



## Strock takes command of Corps; Flowers retires

Article by Bernard Tate  
Photos by F.T. Eyre  
Headquarters

Maj. Gen. Carl Strock took command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in a military ceremony on July 1 at Fort Myer, Va. Strock replaces Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, who retired during the same ceremony after 35 years of Army service.

Strock is the 51<sup>st</sup> Chief of Engineers in the Corps' 229-year history. The U.S. Senate confirmed his nomination as Chief on June 25, with promotion to lieutenant general later this summer.

This ceremony was particularly significant because it was the first actual change of command ceremony the Corps has had since 1984. For the first time in 20 years the Senate confirmed the new Chief of Engineers in time for the flag-passing ceremony which signifies the transfer of command. Previously, an interim Chief of Engineers was named until the new Chief was confirmed.

During the ceremony, the castle flag passed from Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Balch, the Corps' Command Sergeant Major, to Flowers, to Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army, to Strock, and back to Balch.

"General Bob Flowers is a leader whose love of soldiers is legendary," said Schoomaker during the ceremony. "He is the kind of inspirational leader we all enjoy following. During his tenure, Bob established the demanding Sapper Course, which now provides extremely rigorous small-unit leadership training for combat engineers of all services. I formally approved the full program and the wear of the Sapper Tab last month.

"Bob and Lynda, thank you for your over three decades of service to our nation," Schoomaker added. "We wish you good luck and Godspeed as you open a new chapter in your life."

During the ceremony, Flowers also passed the historic MacArthur Castles to Strock. In 1903, when Douglas MacArthur graduated from West Point as an engineer officer, his family presented him with gold castle insignia as a graduation gift. MacArthur kept the castles throughout much of his career, then gave them to Maj. Gen. Lief Sverdrup, chief engineer on his staff in the Southwest Pacific in World War II. MacArthur said that the castles "deserved to be worn by a real engineer" (MacArthur transferred to the infantry in 1917), and he said he didn't want them to "end up in a museum somewhere."

On May 2, 1976, Sverdrup attended the Engineer Dinner at Fort Belvoir, Va., marking the Corps of Engineers' 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In a quiet corner before the banquet, he gave the castles to Lt. Gen. William C. Gribble, Jr., then Chief of Engineers. Overwhelmed by the unexpected gesture, Gribble later announced to the banquet guests that he would establish a tradition of each Chief of Engineers passing the historic castle insignia to the next.

During the ceremony, Schoomaker and Flowers' wife, Lynda, removed the MacArthur Castles from the lapels of Flowers' dress blues. Then Flowers and Strock's wife, Julie, pinned the castles to the lapels of Strock's uniform.

"This is a day of very mixed emotions for me," said Strock as he addressed the audience. "I am both deeply honored and truly humbled to stand before you today. I am honored because there is no greater privilege than to be entrusted with command when your nation is at war.



Gen. Peter Schoomaker, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, hands the Corps colors to Maj. Gen. Carl Strock, the new Chief of Engineers. The flag passed from Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Balch, Corps Command Sergeant Major (right), to Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, outgoing Chief of Engineers, to Schoomaker, to Strock, and back to Balch.



Gen. Peter Schoomaker, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, pins the historic MacArthur Castles on Maj. Gen. Carl Strock, the new Chief of Engineers. Out of the picture is Strock's wife, Julie, who also took part in the pinning ceremony.

But I am truly humbled because I know that there are many other fine officers who could have ably taken the colors here today.

"I am also nervous and confident," Strock added. "I'm nervous because I know how important this Corps of Engineers is to this nation and its armed forces, and I know how important the office of the Chief of Engineers



This official command portrait of Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers will join the Headquarters gallery of 49 previous Chiefs of Engineers. (Photo composite by F.T. Eyre)

## Flowers reflects on time of great change

By Bernard Tate  
Headquarters

*(Editor's note: Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, the 50<sup>th</sup> Chief of Engineers, retired on July 1 in a ceremony at Fort Myer, Va. He led the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through a time of sweeping changes, from the Clinton administration to the Bush administration; the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and their aftermath; the Global War on Terror including fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq and reconstruction efforts in those nations; the USACE 2012 reorganization; the new Program Management Business Process; and deployment of the P2 system.*

*A few weeks before retirement, Flowers sat down to reflect on his tenure as Chief of Engineers.)*

**Update:** Well sir, it's been quite a ride, hasn't it?

**Flowers:** It has! It's hard to believe it went by as quickly as it's gone.

**Update:** What do you want your legacy to be? How will people remember your four years as Chief of Engineers?

**Flowers:** I hope my legacy will be one team, a

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Insights

# The armed forces are our walls of defense

By Col. Mark Fentress  
Chaplain, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Tall walls around the cities were one of the principal defenses of the city-states in ancient Greece. Fred Bauer tells the story of a visitor to Sparta in those times who was surprised by the absence of such protective barriers.

"Where are your walls?" he asked incredulously. "I'll show you later," said the Spartan general who was showing his guest around the city.

In time they came to high ground that offered a view of a vast plain. Thousands of soldiers, their armor gleaming, stood shoulder-to-shoulder, row upon row.

"There," said the Spartan general, pointing. "There are our walls, every man a brick."

Friends, as we celebrate Independence Day on this Fourth of July, let us pause to give hearty thanks for our

great nation and to those loyal, dedicated guardians who stand ready to defend her around the world. Paraphrasing this Spartan general of old, "There stand our walls of safety and security, all of those Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, Sailors, and Civil Servants. Every man and woman a brick."

With a sense of visionary understanding, John Adams confided to his wife, Abigail, on the day the Declaration of Independence was approved, "I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration, and to support and defend this nation. Yet through all of the gloom, I can see rays of ravishing light and glory."

I want to encourage each of you to pray for our great nation, our national leaders, and those loyal young men and women who stand ready to die so that freedom's light continues to shine ever more brightly on America.



**Prayer** — Lord God, be an ever near and present stronghold to all members of America's armed forces serving in harm's way around the world. Continue to hold and shelter their families who wait for their safe return. Grant us Your blessing on our great nation and all nations that affirm the dignity and unconditional worth of man.

May we never forget that liberty was born a twin, and that without loyalty, liberty could never be born, much less sustained for our generation and those generations to come. This we pray in Your holy name. **Amen.**

May God bless America!

In faith and friendship,

**Chaplain Mark.**

*(The opinions in this article are those of the writer and do not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.)*

Commentary

# Hospital teaches what Memorial Day means

By Steve Wright  
Gulf Region Division

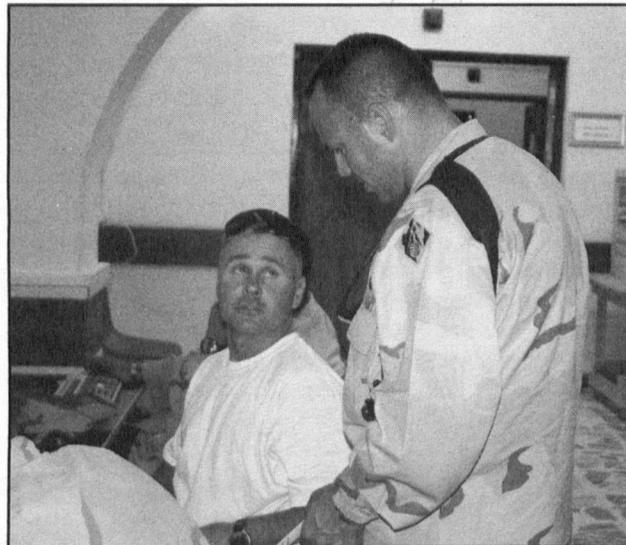
*(Editor's note — This article arrived too late to publish on or before Memorial Day. But the thoughts in it are too profound to discard.)*

I recently had a rare opportunity at the Ibn Sina hospital in Baghdad, which treats wounded Soldiers, Marines, and Sailors. I got to visit injured engineer service members with Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Balch, Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For an hour or so, I saw the pain and suffering that war brings to the young men and women who serve our country in Iraq. It was the night before Memorial Day. Balch was preparing for the next day's ceremony, and he wanted to talk. What he had to say gave me a view into his world. This article won't focus on the sergeant major; he would not want that. But talking to him showed me the special debt our country owes to the men and women who serve in harm's way.

