboro.

The Raleigh Regulatory Field Office announces the birth of **Quinn Elijah Tugwell**. He was born Saturday, June 21 and is the son of first-time parents, **Todd** and **Jennifer Tugwell**.

*Philpott Park Ranger **Sue Hicks** explains to a group of third graders from Irishburg Elementary School the "Enviro Scape" model which demonstrates pollution and watersheds.*

Reaching Out

David Franklin provided presentations at the Southern Environmental Leadership Summit sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration in Raleigh on May 20, 2003 and again on May 21, 2003. Presentations were on the Section 404/NEPA Merger Process improvement initiative and the Ecosystem Enhancement Program.

Terry Ramsey spoke to 30 members of Wilkes County Vision 20/20, a political/citizens group charged with charting the future of Wilkes County for the next 20 years. The June 24 presentation provided information concerning water supply and the operations and new initiatives being implemented at W. Kerr Scott Dam.

Ray Absher spoke to the Greensboro Power Squadron at it's regular monthly meeting on June 9, 2003. 100 power squadron members were present to see the Water Safety Presentation that the Wilmington District Water Safety Team presented in Las Vegas at the International Water Safety Summit in April. Many excellent questions were asked by the Power Squadron members.

Retiree News

For the monthly luncheon 14 folks got together June 5th to socialize. Those attending were Doris and Ken Old, Bettye and Bob Swart, Dan Grimsley, Dorothy K. Everette, Edith and Jim Vithalani, Lawrence Crawley, Max Grimes, Kay and Buddy Johnson, Joe Lewis and Bob Doetsch.

On May 24, Bob and Bettye attended the graduation of their oldest granddaughter, Meghan Houck, from Laney High School. She plans to continue her studies at Cape Fear Community College before transferring to East Carolina University in a year or so.

Bob and Bettye will be heading south later this month to visit relatives in Alabama. Louisiana, and Texas, as well as meeting Missie's family for a day or two along the way.

Dan Grimsley has recently completed a mission trip with the "Over the Hill Gang" from his church to West Virginia. They helped construct a house for a family whose home had been destroyed by flooding.

On June 2nd, Buddy Johnson attended another ROMEO WWII luncheon in Morehead City. More than 140 veterans and guests were in attendance.

Dorothy Everette stated that she was glad to be alive and healthy as most of are.

Vital Statistics:

The four Cs' of a happy workforce...

A recent Towers Perrin study shows that 40% of employees in the US and Canada are highly dissatisfied with their current work experience.

However, the study, Working Today: Exploring Employees Emotional Connections to Their Jobs, also shows that employees have clear ideas about how to improve the situation. Basically, they want a work situation that revolves around what Towers Perrin characterizes as "the four Cs":

- Confidence. People want to feel pride, optimism and certainty about their work, the way they perform their jobs, management and the company itself.
- Competence. People want to be good at the work they do.
- Control. People want to feel some level of control over how they perform their jobs.
- Community. People want to feel that their work contributes to a larger purpose and that they share common goals with their coworkers.

Source: Working Today: Exploring Employees Emotional Connections to Their Jobs. Towers Perrin 2002

Up Front: Continued from pg.2

Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Our District truly adds value by preserving vital infrastructure and maintaining waterways that support the regional economy. Our record of Environmental Sustainment is outstanding. The Environmental Enhancement Program (EEP), an exciting collaborative effort between the District and two North Carolina State agencies, provides for an innovative approach to watershed-focused mitigation. Our Operations Projects continue to partner in sponsoring many events to further the wise use of the natural resources. Truly, no other agency can do what we do during peace and war.

I've met a lot of great people in the District. I wish all of you could know each other and become as aware as I am after this year, that each one of us plays a key role in accomplishing the District's mission. Trust me on this! From the Carolina and Virginia Piedmont to the Eastern Carolina Coast, and even to the deserts of Kuwait and Iraq, the entire District is serving proudly and contributing to our mission, the vision, and the good of our Nation. The District Headquarters and our field sites recently celebrated Corps Day and the 228th birthday of the U.S. Army. We have great cause to celebrate. We serve in a great organization and alongside great people. Hold your heads high. You serve in a values based organization and you serve your nation daily. What a great honor!

As I've traveled the District area this past year, I've met a lot of customers and stakeholders. I've also visited our elected representatives in Congress and the Senate. All are unanimous in praise of the District and the work that you do. Take pride in the tradition of great service you provide.

We still face challenges in security and force protection, the uncertainty of outsourcing initiatives, and tight funding in both FY 03 and 04. We simply must remain vigilant, keep doing the best we can every day, and carefully monitor the expenditure of scarce resources. We must remain relevant, responsive, efficient, and effective. I am confident you are all up to the challenge!

The past year flew by, but it was a rewarding year for me. I have learned from all of you and hope that in some way you have learned a little from me. My boys and I are truly blessed to be part of this District. I am proud to be your commander and continue to pledge my selfless service to you and our nation. I know I can count on all of you to do your part in the coming year to face the many challenges ahead.

Hooah!

– Ray Alexander

US Army Corps of Engineers
Wilmington District