Most of the rest of this article are the sergeant major's words.

"Almost my whole focus has been on our nation at war. It's the number one priority with the Chief (Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, now retired). It's how he feels and it's how I feel. This is why I'm serving in Iraq today. When Gen. Flowers selected me to be the command sergeant major and I moved to Washington, D.C., the Beltway became my perimeter. Engineer Soldiers who come to Walter Reed Army Medical Center are in my perimeter, and they need help. I spend a lot of time trying to look after those troops and their families. I work hand-in-hand with our command chaplain, Col. Mark Fentress. Between us I believe we've helped.



**Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Balch visits Chief Petty Officer John Graham, a Navy engineer, in Ibn Sina Hospital in Baghdad. (Photo courtesy of Gulf Region Division)**

"We knew we were going to lose engineer Soldiers in this war, and the Chief made a commitment that the Corps would be represented by a general officer at the funeral of every engineer Soldier. I made a personal commitment to make sure these Soldiers were honored with the greatest respect possible.

"Since our generals present the American flag to mothers or wives on behalf of a grateful nation, I want them to personally know about the Soldier whose funeral they attend. I sent messages to each of their commanders

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Presidential ridicule

Reference Christina Swanson's commentary about not ridiculing the president in the June issue...

During his presidency, Abraham Lincoln was sometimes portrayed in political cartoons as an ape. I can't think of anything much more insulting. Yet those cartoons did not prevent him from winning a second term and the undying love and respect of Americans for many generations right down to today.

I can't think of any President who has not been ridiculed, caricatured, and insulted by those who oppose him, and affectionately lampooned by his co-partisans. Our children have for more than 200 years managed to respect the Office of the Presidency amid a hail of parody, cartooning, lampooning, and insult.

Americans have always kept their minds open enough to stand up for "Hail to the Chief" after chuckling at a joke about the president's jowls (Nixon), womanizing (Clinton), cowboy language (George W. Bush), or beard and gawky limbs (Lincoln).

That is one of the hallmarks of American freedom of speech. Making a sacred cow out of the president or any public figure is, sadly, the first step in the long, ugly road toward the writer's statement that "In any other country, such a person or group would be imprisoned or shot." (Well, not in *any* other country... in some other countries.)

Let's not take the first step toward such totalitarianism by promoting the idea that public figures cannot be handled roughly by the press and the public. When we are *required* to treat all our leaders as cardboard saints, then we will be a long way toward becoming one of those "other countries" with statues and posters on every corner, depicting their leaders as saviors.

We should not view our leaders as cardboard saints, but as the sometimes noble, sometimes fallible and foible-filled humans they always, always are.

**Penny Schmitt  
Wilmington District**

Letters to the Editor



## Editorial

# Volunteers needed in Iraq, Afghanistan

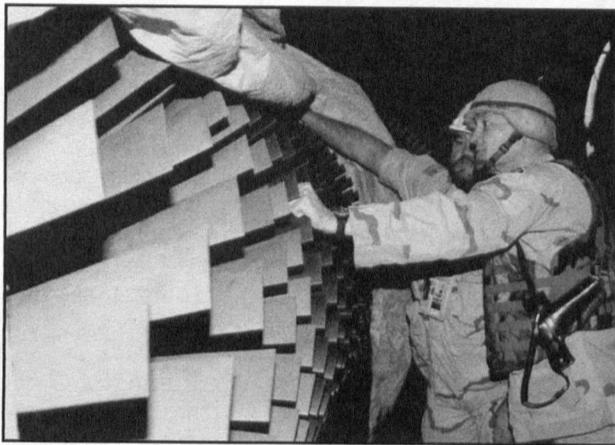
*(Editor's note – Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, the 50<sup>th</sup> Chief of Engineers, wrote this editorial before his retirement on July 1.)*

I'd like to give you some information about working in Iraq and Afghanistan, and ask you to consider a volunteer assignment with either the Gulf Region Division (GRD) or the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED). I also ask that all supervisors actively support employees' requests to volunteer.

GRD and AED continue to make great progress thanks to our 1,700 civilian and military employees who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since the Global War on Terrorism began. After talking with many of them, I'm convinced that you will have an unparalleled opportunity for professional and personal development, adventure, and national service. As part of a historic effort to rebuild a nation, your skills will be honed in a challenging international and interagency environment, and you will return with a broader perspective.

One of our volunteers said that after returning to the U.S., she found herself "looking at our flag forever differently," and was proud of what she and the team accomplished.

Additionally, deployments offer incentives that may include hazard/danger pay; premium pay (including overtime, night, and holiday pay); a 10 percent or 25 percent relocation bonus; foreign post differential, and a separate



**Brig. Gen. Steven Hawkins, commander of Task Force Fajir, and Corps employee Ricky Watson inspect the new blades on a generator rotor in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of Gulf Region Division)**

maintenance allowance. Details are at [www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/Deployment/Finance/financemain.htm](http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/Deployment/Finance/financemain.htm).

As you consider a possible volunteer assignment, talk with Corps employees who have already served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Also, I encourage you to learn more about the great work being done in Iraq at

[www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/Essayonsforward/index.html](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/Essayonsforward/index.html).

For information about deployments, visit our civilian deployment Web page at [www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/Deployment/main.htm](http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cehr/Deployment/main.htm).

Also see GRD's new Orientation Guide at [www.grd.usace.army.mil/guides/GRD%20Orientation%20Guide%20for%20inbound%20personnel%20June%202004.pdf](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/guides/GRD%20Orientation%20Guide%20for%20inbound%20personnel%20June%202004.pdf).

For information on six-month and one-year Temporary Change of Station positions, visit [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil). Select Employment/Army's Vacancy Announcements, and then enter your position title keyword and search on Iraq or Afghanistan.

Your local CPAC or the HECSA CPAC at (202) 761-0356 or (540) 665-3734 can also assist.

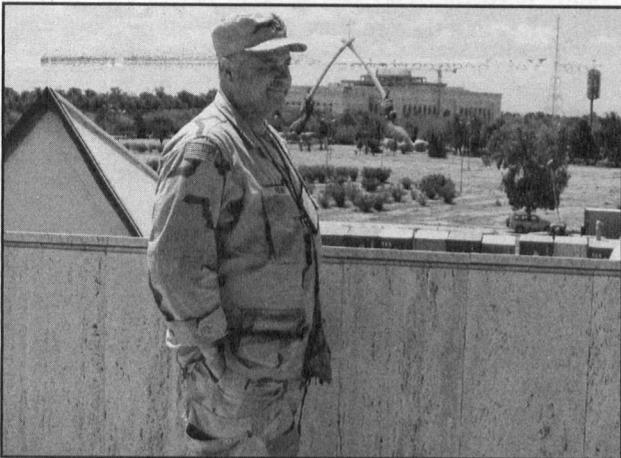
To those of you who have already served at the tip of the spear, I'm enormously grateful to you for bringing help and hope to those in need. The need remains great, so I thank everyone for considering a volunteer assignment to support our tremendously important missions in both countries.

Thank you for all you do.

**Essayons!**

**ROBERT B. FLOWERS**  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

## Retiree gets back in harness in Iraq



**Retiree Frank Trent was rehired to be the Chief of Safety and Occupational Health in the Gulf Region Division. (Photo by Carrie Loy, GRD)**

Like an old fire horse who hears the alarm, retiree Frank Trent didn't want to be left behind when volunteers were needed in Iraq.

Trent had retired after nearly 40 years of government service, 28 of those with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Safety and Occupational Health Office. But unlike the retired fire horse who can't go to the fire because he's too old, Trent is back in harness and happily pulling the load again.

Volunteering to come back as a re-employed annuitant is a good deal. (An annuitant is one who receives an annuity, a fixed amount of money paid at regular intervals.) They draw their retirement pay, plus a full salary, plus other benefits. (See article below.)

But money wasn't an issue for Trent. "I just wanted to help out. During my career I volunteered for every deployment. I didn't always get picked, but I always volunteered."

Trent is the Chief of Safety and Occupational Health

for the Gulf Region Division (GRD). "We're trying to establish a normal, documented, functioning safety and occupational health program for GRD's massive construction workload, plus protect the daily welfare of our civilian and military workforce deployed in support of the GRD mission," said Trent.

Part of the reason that Trent was such a good fit for the job is that he has kept his skills sharp since retiring in June 2002. He has been working for the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a Disaster Assistance Employee, which also required a lot of time away from home dealing with wildfires, tornados, floods, and other disasters.

Trent arrived in-country in March and will leave in August. Why leave the relative comfort of retirement for the hard work, long hours, heat, and danger of Iraq?

"I know it sounds corny, but I really wanted to be

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## Re-employed retirees get 'a great deal'

By Bernard Tate  
Headquarters

Retirement is not the end of the road, nor the end of a person's usefulness. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is actively recruiting retirees to work in Iraq and Afghanistan. Three Corps retirees are currently working in Iraq, and one in Afghanistan.

It is simple for retirees to apply for work as a re-employed annuitant. (An annuitant is one who receives an annuity, a fixed amount of money paid at regular intervals.) Because of their experience, they do not have to compete for job vacancies at the grade level from which they retired.

"Re-employed annuitants do not have to apply under the vacancy announcements to be re-hired at the same grade level," said Shelia Dent, Chief of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center for Headquarters. "They can simply send me their resumes and say that they're interested in working in Iraq or Afghanistan. But because of our volume of recruitment activity, it's more

efficient and easier to manage if they apply against the vacancy announcement. We have about 150 vacancy announcements open. Or they can just e-mail me their resume."

The jobs are open to anyone who retired and we are especially seeking applications from Corps retirees. The exceptions are those who accepted early retirement and a buy-out. Those who have accepted buyouts may be required to re-pay the buy-out if they are re-employed before the required timeframes have elapsed.

There is no age limit, but the retiree must be able to pass a physical, and be able to get a security clearance and passport.

The tours of duty available vary from 120 days to one year. "We prefer to use current Corps Employees for the short requirements," said Dent. "We look to the retirees to help out with the assignments of six to 12 months, and they can extend and go beyond that if they are interested and available."

As for pay, re-employed annuitants may receive their retirement pay, plus the full salary that they would re-

ceive if they were working full-time. "And we pay for their housing, food, medical, full overseas benefits, danger pay, everything for the length of time they are working," said Dent. "It's a great deal for them."

There are a wide variety of jobs available for re-employed annuitants.

"Right now we have a critical need for finance and accounting types, folks who know CEFMS," said Dent. "We need project managers at the grade 13 and 14 level to manage all the construction projects we have. We also need engineers who have administrative contracting officer warrants."

Other positions available include construction representatives, engineers of all kinds, contracting specialists, administrative support assistants, and many more.

For more information, call Shelia Dent at (202) 761-1885, or e-mail [sheila.r.dent@usace.army.mil](mailto:sheila.r.dent@usace.army.mil). To see the jobs that are available, go to [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil), click on the Employment Opportunities in Support of the Global War on Terrorism (the Eagle icon) and then click on the Corps of Engineer Castle.

# 'I hope my legacy will be one team, a learning organization capable of operating virtually.'

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learning organization capable of operating virtually. That will make the Corps of Engineers a viable, important organization well into the future, able to deliver the best services to the nation and its armed services.

And when you think about it, all the things that have happened in the past four years have kind of moved us in that direction. As tragic as 9-11 was, and as hard as the wars have been in Afghanistan and Iraq, they have served as catalysts for change.

And this organization has gained so much experience from dealing with the situations presented to it in the past four years that I am convinced we can do anything. Tremendous people, adaptive, service-oriented, sacrificing. They've done a tremendous job. They've kept the same ethic of service that their forebearers had, they've kept faith with each other, and I think they've kept faith with maintaining the technical expertise that it takes to remain the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Update:** What are you the most proud of?

**Flowers:** Well, I think I'm the most proud of the people.

When I came into the job as Chief of Engineers, on my first walks around the organization, I got the impression that all the bad press we had received for the past year or 18 months had taken its toll on the morale of the workforce.

And I thought, "This organization has done so much, and is too good, to be affected this way." So I needed to cheerlead, and to remind people what this organization has done, and what their service means to this country. Have them focus on that, and how we do that better, rather than focus on the criticism.

Through working relationships, and improving communication, we should let others recognize that the Corps of Engineers is a quality organization, and let them stand up for us. In some measure we've been able to make that happen, and I think that's a big change, and an important one.

**Update:** Very early, you identified communication as one of your strategic goals, and you've been a role model in getting out and talking to people across the Corps. How valuable has that been to you, and what have you learned?

**Flowers:** Well, it's been very valuable to me. The ability to get out and talk to the people and communicate with them has done several things.

It's given me a good feel for the pulse of the organization, an opportunity to get feedback that I wouldn't get if I stayed here in Washington. It's enabled me to communicate the vision, and to assess whether or not it is resonating.

It's given people the opportunity to use me as a sounding board, and to understand that the senior leadership of the organization cares about them. I think that's important thing for people to understand. It's easy for people to feel sometimes that they're out there on their own, and that nobody up here really cares what the people in the Area Office of Wappapello Lake are doing.

But the truth is, the senior leadership does care about them. The leadership must always ask, "How does this affect the people out there providing what we are tasked to provide?" And the only way to have that consciously running through your head is to be somehow in touch with the folks out there.

That would be my recommendation to leaders in this organization. Get out of your office, get out of your cubicle, walk around, and talk to the people you work with. You'll have a better perspective, the people will understand that they are part of an organization that is working hard to see to their best interests, and to take care of the jobs that need to be done.

It's magic!

**Update:** A lot of initiatives started during your tenure. In your opinion, what is the one thing the Corps of Engineers needs to do to remain relevant in the future?

**Flowers:** I gave the opening address at the America Society of Civil Engineers convention in Nashville last November, and I had a person in the audience ask me, "What is the biggest challenge facing the Corps of Engineers in the next five years?"

And I said, "Well, the biggest challenge facing the Corps of Engineers in the next five years is the Corps of Engineers."

If we don't change our culture to be more oriented on serving the nation, if we aren't that one team capable of operating virtually in a learning organization, and if we don't change our culture from being a fiefdom-of-fiefdoms where every district has to sink or swim on its own, the Corps won't survive.

Changing the culture of people takes the most time and the most effort, and that's why I've tried so hard to communicate the vision and make everybody understand why we're doing what we're doing and the direction we're going. I believe we've got to become the 21<sup>st</sup> century organization of choice if we're going to continue to be relevant and serve the nation and its armed forces.

In my mind, it is absolutely critical to the nation to have a Corps of Engineers that it can turn to. So we owe it to those who came before us, and owe it to those who we serve, to change our culture. We need to become used to working in an environment where things will change, to learn from our experiences, to have one database, and to trust each other that the team will help you be successful.

**Update:** There has been a lot of controversy and changes in the past four years. What has been the most difficult part of your job, and what has been the most rewarding?

**Flowers:** The most rewarding part of my job is getting out and talking with the people of the organization. That's the real strength of the Corps, its people.

The most frustrating part is continually advocating for changing the culture, often among people who don't see a need to change the culture. It's pretty tough sometimes to be an advocate in the face of people who are saying, "We don't think so."

But I'll tell you that as time has gone on, I have seen the light go on in more and more people's eyes. It's a course we're on that we've got to stay on if we're going to be successful in the future. And I think we absolutely will be.

**Update:** Will USACE 2012 outlive your tenure?

**Flowers:** Absolutely yes. I think irreversible momentum has been created.

Everything we are doing under USACE 2012 has been done someplace in the organization with great success, and we're expanding that out across the organization. When you combine the refocusing of the organization to better serve the customers with common enablers and common processes, you set the conditions to be that one team, capable of operating virtually in a learning organization.

We have started on the journey, and I don't think there will be any turning back.

**Update:** Has the Corps weathered the controversies that surrounded us when you first came onboard?

**Flowers:** I tell people that sometimes it's a short trip from the outhouse to the penthouse. I think we've weathered the storm well. The Corps is more relevant than it's ever been, and if you surveyed other departments in government and asked "Who do you like working with?", the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be at the top or close to the top of their lists. I think that's a great tribute to our people, to their ability to work, to establish those relationships, cultivate them, and make them stronger.

And I think you would find the same thing in the partners that we've developed. We've signed more partnership agreements, MOUs, and MOAs with other agencies and non-government organizations, in the past few years than we've probably signed in the previous 10 or 20. And I think that's to the great benefit of the organization, because now others are starting to talk about us in the way we like to talk about ourselves.

**Update:** You play golf, so you're familiar with the term mulligan. If you could have a mulligan for one thing during your tenure, what would it be?

**Flowers:** I think I would be more vocal in response to the allegations brought, in particular by the IG report, which accused some of our senior officers of bias or not doing the right thing.

I got some advice at the time, "Maybe it's not a good idea to fall on your sword on this one. When the day is done, you still have to command the Corps of Engineers and lead them through this troubled time. There will come a time to speak out about it."

In hindsight, I wish I had come out sooner and been more supportive of those three officers who had their names dragged through the mud in that IG report, because I think the IG could have done a better job. But I committed to not say that publicly at the time.

But I think when everyone goes back and reviews the bidding, particularly on the Upper Mississippi Navigation Study, they'll find there were a lot of great people trying hard to do the right thing, including the whistle-blower. I think what you saw was the result of some really good people pushing hard to deliver a product on time, but with somewhat of a lack of internal communication.

Having people characterize it as something other than that has always bothered me. So when I see people dredge that back up, it really rankles me, and makes me think I should have done a better job of standing up for those officers and being a lot more vocal about that whole episode.

**Update:** Give us a report card. Is USACE 2012 working as well as you hoped?

**Flowers:** It is. I'll use the analogy of a snowball. You start small, and you roll it, and it gets a little bigger. If you get it to the edge of the hill, it starts to build and it starts moving faster.

We're about to roll over the edge of the hill with that USACE 2012 snowball, and I think you're going to see it take off. People say, "You know, we used to have to send stuff up to the division to look at, and then they would send it up to Headquarters, and it would take us awhile to learn something. We are now learning about stuff right away. We have people that we reach out to who are focused on helping us work better."

I think that's a powerful thing that allows us to provide service better, faster, and hopefully cheaper than we've provided in the past. And that's a great benefit to the people we serve.

**Update:** You've said in town hall meetings that USACE 2012 was a classic 80 percent solution. If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently?

**Flowers:** I can't think of anything I would do differently, other than maybe hit upon the idea of USACE 2012 a little earlier.

The idea behind the 80 percent solution was to get something going quickly, and trust the people to work out the rest. So I provided the vision and some guidance, and gave a framework, and then allowed the people to fill it in. That let groups come together and promote solutions that were far better than I could ever come up with on my own, or any focus group could come up with.

So the 80 percent solution was a starting point and a product from the best people in the organization, and



Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers traveled a lot during his tenure as the Chief of Engineers. Here he talks with Shirley Cheek (left) and Bridgett Brackett (center) in the Employee Support Office of Europe District in Germany. (Photo courtesy of Europe District)

people from outside whom we partner with and serve. Then we allow the people to tweak the rest of it as they move forward and learn from their experiences. And as we evolved USACE 2012, we are putting into practice PMBP, P2, the Learning Organization, and are focusing on our teams.

**Update:** We've all seen the graphic with People, Process, and Communication, with milestones all leading up to becoming a learning organization. How did we do? Which milestones did we meet or surpass, and which ones didn't we reach? Most important, is USACE now a Learning Organization?

**Flowers:** I said that when I passed along the data about the Corps of Engineers to the 51<sup>st</sup> Chief, I wanted this organization to be a learning organization, one team capable of operating virtually.

If we are not there, we are well on our way, and I am very happy with where we are. We set a high mark, and when you look at all we've been through getting to where we'll be on the first of July when I pass the colors of the Corps, I am very happy with all that's been done. I'm enormously proud of this organization and its people, its processes, and their communications. And they will always be evolving.

**Update:** The Environmental Operating Principles were introduced during your tenure. Is the Corps adopting them, and have they changed the way the Corps does business? Most important, has the Corps of Engineers "gone green"?

**Flowers:** I get asked that question a lot. First, the Environmental Operating Principles were a statement of where we were already moving, and had been moving for a long time. So I challenged the organization to develop some principles that we could put into doctrine that would guide how we did business in the future. Those were the Environmental Operating Principles.

Does it mean that we're "greener"? We in the Corps of Engineers have always performed the missions that have been asked of us by the nation and its armed forces, but we've found that the mission set changes over time. In the 1930s we were doing large public works projects, building dams and waterways systems that the nation wanted. In

2004, the nation is asking us do more environmental restoration. So it's a change in our mission set.

Let's say we were given a flood control mission in the 1950s. The way we perceived the mission then, our job was to move water from where it wasn't wanted to where it could be accepted, as quickly and as cost effectively as possible. And often, in many places, that was a concrete-lined ditch. Mission accomplished.

If we had been given that same mission in the 1960s, we probably would have still done something like the concrete-lined ditch, but we probably would have put some grass and trees around it, and built a park.

That same mission in the '80s or today, we wouldn't approach in the same way. We'd say, "Let's look at some more options." And today, we would bring those who are affected by the work into the planning process. And that's what the Environmental Operating Principles are all about, the codification of doing that.

And so it's a journey we've been on. I'm proud of the work that's been done, but I think it's just part of the natural evolution of the Corps of Engineers. The type of projects we deliver will probably be different in 2020 than it is in 2004. But as a learning organization, capable of operating virtually as one team, we will still be the premier engineering organization of choice for this country.

**Update:** You traveled a lot — China, Sub-Sahara Africa...

**Flowers:** The Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, Thailand, Europe, Greece, Israel, Japan, Korea, South America, and Central America. Yes, quite a few places.

**Update:** What was the significance of all those visits, and what would you like to see happen with the Corps of Engineers and its global presence?

**Flowers:** I think the Corps of Engineers is uniquely positioned to close the gap between some of the haves and have-nots in the world because of the services that we can bring. And we can also help shape the peace, and create conditions of enduring peace.

If you're not out there looking around, and aware of the opportunities that exist, then you won't be able to take advantage of them. So I thought it important that the Chief of Engineers travel around, raise awareness, and see first-

hand where opportunities may exist. I think I've been able to do that, and I think we've been able to make a difference in the world. That's a pretty good thing, and I think that's great legacy.

**Update:** What one piece of advice would you give to future Chiefs of Engineers?

**Flowers:** Well, I like old Joe Stillwell's admonition — "Non illigitamus carbundum" — "Don't let the bastards grind you down."

There are always going to be naysayers and, Lord knows, if it's not controversial the Corps doesn't touch it. So there's no scarcity of controversy, and in many things that we do there's no way we're going to please everybody.

So you must base what you do on the best science and engineering available, stay the course, and take care of the people. The rest of it will take care of itself.

**Update:** What have you learned personally as the Chief of Engineers? What lessons will you take from here forward in your own life?

**Flowers:** Well, hopefully, I've learned to be a better listener.

The lesson I'll take forward is the enormous power in teams, in bringing people together, empowering them, and letting them put themselves into something. If you can articulate to people what they are doing, why they are doing it, where you want them to go, and let them buy in, you can do anything.

**Update:** What are your plans for retirement?

**Flowers:** I'm going to go to work in the private sector and find some more mountains to climb. I don't know where or what yet.

I've had some interesting offers, and taken a look at all of them. I've always wondered if I could be competitive in the private sector, so I think I'll have the opportunity to test myself. That's one of the mountains to climb.

But I will always be an advocate for this organization. I will always feel a part of it and feel close to it, and always be looking to help out where I can in furthering the cause of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Update:** Any idea where you and your wife will settle?

**Flowers:** Right now, no. Most of our family is around the East Coast, so we've enjoyed living here in the Washington, D.C. area, and wouldn't mind staying here. But where we go will depend on where I take a job.

**Update:** On the back of your "Just Do It" card, the last item says "Keep a sense of humor, enjoy your families, and have fun." Well, did you have fun?

**Flowers:** Absolutely yes.

Whenever I needed to recharge my batteries and have fun while I was traveling, all I had to do was go talk to some people. If I'm here in the office, just walk around on the third floor or sixth floor of the GAO Building, and talk to the people.

And I always found time to spend with my family to maintain that connection, spend time with my grandchildren, and now and then play a little golf. You've got to have that balance in your life, I think, to be happy.

So it's been a great ride. The four years went by very quickly for me. As I think back, there were some tough times, and there were some really good times. The really good times far outweigh the bad, and every time I think back on my four years, I smile.

**Update:** Anything else you would like to add?

**Flowers:** I think my parting word to everyone is that the strength of the Corps of Engineers is in its people. Leaders come and go, and you've got a great leader coming in Maj. Gen. Strook.

But the real strength of the Corps of Engineers, its continuity, is not in the commanders or the Chiefs. It's in the people who stay as part of the organization. So I'm very proud of them, and I hope that they feel proud of themselves.

# Virtual teaming

*Team operating in cyberspace is new wave in managing projects*

By Brian Temple  
Europe District

We used to move projects to the people.  
Later, we moved people to the projects.  
Now, we simultaneously move both.

To test, expand, and demonstrate the ability of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' districts to team up to share design workloads, a pilot Virtual Teaming effort is under development to put projects on the fast track. Three districts of the North Atlantic Regional Business Center (Europe, New York, and Norfolk), supported by Huntington District and Headquarters, are developing a design package for an Explosive Research and Development Loading Facility to be built at Picatinny Research Development and Engineering Center in New Jersey.

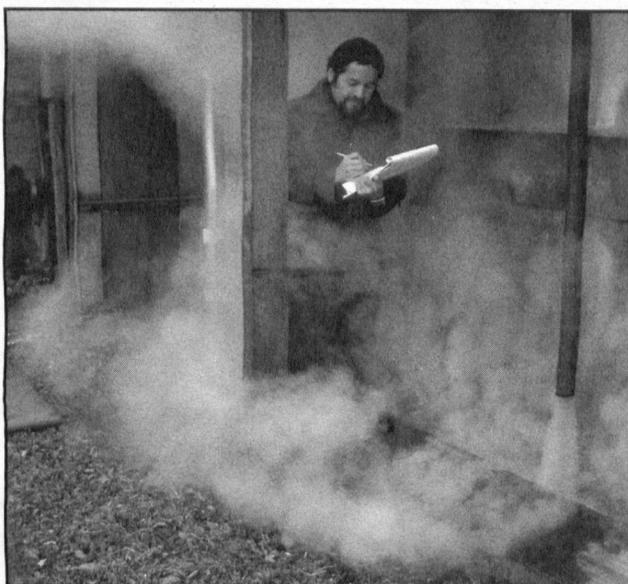
## Keystone of USACE 2012

Starting last summer as a North Atlantic Division (NAD)/Europe District vision for regionalization where work is regularly shared between districts, Virtual Teaming grew into a keystone of USACE 2012, an organizational restructure initiative designed to provide customers with better, more affordable service. The original goal was to share resources to support district manning differences, but the concept of working electronically in "real time" rapidly matured into an actual project, said David Marquardt, Chief, Engineering Team for Europe District.

Last July, the Chief of Engineers provided seed money to the effort, and members of NAD, Headquarters, and the Europe, Norfolk, and Huntington districts developed a concept of electronic data management that has become Virtual Teaming.

"The primary goal of the Picatinny pilot project is to demonstrate the Corps' ability to provide seamless customer support regardless of the location or composition of the supporting district. Or, in the case of this pilot project, a group of supporting districts," said Marquardt.

The methods used by this inter-District Support Team are actually familiar when compared to more traditional approaches. This project began with a face-to-face, meeting with the customer at their installation in New Jersey. This let the entire Project Delivery Team (PDT) (Direc-



Europe District's Fernando Bautista sketches the footprint of a building at Picatinny Arsenal. (Photo by Fernando Bautista, taken with automatic timer)

torate of Public Works, customers, project manager, and designers) meet, establish contacts, visit the proposed installation, and review existing similar facilities.

## Working in cyberspace

But, since the initial PDT meeting in December, each PDT member has saved time and money by working from their respective offices. No more expensive travel with time consuming flights and lengthy layovers. As in any project, team members are in frequent contact via e-mail, phone, and teleconferencing, especially in this case where they are hundreds, even thousands of miles apart.

Project data, notes, drawings, files, and other information are all stored on a common server in Mississippi and are accessible to all PDT members. The file management software is administered by Huntington District in West Virginia. The system allows any PDT member to access, review, and modify work as needed.

But, when fielding a new program, challenges are ex-

pected. "There's some delay in opening and returning large files due to limitations of data line capacity," said Marquardt. "There has been some frustration at not having the 'instant on' response we expect from our local data servers. File sizes, where possible, are partitioned into smaller sub-folders reducing their 'electron' size and therefore time of retrieval."

## Working well

Having one district six time zones ahead in Europe has had some effect on the process, but communication has not been adversely affected. Team conference calls are simply scheduled for the afternoon in Germany, giving the team members a two-hour workday overlap that allows team members to communicate with each other. E-mail messages are just part of the morning mail.

"The Virtual Teaming process is working well," Marquardt said. "The Corps should expect to see more of this kind of teamwork."

Changing official procedures can take some time, but doing what is right for the customer sometimes means making adjustments to business practices. Change is needed to ensure future success.

John Bianco, Chief of Business Technical Division in NAD, said the initiative is overdue. Bianco, who has division oversight of the initiative, said architectural and engineering firms operate globally with the same concepts to optimize their project schedule.

"We're getting to that point," he said, emphasizing that the Corps is a forward-thinking organization. "The capability of Virtual Teaming enables us to work with the best resources within the region, allowing the team to... participate in highly involved or complex projects. The engineers that are pulled in should be our best and brightest. We can bring them in remotely; they don't have to be on site."

With deployable video teleconferencing engineers can work in "real time," and can walk through just about any project with experts on the other end of the VTC.

"I think this is a tool of the future," Bianco said. "I think this will be the tool of choice for the agency. We're learning how to use it, and we'll be able to bring more assets into projects."

# Retiree

Continued from page three

part of this historic undertaking," said Trent. "I love this kind of environment and working for the military. I spent a year in Kuwait after Desert Storm in 1991-92 and had great experiences working with young Army leaders. So I just had to do the same thing again, as well as lend a hand to the Iraqi people."

**Family support.** Trent also had the support of his family.

"I've been married to a wonderful lady for 43 years who has always allowed and even encouraged me to do what is right," Trent said. He smiled and added, "She said, 'You might as well go if that's what you want to do. Otherwise, you'll just sit around the house sulking and getting under my feet.'"

Sheila Dent, Chief of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center at Headquarters, helped process the request for Trent to return to work under the Re-employed Annuitant Program.

**Good fit.** "Frank was a good fit for this program," Dent said. "He had a needed skill and exceptional experience.

*'There's so much retirees can bring to the theater in skills, knowledge, experience, maturity.'*

I think we did a good job in putting his package together, and he was the first to return under the program. He helped fill an important job in Iraq."

**Feel good.** "It really feels good to be back in this environment working for a quality organization like GRD," said Trent. He shares a trailer with three other men in Baghdad's Green Zone, and works at Essayons Base, GRD Headquarters.

Former King Faisal once lived in the complex of three residences on the Tigris River that are now Essayons Base.

"There are a few hardships, and of course you miss the family and Wednesday golf with the guys, but this is great," Trent said.

**No recliner for Trent.** "After I retired, I was afraid of falling into a recliner and turning into a vegetable," Trent continued. "This is a great way to contribute to a monumental effort of great historic significance and help people bootstrap their country up from the dust. As Maj. Gen. Ron Johnson, the GRD Commander, says, 'This is the construction Super Bowl.' If the opportunity presents itself, I might come back after a stint at home, maybe in the winter."

The rewards are so great that the hardships and danger don't bother Trent.

**Danger.** "There are real dangers here and they should not be minimized," said Trent. "Here in the Green Zone

we're relatively safe, although we get an occasional rocket fired in our direction.

"Having said that, everyone working here goes about their daily activities unimpeded," Trent added. "We have thousands of professional Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines who add a great degree of safety. I haven't lost a minute of sleep due to security concerns."

In all, Trent recommends volunteering for work in Iraq.

**Recommendation.** "I'd strongly encourage Corps retirees to consider a six month assignment here," said Trent. "It's rewarding professionally and personally, and the money ain't bad. There's so much that the retirees can bring to the theater in skills, knowledge, experiences, as well as maturity. We have two solid medical facilities here that meet any need, so that shouldn't be a concern. It was a right decision for me, and if anyone wants to talk to me about my experiences or e-mail me, I'll be happy to respond."

(Steven Wright, the Public Affairs Officer of Gulf Region Division, and Bernard Tate, editor of the "Engineer Update," contributed to this article.)

# Around the Corps

## AED change of command

On July 19, Col. John O'Dowd assumed command of the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED). Lt. Gen. David Barno, Commander of the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, presided over the ceremony.

Barno honored the outgoing commander, Col. Richard Conte, for his commitment to rebuilding the infrastructure of the Afghanistan National Army (ANA), contributing to civil works projects ranging from wells to hydroelectric dams, and serving as the CJ-7 staff director. Barno also expressed confidence in O'Dowd's ability to continue AED's record of service.

The Corps activated AED as its 45th district on March 1. Executing a \$350 million construction program with about 65 military and civilian people, the district has built more than two million square feet of facilities for the ANA. The district also supports the U.S. armed forces, and provides technical assistance to the U.S. Agency for International Development. Projects include restoring Afghanistan's roads; government and administrative facilities; water, irrigation, and power systems; schools; and medical facilities.

## New FUDS regulation

The Corps now has a new regulation to manage the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Program. Engineer Regulation 200-3-1, "FUDS Program Policy", replaces the "FUDS Manual."

The new ER incorporates many changes and recommendations from DoD's Management Guidance for the Defense Environmental Response Program, EPA, and the Association of States and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials.

"This is a step forward in ensuring the FUDS Program is aligned with other DoD cleanup programs, and coordination with EPA and the states is increased," said Ray Fatz, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health). "The need to revise the old 'FUDS Manual' was one of the initiatives identified by the FUDS Forum that includes representatives from EPA and the states. It will enhance our coordination and consultation with all our stakeholders and regulators. I'm pleased the new ER is in place."

It took more than two years for the Corps to write the new ER.

"We had a workgroup led by Julian Chu, a FUDS policy and planning expert, that wrote the ER, and then resolved comments. We had more than 3,000 comments," said Robert Lubbert, Corps national program manager for the FUDS Program. "The key is that the FUDS Program is now executed in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, the National Contingency Plan, and the DERP guidance."

The new ER:

- Addresses many recommendations from General Accounting Office audit reports.
- Adds checklists to Inventory Project Report preparation, and generic notification guidance on new properties.
- Further acknowledges the role of the lead regulatory agency as a key member of the FUDS project team.
- Incorporates the latest FUDS policies including the development of statewide management action plans.
- Adds the preliminary assessment phase to the FUDS determination process where potential toxic substances or military munitions projects are identified at eligible FUDS properties.
- Emphasizes public involvement in FUDS actions.

ER 200-3-1 can be found at <http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/usace-docs/eng-regs/er200-3-1/toc.htm>

## Service to America finalists

The finalists for the 2004 Service to America Medal finalists were announced June 16. The 28 finalists were announced at a luncheon in the Russell Senate Office Building by Max Stier, president and CEO of the Part-

nership for Public Service, and Timothy Clark, editor and president of *Government Executive* magazine.

One finalist is a Corps employee. Stephen Browning, Director of Regional Programs for South Pacific Division, is a finalist for the National Security and International Affairs Medal.

This year's finalists were narrowed down from a nomination group of about 500, and will be winnowed again into eight awardees. Medals will be awarded for Federal Employee of the Year, Career Achievement, Call to Service, Homeland Security, Justice and Law Enforcement, National Security and International Affairs, Science and Environment, and Social Services.

## Atomic cleanup

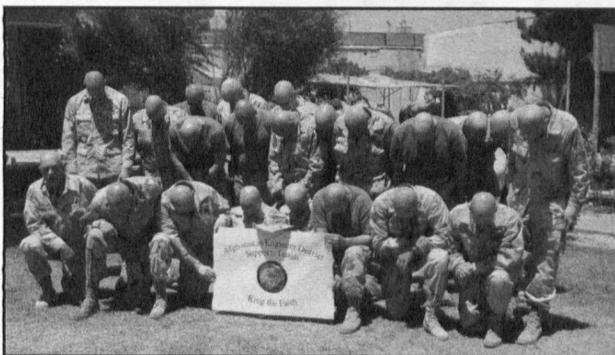
On June 7 Buffalo District began removing a remnant of early atomic weapons processing in Tonawanda, N.Y. Building 14 at the former Linde Site was used for laboratory and pilot studies for uranium separation to develop the first atomic bombs in World War II.

Analysis confirmed that specific areas of radioactive contamination existed in Building 14 that exceeded federal and state limits. In recent years, the current owner, Praxair, Inc. has used Building 14 for research and development and office space.

"Praxair employees have been safe during their time in the building," said Ray Pilon, project manager. "But since we found some areas under, around, and within the building's structure that exceed federal and state guidelines, we had to examine options for cleaning up those areas. We soon realized that removal activities would affect the building's integrity, especially if we removed soil beneath concrete floors, around drain lines, and under load bearing walls. We determined that removing the building provided the greatest certainty of success in meeting long-term remediation goals."

"The removal of Building 14 is a significant event for many residents," said Patrick Jones, a district spokesman. "For them, this building represents a 60-year legacy of contamination from research in the early days of atomic weapons."

Besides dismantling Building 14, the district and its contractors removed 400,000 tons of radiologically contaminated material from the Linde and Ashland I and 2 sites. The Corps also recognized the safety record of the remediation team at the former Linde site, where environmental cleanup contractor Shaw Environmental, Inc. and its subcontractors accumulated more than 500,000 man-hours without a lost-time accident.



These Corps personnel in Afghanistan shaved their heads in solidarity with Isaiah Bugarin, age 8, who lost his hair during cancer treatment.

## Commitment above and beyond

No one questions the commitment of those in the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED). They volunteered to work long hours in a combat zone executing a multi-million dollar construction program. Besides their work obligations, they find time to help a local orphanage by collecting and distributing clothes and educational materials, and providing donated contributions to repair the buildings.

But on July 19 they took commitment to a new level.

They heard about Isaiah Bugarin, age 8, from Fort Worth, Texas, who is diagnosed with Wilm's Tumor (cancer of the kidney). Isaiah has had surgery to remove the tumor, plus chemotherapy and radiation.

As a result of his treatment, Isaiah is losing his hair. His Little League team, in a show of support, shaved their heads so Isaiah wouldn't feel uncomfortable about being bald.



Andrea Duff-Arnold gets her head shaved.

Lt. Col. Alan Devenney, an AED Army officer, and his wife are close family friends of the Bugarin family. Devenney thought it would be a great show of support to shave his head, and asked the AED team members to join him.

"Cancer is a terrible condition that touches many people," Devenney said. "It's especially difficult when it strikes kids. We wanted Isaiah to know there are soldiers and DoD civilians who are thinking of him even though we're halfway around the world in Afghanistan. Isaiah has a challenge that will take courage and strength. It's our hope that through our action he will know he isn't alone in his fight."

Twenty-two members of AED, including two women, joined Devenney to have their heads shaved. Everyone had his or her own reasons for participating.

"I wanted Isaiah to know that losing your hair is no big deal, no matter how much hair you had or didn't have," said Andrea Duff-Arnold. "It's just hair, and will grow back in time."

Besides the pictures that were taken, AED is sending Isaiah a boonie hat with his name stitched on it, and an autographed poster with AED's logo.

## Environmental recognition

Tommy Socha, a plant specialist with Charleston District, won the 2004 Charleston Area Federal Employee Association Technician/Assistant Employee of the Year on May 7.

Socha was recognized for his commitment to environmental stewardship and enhancement, and has made numerous significant contributions toward developing creative and cost efficient bioengineering solutions for stream bank erosion stabilization, coastal erosion control, and beach dune building and stabilization.

Further, he was instrumental in discovering a new invasive plant in the coastal area, the beach vitex, which is adversely affecting coastal zone and beach areas.

## Engineer Update Online

These articles and more are featured in the July edition of the *Engineer Update Online*. You can access it at [www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/pubs/update.htm](http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/pubs/update.htm)

**P2 and Skywalker Ranch** -- One of the ancestors of P2 was a computer program created by an Army captain to make George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch run more efficiently.

**Statue of Liberty** -- New York District repairs the seawall at Liberty Island to help protect and preserve the Statue of Liberty.

**Blessing of the Fleet** -- New Orleans District holds the Corps' first Blessing of the Fleet ceremony. Eighteen civilian and Corps vessels participated.

**Our man in...Yap Island?** -- Chuck Miller deploys to a South Pacific tropical island to help with recovery operations after typhoon.

# Memorial Day

Continued from page two

and sergeant majors to gather information about the Soldier from his unit, and then forwarded their responses to the appropriate general officer.

**1st Lt. Doyal Hufstedler.** "I received a message back from Brig. Gen. Randy Castro, Commander of South Atlantic Division, with a story that touched him deeply. He went to Lt. Doyle Hufstedler's funeral on Good Friday. A week before, when an M-113 (armored personnel carrier) was hit by an IED (improvised explosive device), I knew it would be engineer Soldiers. It was, and five engineers died. One was 1st Lt. Doyle, who was in Engineer Basic when Gen. Castro was at Fort Leonard Wood. When the word went out for someone to be at the funeral in Abilene, Texas, he really wanted to be there.

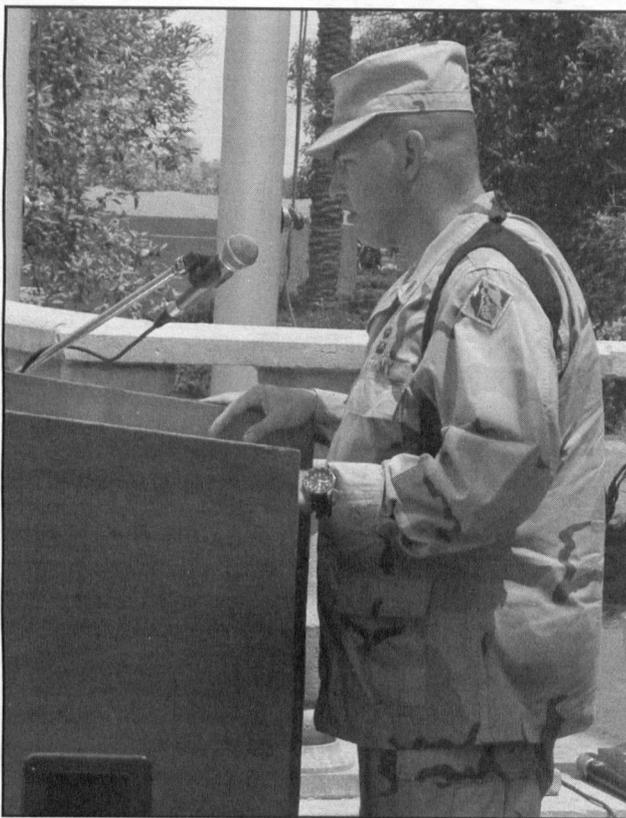
"When Gen. Castro passed Doyle's flag to his wife, Leslie, who was eight months pregnant, she leaned over and whispered that she had met him earlier at Fort Leonard Wood at a class reception, a dining-in, and at graduation. Leslie said, 'I knew it would be you, and that you would give me the strength I needed.'

**Pfc. Jason Meyer.** "One of the funerals that I wanted to attend but couldn't was for Pfc. Jason Meyer. Maj. Gen. Robert Griffin, the Deputy Commander, represented the nation at his funeral at Arlington National Cemetery. I live at Fort Meyer, Va., within walking distance of the cemetery, and last Memorial Day I wanted to walk there with my wife, Marilou, and be among our nation's heroes.

"It was a good day to check in on our Soldier, Jason Meyer. We walked to his grave and, as we were leaving, we saw a couple about our age coming toward us. We knew they were there to visit someone from Afghanistan or Iraq. Lo and behold, it was Jason Meyer's parents, Loren and Deb. What can you say to a family who has lost a son? Only that he died for a cause bigger than any one citizen, and that he's one of our nation's heroes. And I could tell them that I care, his fellow Soldiers care, and our nation mourns his loss that Memorial Day weekend.

"It's the severely injured who are so difficult for me. You see visually the results of war. Today, Soldiers are protected by body armor. They have SAPI (Small Arms Protection Insert) plates that protect them from 7.62mm (.30 caliber) rifle bullets and shrapnel, so it's their arms, legs, and eyes they're losing. In any previous wars, they probably would have died of wounds to other vital organs if it wasn't for that armor.

**Sam Ross.** "The first seriously injured Soldier I saw at Walter Reed was Sam Ross. Sam is a high-energy guy who had been hit everywhere by shrapnel and lost



**Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Balch addresses Corps personnel on Memorial Day at Essayons Base, headquarters of Gulf Region Division and Central District in Baghdad. (Photo courtesy of Gulf Region Division)**

both eyes and a leg. After several days he started to respond to treatment. I visited him and met a friend of the Army named Eric Beve who told me Sam's story. Beve said Sam's grandfather and aunt raised him near Pittsburgh, and didn't have a lot of money.

"So I asked Mr. Beve to make sure lodging was arranged for them at the Fisher House," said Balch. "Almost every military hospital has a house built by Zachary Fisher, a philanthropist and friend of the military. Families of hospitalized military personnel can stay there free.

"And I was able to get someone else to help when Sam recovered enough to return home. I wanted his hometown to know that a hero was coming home. I called John Spisso, the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for Western Pennsylvania. Spisso, with the help of Sam's Army recruiter, organized a parade in Sam's honor to welcome him home.

**James Fair.** "James Fair is another Soldier that I think about a lot. He lost both eyes and both arms above

the elbows. When I went to the hospital his wife was by his side, and she never left his side for months on end. She was pregnant with their fourth child, all under the age of five. We as a nation owe these young men and women who protect our peace and freedom. What could we do to help this family?

"When I visited the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Bamberg, Germany, I shared a few of these stories, especially about James Fair. First Sgt. Chris Rafferty, a great leader I've known for a few years, came to me afterwards and said his Soldiers would like to help. I said, 'If you're talking about helping their financial needs, then please package it with a nice card and a note in an envelope.'

"The next morning First Sgt. Rafferty gave me an envelope with \$1,500 in it from his company of 105 Soldiers. These are the kind of people that we have in the Engineer Regiment. There's camaraderie, teamwork, and care that are an example for others to follow. We take care of each other, and I'm so proud of their service. I'm honored to serve side-by-side with them every day.

"This conflict isn't over, and we'll need more Soldiers and Corps civilians to serve here in Iraq. I pray that they come and safely serve and make a difference.

**Jonathan Falaniko.** "Freedom isn't free and war isn't easy. Command Sgt. Maj. Ioakimo Falaniko has been my friend since 1987 when we were in the Sapper Leader Course together at Fort Leonard Wood. I've known his son Jonathan since he was four.

"I got a call last year that Ioakimo's son was killed in combat. I think it hurt me almost as much as it hurt his dad. Jonathan joined the Army in May 2003, and after his training he was sent to Iraq. His father picked him up the airport and they got to spend some time reminiscing. He was the command sergeant major's kid and everyone looked up to his dad. He told his dad that he must have been a heck of a sergeant major for everyone look up to him the way they did. It wasn't long afterward that we buried Jonathan in Arlington National Cemetery."

Tomorrow is Memorial Day for those of us here in Iraq with the Gulf Region Division. We will stop work at 1130 and pay tribute to America's fallen heroes in every conflict since the Revolutionary War. We will also remember our veterans and military members now serving their nation. We will, civilians and Soldiers, wear our desert camouflage uniforms and know, together, the sacred nature of this day.

God bless America, and may God bless our efforts to help rebuild Iraq for the Iraqi people.

*(The opinions in this article are those of the writer and do not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.)*

## Change of command

Continued from page one

is to the Corps of Engineers.

"But I'm confident because over the last 33 years, the Army has prepared me for this moment," Strock added. "I am also confident, most importantly, because from his first day of command, Bob Flowers focused on the future, and made it known that he was there to set the conditions for the success of the 51<sup>st</sup> Chief of Engineers."

In his previous assignment, Strock served as the Director of Civil Works in USACE Headquarters. In September 2003 he returned from a six-month tour of duty in Iraq as the Deputy Director of Operations for the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Strock's other USACE assignments include serving as the Director of Military Programs in USACE Headquarters, and Commander of the Pacific Ocean and North-western divisions.

Flowers served as the nation's 50<sup>th</sup> Chief of Engineers from Oct. 2000 until July 1. Before his selection as Commanding General of USACE, Flowers commanded the Maneuver Support Center and Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

"I've had the rare privilege of being a soldier, and a day doesn't go by that I don't think of those who died under my command," said Flowers. "And a day doesn't go by that I don't think about those civilians and soldiers of the Corps of Engineers that we've sent in harm's way, almost 2,000 since 9-11, all volunteers.

"For the last four years, I've commanded a unique organization, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," Flowers added. "There's nothing else like it in the world. Great civil servants, taking care of the nation and its armed forces, and I'm enormously proud of them."

Flowers' tenure as Chief of Engineers was marked by change and challenges...the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the cleanup effort afterwards; war in Afghanistan and Iraq and rebuilding efforts in those countries; the Environmental Operating Principles; the Project Management Business Process and the deployment of the P2 computer software to support it; and the USACE 2012 reorganization of the Corps.

After retirement, Flowers plans to work in the private sector. "I've had some interesting offers, and taken a



**Maj. Gen. Carl Strock (left), new Chief of Engineers, Col. Charles Taylor, Commander of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), and Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, outgoing Chief of Engineers, inspect the troops during the ceremony.**

look at them," Flowers said in a recent interview. "I've always wondered if I could be competitive in the private sector, so now I'll have the opportunity to test myself."